

EXPLORE!

Walking the Western US National Parks
10 days

USA - Trip code WUS



Walking the Western US National Parks

An exhilarating journey on foot in some of the western United States' most beautiful national parks. Marvel at the magnificent Grand Canyon, feel on top of the world at Angel's Landing in Zion National Park and hike amid the surreal hoodoos of Bryce Canyon. In between hikes at Arches and Canyonlands discover your adventurous side in Moab. This walking trip takes you to some of the most stunning natural wonders that America has to offer.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Route 66** - Drive along one of the most historic highways in America
- ★ **National Parks** - Explore five of Americas most beautiful and unique National Parks
- ★ **Zion National Park** - hike Utah's best trails
- ★ **Bryce Canyon** - Journey through the surreal and beautiful hoodoos
- ★ **Moab** - Utah's adventure capital; mountain biking on some of the world's best slick rock (optional)

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

8 - 13

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip Las Vegas

Depending on the arrival time of your flight you may have the chance to explore this vibrant American city. Las Vegas is a name that conjures up images of flashing lights, wedding chapels, slot machines and limousines - you will find all of this and so much more in this decadent, sense assaulting metropolis. Take a walk along the strip and you may see dancing fountains, an erupting volcano, a pyramid and the Eiffel Tower all within a short walk from each other. Or take the opportunity to try and win a little holiday spending money! With multiple bars and restaurants to start your culinary journey in the US, Las Vegas is a great place to really get into that holiday mood.



Accommodation: Golden Nugget (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive Route 66 to Grand Canyon

Today we leave behind the bright lights of Vegas and drive towards the, aptly named, Grand Canyon. We will travel today along Historic Route 66, one of the most well known driving routes in the world and one of the original highways within the US Highway system. Well documented in songs and television programmes we will travel this historic route, stopping for lunch in the quirky Route 66 themed, Seligman before continuing on to the first of our National Parks, the Grand Canyon. Late afternoon we will take our first hike at this magnificent fissure from the South Kaibab trailhead to Yavapai Point. Here we will watch the sun set and the stunning colour changes that this brings to this beautiful landmark.

Today's four and half kilometer hike is expected to take around one hour.



Accommodation: Red Feather Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Day 3 - Full days hiking at the Grand Canyon



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 3 - Full days hiking at the Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon National Park is a sight to behold. A unique combination of geologic colour and eroded forms make this massive fissure in the ground one of the 'must see' sights of America. At 446 km long, up to 29 km wide in places and 1.8k m deep, the sheer size of the Grand Canyon overwhelms our senses. We have a full day to explore the routes and trails around the South Rim of the canyon. With routes ranging from easy to strenuous and regular buses to drop you at the various trail heads you will have the opportunity to choose the walk that most suites you. You may wish to hike various parts of the rim trail (easy to moderate walking), taking you along the top edge of the canyon with some stunning view points; or perhaps the Bright Angel Trail, a steeper walk that takes you further down below the rim of the canyon and into the abyss itself. There are a multitude of different walking options available, all of which will offer you some spectacular scenery of this amazing landscape. In the evening, if you wish to see more of the canyon, there is the opportunity for an optional helicopter ride over the canyon or, if you prefer to keep your feet on the ground to visit the local IMAX theatre.



Accommodation: Red Feather Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Lunch

DAY 4 - Drive to Zion National Park via Page; hike Emerald pools

Leaving the south rim this morning we travel to Page, a small town in northern Arizona situated on the shores of magnificent Lake Powell. After a short break for lunch we will continue for our first short hike of the day at Horseshoe Bend. The trailhead is located just outside Page and overlooks one of the most spectacular views on the Colorado River. Created when the Colorado plateau uplifted (a mere five million years ago) and the river became trapped in its bed, causing it to cut its way through the rock to seek a new natural level and forming a 270 degree horseshoe-shaped bend in the canyon. After our short hike at Horseshoe Bend we continue to Springdale and Zion National Park. The main area of the national park that we will visit is Zion Canyon, a 24km rift in the beautiful red and tan coloured Navajo sandstone and the location for our hiking this afternoon and tomorrow. Our first visit into the park takes us on a moderate hike to the Emerald Pools - lower, middle and upper - that offer us waterfalls, misty trails, hanging gardens and winding paths along with a taste of the beauty that Zion National Park has to offer.

Today's two and half kilometer morning hike to Horsehoe bend is expected to take around one hour. The afternoon hike in Zion is three and half kilometers, taking approximatley two hours.



Accommodation: La Quinta Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Lunch

DAY 5 - Hike Angel's Landing and/or The Narrows

Taking the shuttle bus from Springdale today we enter Zion for a full day of exceptional hiking. Zion National Park is the showcase of the west with, what are known as, the best hikes in Utah located inside. For those with a head for heights, the magnificent Angels Landing trail will offer you some of the best views across the whole of the Zion Canyon. Starting with 21 steep switch backs known as Walter's Wiggles, the route takes you first to Scout Lookout - a point with some great views and a turnaround for those that tend not to want to continue the more strenuous ascent. From here the route takes narrow paths, with some steep drop offs and chains provided for portions of the last 800m to the 1760m (5790 feet) top. For those inclined to continue to the top, you are rewarded with some of the most spectacular views and a definite sense of achievement. The whole of the Zion Canyon and beyond opens up beneath you and you truly feel on top of the world.

Pending weather conditions, an alternative and beautiful trail is that of The Narrows. The oldest of the United States slot canyons, The Narrows is probably one of the most unusual hikes in the area and takes you through a 500 feet deep gorge with vertical sandstone walls. Eroded over time by the meandering river, the colours and patterns within The Narrows are breath taking. Spare boots or shoes are advisable as, at times, the river runs wall to wall in the canyon and you will get your feet wet following the trail into this stunning hidden landscape. This hike can be up to 15 km / 8hrs long, but you are able to turn round at any point you should chose (Please note this hike cannot be undertaken if there are flood warnings at the ranger's station.) Other, easier, hikes are available through the park and can all be accessed using the shuttle bus.

Today's 9 kilometer hike to Angles Landing is expected to take around four and half hours.



Accommodation: La Quinta Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Lunch


DAY 6 - Drive to Bryce Canyon; hiking in the National Park


Departing from Springdale this morning we continue through Utah to Bryce Canyon. Not actually a true canyon, but a series of natural amphitheatres, Bryce is distinctive due to its geological structures known as 'hoodoos'. These unusual structures are formed by a combination of frost and water erosion of sedimentary rocks and result in an 'other worldly' landscape of pinnacles, spires and wonderful rich colours that are not seen in such abundance in any other area. Our hiking this afternoon takes us down amongst these wonderful formations on an assortment of trails which interlock and cross over giving you the opportunity to make your walk as long or short as you like. (1.3km - 14.5km)



Accommodation: Ruby's Inn (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Lunch


DAY 7 - Sunrise at Bryce Canyon; drive to Moab; hike Delicate Arch

This morning you have the option to return to Bryce Canyon for a short hike at sunrise, approximately one and half hours. Given the nature and colour of the hoodoos in Bryce, one of the most stunning times to see them is when the sun exaggerates the golds, oranges and reds of the stones. Our journey then takes us on to Moab, the adventure capital of Utah and home to both Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Arches National Park has over 2,000 natural stone arches as well as soaring pinnacles, giant balanced rocks and winding hiking trails. Late this afternoon we will visit Arches and take a hike to the most iconic area of the park, Delicate Arch. At 20 metres tall and freestanding, this natural rock archway is a perfect spot to watch the sun set on this magnificent landscape.

Today's four and half kilometer hike is expected to take around two hours.

 **Accommodation: Red Stone Inn** (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Lunch


DAY 8 - Hike Fisher Towers; optional mountain biking, a river float trip or rafting in Moab

We take a moderate hike this morning to the Fisher Towers site, a short drive outside Moab. These rock pinnacles are isolated remnants of a 225 million year old floodplain deposit located in western Colorado. When the Colorado plateau lifted the salt deposits underlying the region buckled and collapsed and subsequent erosion caused the formation valleys and cliff escarpments. Now these rock pinnacles soar above the red and purple hued canyons below and are a favourite spot for hikers in the area. This afternoon is left free for optional activities in Moab. Set in slick rock country, Moab attracts thrill seekers from around the globe looking for the best mountain biking, canyoning and hiking there is on offer. If you fancy something a little more sedate you may want to try your hand at a float trip on the Colorado, bike ride or a sunset Hummer jeep ride.

Today's seven kilometer hike is expected to take around four hours.

 **Accommodation: Red Stone Inn** (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

DAY 9 - Morning hike in Canyonlands, drive Salt Lake City

This morning we visit the last of our National Parks on this trip, Canyonlands. A wilderness of countless canyons and buttes carved by the Colorado River and its tributaries which also divide the park into four districts: the Island in the Sky, the Needles, the Maze and the rivers themselves. Our hikes this morning take us into the Island in the Sky district where we will take an easy trail to the spectacular Mesa Arch, a natural rock arch on the edge of a cliff before hiking on to the Grand View Point, aptly named for its beautiful panoramic views of the region. After a picnic lunch we return to our vehicle and drive to Salt Lake City. The capital and most populated city in Utah is bordered by the waters of the Great Salt Lake and the snow - capped peaks of the Wasatch Range. It is home to the headquarters of the Mormon Church at Temple Square where you will find the majestic 19th Century Salt Lake Temple and the neo-Gothic Assembly Hall.

Today's four and half kilometer hike is expected to take around two and half hours.



Accommodation: Comfort Inn - SLC (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 10 - Trip ends Salt Lake City

Trip ends in Salt Lake City this morning, transfer to airport.



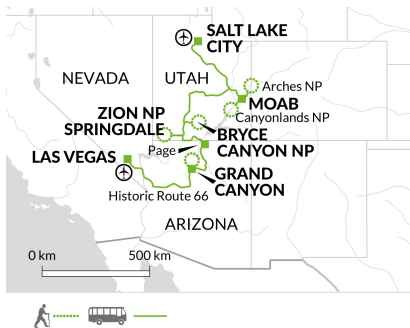
Meals Provided: None

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE

Day 2	4.5km
Day 3	3-20km
Day 4	5.5km
Day 5	9km 4km
Day 6	6-15km
Day 7	4.5km
Day 8	7km
Day 9	4.5km

 Optional Walks



Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks on 8 days for between 1 to 8 hours. Choice of distances in Grand Canyon and Bryce. The walks are on well-maintained and well-defined paths, some are steep in places with switch backs.

Why book this trip

To allow for extra flexibility, we offer this trip with hotel accommodation in the early spring and later autumn and during the warmer months we camp. The hotels we use are standard 3-star accommodations, situated close to the national parks for easy access to the superb hiking. The hotel-based departures give you the opportunity to see the parks as spring arrives or as the colours of autumn start to change. With cooler night time temperatures, sleeping in a hotel rather than under canvas during these times will be more comfortable. For those of you who prefer four walls and an ensuite bathroom, these dates could also be for you. The camping departures still run at quieter times of the year (i.e. outside of the school holidays) and we stay at sites with great facilities situated close to the national parks. Camping gives you the chance to dine al fresco and watch the stars.

What's included?



Included meals

Lunch: 5



Transport

Maxi-wagon



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver



Accommodation

1 nights premium hotel
8 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

USA

Climate

There are great variations in the altitude and terrain of the areas visited and this is reflected in the temperatures. Desert areas can be extremely hot in the summer months (49°), though temperatures can drop dramatically at night. The mountains are cooler and wetter especially in the north of the Rockies. At the beginning and end of the season there may still be some snow around in the high passes and it can be cold, whereas in mid-summer the day time temperatures can soar.

Time difference to GMT

-9

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Christian

Language

English

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Grand Canyon Helicopter flight approximately US\$ 235-265 (1 hr), IMAX cinema US\$ 13

Moab River float half day US\$ 50; Mountain bike day hire US\$ 45-65; Half day Hummer US\$ 90; Rafting \$50 half day

Clothing

Pack layers! This trip covers a variety of altitudes and, being early and later season the temperatures will get cold. Daytimes may be bright and warm, but mornings and evenings will be cold. Dress is informal. Bring a warm fleece, hat and gloves would be advisable as would warm trousers and long sleeved tops. Include a lightweight waterproof jacket, swimwear, sunglasses and a sun hat.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main bag, plus a daypack for hiking. Soft luggage is more practical for loading into the trailer. Please pack light as you will be expected to carry your own luggage at times. Laundry facilities will be available at various points during the trip.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle (3 litre capacity), sun cream, plastic bags to keep things dry. You may find walking poles useful.

For camping itineraries also bring:

A (head) torch and a towel, 2 or 3-season (temperature -5°C to 0°C) sleeping bag (a sleeping sheet or liner is also useful). A thermal ground pad is provided.

Please note: Sleeping bags can be purchased from a store for as low as US \$50. Please ask your Tour Leader on arrival.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

In North America tipping 15%-20% is a recognised part of life across the service industry, including restaurants, activity suppliers, taxis and guides. Local staff will look to you for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Unlike other Explore trips, during our trips in North America our Explore leaders will not operate a tips kitty. However, they will be more than happy to provide guidance throughout the trip on who to tip when and to suggest appropriate amounts.

Country Information

USA

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£15

Dinner price

£21

Beer price

£Varies for different towns, average £4.00

Water price

£1.1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

USDollars.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Bring your money in US\$ cash.

Where To Exchange

Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities. Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance

Widely accepted just about everywhere.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Maxiwagon

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

USA: (Including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). You must apply online for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), here <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip may be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Libya, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen since March 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. If you are a citizen of a country not included in the VWP you cannot apply for an ESTA. In both cases, you will instead need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (This is not necessary if only transitting through the USA)

I-94 - This is only required for completion if entering the USA by land through an official border crossing. For anyone entering by air or sea, you will be advised about this form during your journey if applicable. The i94 is a history of entries and exits to the US. You can get this for free online here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>. Each i94 accessed is only valid for border crossing for 7 days after printed.

Entry requirements for the USA can change regularly, therefore, please ensure you have the most up to date information before you travel by checking the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada (in transit): An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of

your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station. Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers. If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

USA

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
