

EXPLORE!

Yellowstone and Western Trails
15 days

USA - Trip code YL

Yellowstone and Western Trails

Following scenic park trails discover some of the most spectacular scenery in North America's National Parks. The variety is endless, from glaciers and rivers, to deserts and canyons, hot springs and waterfalls, join us as we view the geysers of Yellowstone National Park, meander amongst the hoodoos and rock formations of Arches and Canyonlands and hike along the shores of dramatic glacial lakes.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Yellowstone NP** - Thorough exploration of spectacular scenery and mud volcanoes
- ★ **Grand Teton NP** - Soaring peaks and glacial lakes.
- ★ **Dinosaur National Monument** - Uncovering America's jurrassic past
- ★ **Moab** - Adventure centre with many optional activities on offer
- ★ **Arches NP** - Picturesque rockscape
- ★ **Canyonlands NP** - Rock Hoodoos and Canyons
- ★ **Salt Lake City** - Mormon Capital of Utah

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:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

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 in Salt Lake City

Join trip in Salt Lake City



Accommodation: Salt Lake Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Yellowstone National Park area

Leaving early we journey north towards the Rockies, aiming to reach the outskirts of Yellowstone National Park. We travel through Utah and Idaho passing through National Forests and the Fort Hall Indian reservation. The scenery today is on a par with Yellowstone itself, and we plan to stop off at the magnificent Mesa falls, on the approach we witness the toothy skyline of the Teton Range, which thrusts up 2135 metres from the plains - out to the north you can see Big Bend Ridge, the western flank of a volcano that erupted 1.3 million years ago. We reach West Yellowstone late in the day, our long drive enabling us to make the most of our time here. The elevation of this area is just under 2300 metres, so nights can be cold.



Accommodation: Madison Arm Resort Campground (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Exploring Yellowstone NP

We have almost 3 full days to thoroughly explore the wonderland of Yellowstone National Park by vehicle and on foot. Although scenery is the primary draw of this area, the park abounds with wildlife. Having been protected from hunters since the park's inception, bear, moose and elk are frequently seen. Here we see geysers, hot springs and mud volcanoes and walk along beautiful trails. There are flowery alpine meadows to explore where wild animals roam. Buffalo Bill was the first to bring tourists here (often royalty he'd met on his travels) and these visitors, like us, marvelled at the spectacular scenery. The volcanic activity frightened the Indians who believed this to be the land of evil spirits, and so the wilderness remained unexplored until it was declared the first National Park in 1872. We plan 2 half day walks in the park. The itinerary is flexible depending on local conditions and the ability of the group but will incorporate areas such as the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone with its beautiful waterfalls, Mud Volcano, Beaver Ponds Trail and Mammoth Hot Springs.



Accommodation: Madison Arm Resort Campground (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Explore Yellowstone NP

Today we continue exploring more of Yellowstone National Park.



Accommodation: Madison Arm Resort Campground (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Visit Old Faithful and drive to Grand Teton NP

Before leaving the park this afternoon we drive to the Upper Geyser Basin. Old Faithful - the most famous and reliable of the geysers is here, amidst this intensely geo-thermal area, home to the world's largest concentrations of hot springs and geysers. We spend 4-5 hours in the area, walking from Firehole River to Geyser Hill, perhaps diverting to Morning Glory and Biscuit Basin. We travel on to Grand Teton N.P. via Colter Bay where we visit an Indian Arts museum (optional). We continue to our base, just outside the park, for the next 4 days. The Grand Teton area is blessed with some of the most dramatic mountain scenery anywhere in North America - 10

summits carved by glaciation tower three kilometres above the valley floor. At the foot of the mountains lies a necklace of sparkling lakes. These jagged pinnacles are the inspiring back-drop for our hikes in the park.



Accommodation: KOA South Jackson Campground Cabin (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Single room available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 6 - In Grand Teton NP; Cascade Canyon

On our first day we drive to Jenny Lake. You may follow the shoreline on foot and follow this scenic walk up to Hidden Falls and Inspiration Point (4 hrs return). Then we continue further to Cascade Canyon passing beneath Mount Aven where moose and bear are often spotted. On the return it is possible to take the passenger ferry (optional) which plies across the blue waters of Jenny Lake, back to our transport waiting on the far side - high above hangs the Teton Glacier, a stunning finale to our walk.



Accommodation: KOA South Jackson Campground Cabin (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - In Grand Teton NP; optional rafting on Snake River

Our second day is free for relaxing in nearby Jackson, an ideal place to wind down after the last few days. The downtown area still has the boardwalks so typical of the first town in the west and has some good shopping. It is an excellent centre for outdoor activities: grade 3 rafting trips on the Snake River can be arranged or you could perhaps hire a bike for some independent sightseeing.



Accommodation: KOA South Jackson Campground Cabin (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - In Grand Teton NP; Hike at Amphitheatre Lake

The final day can be spent hiking up to Amphitheatre Lake - a tough trek (6 hours walk) which rewards the traveller with remarkable views of Jackson Hole and its lakes - alternatively for those wishing something easier, it is possible to stroll around one of the many nearby glacial lakes such as Taggart and Bradley.



Accommodation: KOA South Jackson Campground Cabin (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - Drive to Flaming Gorge area

We drive through the Gros Ventre range onto the Sublette Plateau, heading down through the rich red-hued rock of Flaming Gorge, appropriately named by Major John Wesley Powell whilst on his famous expedition in 1869. Once a hideout for Butch Cassidy, Flaming Gorge is now home to wildlife such as Osprey which are often spotted nesting on craggy rock pinnacles and clifftops and here we explore the Canyon Rim Trail on foot (1.5 hours walk). Tonight we stay near the town of Vernal.



Accommodation: KOA Vernal Campsite (or similar)



Simple Camping



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Drive to Moab via Dinosaur National Monument

We traverse the high desert landscape which switches to pine clad mountains as we enter the state of Utah. Here we explore the Dinosaur National Monument, renowned for the exceptional number of dinosaur bones discovered in one single sandstone cliff, including Brontosaurus. We journey across the 2511 m high Douglas Pass to Moab.



Accommodation: Canyonlands Campground Cabins (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Fisher Towers Recreation Site and Canyonlands National Park

Waking early to take advantage of the brief respite from the desert heat, we drive to the Fisher Towers, one of the most outstanding scenic features of Utah's Colorado Riverway. Rock pinnacles soar above a maze of red and purple hued canyons. The 7.5 kilometre hiking trail along the base of the towers offer excellent views (3-4 hours). In the late afternoon, we head to Canyonlands National Park where we explore the arid, canyon incised region set at an altitude of 1800 metres, known as the 'Islands in the Sky'. The plateau is set 600 metres high above the confluence of the Green River and the Colorado. We visit Mesa Arch and Grand View Overlook, walking some of the trails into the desert wilderness.



Accommodation: Canyonlands Campground Cabins (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Simple Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 12 - Free day in Moab

As well as being ideally located for walks in the nearby parks, Moab is one of the USA's leading adventure centres where you can take advantage of the many activities on offer. The opportunities are boundless, for example taking an optional half day float trip on the Colorado River - a unique way to view the towering canyons and experience the silence and beauty of this remote area. We use inflatable kayaks and will travel over some small rapids, but no experience is necessary. There is also an opportunity to make an optional jeep excursion to visit areas which are inaccessible to other vehicles, perhaps seeing petroglyphs left behind by the Ancient Ones.



Accommodation: Canyonlands Campground Cabins (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Hiking in Arches National Park

Today we visit the extraordinary Arches National Park, where more than 1,600 natural arches have been sculpted over the years by wind, sun, frost and rain, creating a strange rockscape in the desert. Soft Entrada Sandstone - a 91m layer of rock deposited as sand during the Jurassic Period - has been eroded into twisted spires, fins and arches which are particularly beautiful in the morning and afternoon when they take on a fiery glow in the low light. The famous Delicate Arch has become Utah's symbol and seems to defy gravity as the large precariously-balanced boulders hover near the edge of a cliff.



Accommodation: Canyonlands Campground Cabins (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 14 - Drive back to Salt Lake City

We return to Salt Lake City, Utah's capital, with time to take a stroll around the centre. Founded by a group of believers of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) in 1847, the city is now their international headquarters and some of the finest buildings are ecclesiastical. The setting, below the Wasatch mountains and beside the great salt lake, is superb and makes this a pleasant city to explore on foot.



Accommodation: Comfort Inn - SLC (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Trip ends Salt Lake City

The trip ends in Salt Lake City this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: None

Walking and Trekking information

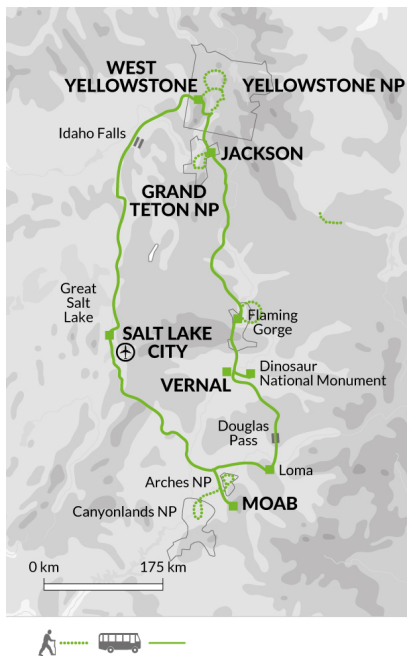
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Walking grade

Easy to moderate

Trek details

8 days walking of between 4-6 hours a day. Longer options available. Please see website for more details.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12
Lunch: 10
Dinner: 7



Transport

Maxiwagon



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver



Accommodation

8 nights simple cabins
4 nights simple camping
2 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.

There are a number of exciting optional excursions you can do on tour. These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Jackson - Teton Village Aerial tram US\$20; Bike Hire US\$50 for 1/2 day; Rafting US\$77-\$138; Guided tour US\$75
Moab - Float trip US\$75; Jet Boat US\$89 for 1/2 day; Hummer sunset tour US\$90

Clothing

Pack layers! Please note that temperatures in this area can be high during summer - sometimes over 40°C. Please bear this in mind when packing for your trip. Dress is informal. A warm fleece or sweater is essential for cooler nights in the desert or at higher altitudes. Include a long sleeved shirt, warm trousers, 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

Bring only the bare essentials - one main bag plus a small daypack for walking and for personal items. Main luggage cannot be accessed during the day. Soft luggage is more practical than a hard shell suitcase. Bring plastic bags to keep things dry. Please only pack what you can carry.

Laundry facilities are available at various points during the trip.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle (3 litre capacity), high factor sunblock, plastic bags to keep things dry, a (head) torch and a towel. Please also bring a 2 or 3-season (temperature -5°C to 0°C) sleeping bag (a sleeping sheet is useful). A thermal ground pad is provided. You may find a walking pole useful. 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.

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

US Dollars.

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

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

The simple Log Cabins are like camping at its best. Cabins have a double bed or twin size bunk beds. They have electricity and heat but no running water or bath facility. You will need a sleeping bag. Water is available nearby outside your cabin. Grills for cooking are also available in front of your Cabin. Restrooms and showers are located in 3 complexes throughout the property.

All camping equipment is provided except a sleeping bag. Like many adventures of this type, much of the team spirit and camaraderie is developed through mucking in and helping out with basic camp responsibilities which will include the setting up and taking down of camp and the loading and unloading of the trailer. At some points you may also be asked to help with meal preparation, washing and clearing up. Be prepared for some early starts and some long days - there is an enormous amount to see!

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 01 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: 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, Travcours. See www.travcours.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 Travcours. The Team at Travcours 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.