

USA – GRAND CANYON AND MONUMENT VALLEY



Travelling through Utah, Arizona and Colorado, this memorable holiday encompasses the breathtaking scenery and epic landscapes of some of the USA's most dramatic National Parks. A 'Grand Circle' tour of some of the USA's most dramatic National Parks. Never-ending horizons and unique geological formations. The awesome Grand Canyon

Departs: 11 – 26 May, 31 Aug – 15 Sep, 21 Sep – 6 Oct 2007

Cost: Fully escorted - land only AU\$7610 per person (half-board plus 2 picnic lunches)

Day 1: Las Vegas - 1 night

After being met at the airport and transferred to the hotel, we will have the opportunity to view the famous bright lights, or just to rest and relax after the journey.

Day 2: Zion National Park to Bryce Canyon - 2 nights

Today we begin our tour of the Grand Circle with a morning drive via St George and Mesquite to Zion National Park. A wide array of waterfalls, steep overhanging cliffs and rock formations are found within Zion's spectacular canyons. We'll be able to explore the park with walks to lower and Upper Emerald Pools and an easy trail walk alongside the Virgin River to 'the Narrows'. Hanging gardens of wild flowers can often be found here in spring and summer.

In the late afternoon we travel to our hotel. Walk itineraries: Emerald Pools & Zion Canyon

Day 3: Bryce National Park

A marvellous day's outing to Bryce Canyon where there will be morning walks from Sunrise Point to Queen's Garden and along the Navajo Loop Trail. The trail passes some of the many pinnacles, spires and cathedral like formations that make Bryce such a stunning geological area. In the afternoon there will be a short walk from Rainbow Point on the Bristlecone Loop.

Walk itineraries: Morning: Queen's Garden and Navajo Loop, Afternoon: Rainbow Point on the Bristlecone Loop

Day 4: Capitol Reef National Park to Green River - 1 night

Leaving Bryce Canyon, the morning drive is along scenic Highway 12 via the Escalante Canyons to Capitol Reef National Park. After viewing some of the excellent displays at the Visitor Centre we'll enjoy afternoon walks along the Fremont River. The coach then continues to Green River for one night.

Walk itineraries: Morning: Walks along the Fremont River Trail, Afternoon: Grand Wash Trail

Day 5: Green River, Canyonlands National Park and on to Moab - 3 nights

In the morning we'll visit the 'Island in the Sky' area of Canyonlands National Park. There's an easy walk that leads out to the Canyon Rim, offering superb views of Buck Canyon and Washerwoman Arch. We continue to Moab for a three-night stay.

Day 6: Arches National Park

Today is spent walking in Arches National Park, an area that contains the world's largest concentration of stone arches. There are walks to the Garden of Eden, Double Arch and Landscape Arch. After the evening meal, we take a cruise on the 'Moab Queen', which offers a light and sound show as she begins the ascent upstream to the Colorado River Canyon.

Day 7: Negro Bill Canyon.

In the morning we follow a trail into the lovely Negro Bill Canyon before returning to Moab and a free afternoon.

Day 8: Canyonlands, The Needles to Cortez - 2 nights

Today a short coach journey takes us to the Needles area of Canyonlands. We visit Newspaper Rock, a panel of Indian petroglyphs dating back to 1,000 AD and walk the Slickrock Foot Trail to view pinnacles, arches, spires and Indian ruins before continuing to Cortez our base for exploration of Mesa Verde National Park.

Day 9: Mesa Verde National Park

Mesa Verde National Park, which occupies part of a large plateau rising high above the Montezuma and Mancos Valleys, preserves a spectacular remnant of the Anasazi Indians' thousand year old culture. There are more than 4,000 archaeological ruins in the park and we will explore some of these by coach and on foot.

Day 10: Monument Valley - 1 night

From Cortez we travel past small villages and trading posts to Four Corners Monument for a short stop before continuing along scenic highway 163 into the dramatic Monument Valley. Monument Valley is one of nature's most artistic creations. Carved red sandstone buttes and slender sky-reaching monoliths bear names like "The Totem Pole", "The Three Sisters" and "Roosters Rock".

Day 11: The Grand Canyon - 3 nights

We continue South West again to the Grand Canyon with a visit to the Navajo National Monument on the way. The grandeur and beauty of the Grand Canyon carved out over millions of years by the Colorado River is a spectacular sight not to be missed. In the afternoon we make stops at Desert View Watchtower and the Tusayan Ruin Museum. In the evening there's an optional visit to the Imax Theatre just outside the Park to watch an excellent film of the history of man's discovery and settlement within the Grand Canyon.

Day 12: The Grand Canyon

Today we enjoy a day of walks along the South and West Rims with visits to the Yavapai Museum and Visitor Centre.

Day 13: The Grand Canyon

A choice of walks will be offered. Those who wish to descend into the Canyon walk from the Bright Angel Trailhead to Indian Gardens or continue further to Plateau Point (a further 1.5 miles) to view the Colorado River, 1,360ft below.

Day 14: Return to Las Vegas - 1 night

The final coach journey of the holiday completes our circuit of the Grand Circle with a drive via Kingman to Las Vegas. At the time of writing coach access to the Hoover Dam is not permitted, however if possible at the time of travel, our journey will include this famous landmark.

If you've any spare dollars left there's a chance to win your fortune at one of the many gaming tables or slot machine arcades in Las Vegas this evening, after the final dinner.

Day 15: Journey home

Tour ends with a transfer to Las Vegas airport

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