

Walking the Grand Canyon & American Wild West, United States

Awesome scenery and Native American culture in the magnificent national parks of the American Southwest.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels, Lodges
Grade	Moderate
Duration	16 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 11 days
Min/Max group size	6 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 6
Trip Leader	Local Leader USA
Land only	Joining in Las Vegas, United States
Max altitude	2,444m/8,020ft, Bryce Canyon, Day 4

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2024 Dates:

Sat 30 Mar - Sun 14 Apr

Sat 12 Oct - Sun 27 Oct

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 6 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



The trip will be led by an experienced driver/guide, ideally placed to give you an insight into, and information about, their country. In tribal lands an additional local guide will join you to further enhance your experience.

Your trip highlights

- Walk each day amidst the most spectacular landscapes of America's Southwest - the backdrop for numerous western movies
- See the best of America's great national parks with hikes in Zion, Bryce, Arches, Canyonlands and, of course, the Grand Canyon
- Explore Navajo and Hopi Indian tribal lands including Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly and the Hopi Mesas where you walk in the company of Native American guides
- Discover the stunning red rock scenery of Sedona and finish with the bright lights and razzmatazz of Las Vegas

At a glance itinerary

Day 1	Fly to Las Vegas. Transfer to hotel.
Days 2-3	Drive to Zion National Park. Emerald Pools and Observation Point walks.
Days 4-5	Drive to Bryce Canyon and hike the Fairyland Loop trail. Drive to Moab and walk in Canyonlands National Park.
Day 6	A full day's walking in Arches National Park.
Days 7-8	Drive to Canyon de Chelly via a short hike in Monument Valley (optional jeep tour). Day hike with Navajo Guides in Canyon de Chelly. View Spider Rock at sunset.
Days 9-10	Explore Hopi Mesas en route to the Grand Canyon. Walk along the Bright Angel Trail to Plateau Point.
Day 11	Hike the West Rim Trail of the Grand Canyon. Afternoon at leisure in Tusayan.
Day 12	Drive to Sedona via Flagstaff. Afternoon walk.
Days 13-14	Walks in Sedona area. Visit Red Rock State Park. Return to Vegas.
Days 15-16	Overnight flight to the UK.

Trip summary

As nature's great playground, the national parks of the southwestern states of America are hard to beat. They offer some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery anywhere in the world and we're delighted to make their plunging canyons, intricate rock spires, towering cliffs and sparkling waterfalls the focus of this outstanding walking holiday.

Your holiday begins with full and half-day walks in four of the most scenically spectacular parks in the American Southwest: Zion, Bryce, Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. Each offers a striking, otherworldly landscape of multi-hued, sculpted rock formations yet each has a different natural twist, from fairytale hoodoos to delicate rock arches and from vast river-carved gorges to canyons with walls as high as a skyscraper.

Heading south into the heartlands of the wild west, we've designed this trip to follow in the footsteps of John Wayne taking you amongst the rock monoliths of Monument Valley and exploring the tribal lands of the Navajo and Hopi Indians in the company of Native American guides. Following the trail west you'll next experience the magnificence of the Grand Canyon, walking along the rim trails that offer endless breathtaking vistas, and also down into the canyon itself, giving a stunning, alternative perspective on one of nature's greatest wonders.

You then travel further south through Arizona to laid-back Sedona with its cool, alternative vibe and explore the beautiful red rock scenery on foot. After two days of great hikes through a landscape that is instantly recognisable from a hundred western moves, you return to Las Vegas along route 66 before spending your final night amidst the glitz and glamour of the Vegas Strip.

Special notes

Walking the Grand Canyon & the American Wild West has replaced our previous Grand Canyon Trek. This is due to restrictions that were introduced in 2019 on trekking into the Grand Canyon at the Havasupai Reservation.

Grade of holiday

The walking on this trip is on well-maintained paths throughout. Even in rough terrain paths are good. Although we would grade much of the walking on this trek as Gentle/Moderate, as prevailing temperatures may be high, we have graded this trip as Moderate overall.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London To Las Vegas

Today you will fly to Las Vegas in the state of Nevada. On arrival at the airport you will be transferred to your overnight hotel. Flight schedules permitting there may be time tonight to experience the extravagant spectacle of the Vegas Strip.

Overnight: Mardi Gras Hotel, Las Vegas

Day 2: Drive to Zion National Park - 3 hours. Afternoon walk to Emerald Pools - 4.85km/3 miles, 175m/570ft of ascent.

You leave Las Vegas after breakfast and drive north to Zion National Park, reached after approximately 3 hours. En route you'll pass out of Nevada and into the State of Utah, home to some of the most spectacular natural scenery in the United States.

Named after the homestead of an early settler, Zion is a small but amazingly diverse national park. The multi-coloured rocks of the main canyon complement the colours of the rich vegetation and rushing waters of streams, pools and waterfalls. Mountain lion, golden eagles and a host of smaller 'critters' may be found in the park, which offers some great short and full day walks. After perhaps a look round the informative Visitor Centre, you'll take your first walk of the trip, up away from the valley floor to the Emerald Pools. Passing through a shaded forest of oak, maple and fir you will reach in turn a small waterfall, a hanging garden, and then a series of pools set at different levels on the canyon walls. The trail is well graded throughout and makes for an excellent introduction to the hikes to come.



Overnight: Holiday Inn Express Springdale, Zion Park (Meals: B L)

Day 3: Day walk at Zion National Park to Observation Point - 13km/8 miles and 655m/2,148ft of ascent.

The first full day walk of the trip takes you up from the floor of Zion Canyon to the eastern plateau above. The first part of the trail follows a short interpretive trail to Weeping Rock - a rocky alcove with a dripping spring above and overhung with ferns and wildflowers. Relatively few visitors venture past this point as the trail steepens and continues to climb, however it's a good path underfoot, having been cut, pitched and paved in the 1930s. A mile and a half from the trailhead a path forks southwards along Hidden Canyon but you continue northwards to reach Echo Canyon. The steep ascent ends as you enter Echo Canyon, an impressive narrow slot canyon with a sandy floor which you follow a short way, with walls of almost white rock towering above. Ahead, the skyline is dominated by Cable Mountain.

The trail leads you away from Echo Canyon and steepens again as you ascend towards the promontory of Mount Baldy, giving all round views. The final $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile is over rougher ground but still straightforward, leading you to Observation Point itself. This viewpoint is perhaps one of the best in the park, giving you a sweeping vista of Zion Canyon below, and across to features including Angels' Landing, Cathedral Mountain, the Three Patriarchs and to the south the jagged outcrop known as the Watchman. You return to the valley via the outward route.

As with a number of National Parks in the US, a free public shuttle bus service operates within Zion, stopping at all the main trailheads and points of interest. The shuttle reduces the need for visitors to use their cars and thereby cuts down on both congestion and pollution. When you return to the valley floor you can use the shuttle bus to either return to your hotel or, energy permitting, to see some other areas of the park, e.g. The Court of the Patriarchs; a walk along the Virgin River, or the Narrows, a twisting, narrow canyon and one of Zion's most photographed natural features.

Overnight: Holiday Inn Express Springdale, Zion Park (Meals: B L)

Day 4: Drive to Bryce Canyon National Park - 2 hours. Fairyland Loop walk - 14.5km/9 miles and 290m/950ft of ascent.

After breakfast you board your transport and make the 85 mile drive east to Bryce Canyon National Park. The first leg of your journey, to Mt Carmel Junction, follows what many consider to be one of the most scenic of all American roads bordered, as it is, by cascades of multi-coloured slick-rock. Along the way you pass through a mile long tunnel, which at the time of its construction in the 1900s was considered an engineering marvel.

Also look out for the unusual 'Checkerboard Mesa', a large sandstone outcrop cross-hatched by windblown sand (horizontal grooves) and the effect of freeze-thaw on the natural vertical joints.

Although smaller and less well known than parks such as Yosemite or Yellowstone, Bryce Canyon is a firm favourite with those who have visited; it is often the one people name if asked which park they would most like to return to. Although it boasts a great diversity of flora and fauna (the park covers three climate/vegetation zones and is home to over 100 species of bird, dozens of mammals, and more than a thousand plant species) it is Bryce's 'hoodoos' that make it so unique; a 'hoodoo' being a rock spire formed by the action of ice and rain on the limestone rock which typifies the area. The 'Hoodoos' come in a wide variety of red, pink, yellow and even purple hues, caused by the oxidation of iron and manganese within the rock itself.

The Fairyland Loop trail starts at 2,444m/8,018ft and is a fantastic way to explore Bryce, taking you down 900 feet from the rim, away from the crowds and in touching distance of the colourful hoodoos. The walk can be done in either direction, but most commonly takes the clockwise route. Setting out from Fairyland Point you begin your steady descent into the canyon. The trail rises and falls as you pass through Fairyland Canyon into Campbell Canyon. Eventually you reach the lowest point which is marked by the surprising sight of a hoodoo shaped just like 'Tower Bridge'. From here you slowly climb back to the rim past the striking feature known as the 'Chinese Wall'. Finally, a 2.7 mile walk along the rim trail takes you back to the trailhead.

The colours of Bryce Canyon are perhaps best experienced in the late afternoon so, depending upon when you finish your hike, you may well pay a visit to one or more of the park's classic viewpoints, such as Inspiration Point or Sunset point. Once the sun has set you make the short drive to your lodging not far from the park entrance.

Overnight: Best Western Plus Ruby's Inn, Bryce (Meals: B L)

Day 5: Drive to Moab - 5-6 hours. Short walk in Canyonlands National Park.

Today's road journey is the longest of the entire trip, with around 5-6 hours of driving. As you might imagine there's plenty of scenic interest along the way and your guide will be careful to break up the travelling with rest and refreshment stops.

You are now entering cowboy country; Butch Cassidy's boyhood home lies less than 50 miles north of Bryce, and as you travel east the landscape of snow-capped mountains, extensive prairies and red rock canyons will probably look quite familiar from any number of movies. Modern day cowboys still work the land in this region, although you will probably see more in pick-up trucks than on horseback. After passing over the San Rafael Desert you turn off the highway for a short walk in Canyonlands National Park. Carved by the Colorado and Green rivers, Canyonlands' primary features are its spectacular gorges, which naturally create three distinctive areas. The Island in the Sky, where you will walk, lies to the north of the park and overlooks more than 10,000 square miles of rugged wilderness. The Maze District is most readily accessed by raft/boat along the Green River a method used by the region's foremost explorer John Wesley-Powell in the mid-19th century. The Needles District in the Park's south-east corner features a range of multi-coloured rock spires similar in appearance to those seen at Bryce.

Depending on the time taken to reach Canyonlands, there should be time to walk along either or both the Grand View Trail (2 miles), or the Upheaval Dome Overlook Trail (1 mile). After your leg stretch, it's around a 30 mile drive to reach your base for the next two nights at Moab. The town of Moab is Utah's self-styled adventure capital. Long the home of Sabuagana Ute Indians, the first permanent settlement here was made by Mormon farmers between 1878 and 1879. Today the area remains a rich producer of peaches, apples and grapes. In the 1950s Moab boomed with the development of Uranium mines, followed by the discovery of oil and the extraction of Potash in the 1960s. With the decline of these industries in the late 1960s, tourism has



become Moab's most high profile industry. The fabulous natural scenery draws visitors from across the USA and beyond: the former mining roads are popular with off-road drivers, the rivers offer exhilarating white water rafting, while the slick-rock presents challenging routes for rock climbers and mountain bikers alike.

Moab has a relaxed atmosphere and a good selection of shops, cafes, bars and restaurants. After checking in to your hotel and freshening up it's just a short walk to find a pleasant spot for a cool drink and dinner.

Overnight: Aarchway Inn, Moab (Meals: B L)

Day 6: Walks in Arches National Park, including Devil's Garden - 11.6km/7.2miles, approximately 15m/50ft of ascent, and Delicate Arch - 4.8km/3 miles and 146m/480ft of ascent.

Just five miles north of Moab is Arches National Park, boasting over 2,000 natural rock arches. The park lies above a bed of salt, which was deposited on the Colorado Plateau around 300 million years ago following the evaporation of a former sea. Subsequent centuries saw this salt bed overlain with a variety of deposits which became compressed into layers of rock. Eventually, the pressure of this overlying rock caused the salt layer to shift and buckle, leading in turn to a series of up-thrusts and subsidence. Relatively recently, in geological terms, this landscape has become scoured by natural forces such as wind, ice, water and heat to create an area of spires, arches, sandstone fins and steep buttresses.



Today you will take a series of short walks, taking you to some of Arches most famous features, such as Balanced Rock, the Windows and Double Arch. You will also take two longer hikes. From the northern end of the Park you trek into Devil's Garden, which contains the dramatic Landscape Arch. With its span of over 60ft, this arch is evidence of the continuing processes of erosion. In 1995 two large sections of rock fell away from the Arch, making it even more slender and sinuous. Most visitors to Devil's Garden head straight back to the trailhead from this point but you will pick up a 'primitive' trail which leads you deeper into the back country. Although mainly a sandy path, this trail also leads you up, over and along a number of the sandstone fins. Your ultimate goal is Double O Arch, offering some great photo opportunities.

Your second hike today will take you to the state symbol for Utah - 'Delicate Arch'. The route is almost entirely over bare rock and involves a gradual ascent from a stream bed up onto a broad sandstone dome. Although the walk entails a relatively modest ascent it can be tough going in the heat of the day, so your guide will probably start, or end the day with this hike. The final section of the walk involves a short stretch of approximately 350m/1,200ft, along a ledge path cut into the rock. This path slopes into the rock you're traversing and is a good 3-4ft wide throughout, so really presents no problem. The arch itself is hidden until the last moment you arrive just above the rocky bowl in which it stands.

Overnight: Aarchway Inn, Moab (Meals: B L)

Day 7: Drive to Monument Valley. Short walk on Wild Cat Trail - 5.15km/3.2miles, negligible ascent. Drive to Canyon de Chelly National Monument - 2 hours.

You make an early start today for the journey to Canyon de Chelly. Non-stop this road trip would probably take you around four hours, but along the way is one of North America's 'must see' sights; the iconic Monument Valley. Belonging to the Navajo Nation, Monument Valley covers an area of nearly 100,000 acres and straddles the Utah and Arizona boundary. In 1938 the beauty and drama of the freestanding rock spires, buttes and mesas drew film-maker John Ford here and 'Stagecoach' became the first of countless movies made here since. It is a couple of hours drive to reach Monument Valley where you will be able to stretch your legs on the 'Wild Cat Trail', a short three mile walk out to one of the most prominent features of the valley, the East Mitten. For those that wish, an optional 4WD excursion around the main attractions of the valley is possible instead of the walk (payable locally - prices start from around \$75 per person).

You are now in the heart of Native American Indian territory and as you drive south you pass a mixture of isolated homesteads and small settlements. Altogether the Navajo Reservation has a population of around 90,000, whilst the smaller, neighbouring Hopi Reservation stands at around 11,000. Today tourism is an important part of the local economy with traditional crafts such as weaving and jewellery-making much in evidence. Traditional values and beliefs also remain strongly held, many enshrined in tribal law. Alcohol is prohibited on Navajo and Hopi lands (including in restaurants and hotels) and permission should always be sought before attempting to take photographs of people or their homes.

The Visitor Centre in Monument Valley features regular exhibitions of Navajo life, art and history.

Leaving Monument Valley you drive south through the Arizona desert for a couple more hours to arrive at the small town of Chinle. Here you check into your hotel for the next two nights, close to the entrance to Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

Overnight: Holiday Inn Chinle or Thunderbird Lodge, Canyon De Chelly (Meals: B L)

Day 8: Canyon de Chelly hike - 16-19km/10-12miles, approximately 305m/1,000ft of descent. Scenic drive along canyon rim.

The labyrinth-like Canyon de Chelly (pronounced 'shay') is actually formed of several canyons which extend from the outskirts of Chinle. At the mouth of the canyon the rock walls stand some 30 feet high but as you head east into the main canyon, these walls become 1,000 foot high towering cliffs. Archaeologists have established that this area has been continuously inhabited for around 5,000 years and the canyon is one of the most important ancient sites in the US. The original settlers here were hunter gatherers who camped on the canyon floor but over time the natural caves and ledges of the canyon became the preferred places for dwellings, offering natural shelter and protection. In the last 2,000 years Pueblan Indians have been succeeded by Hopi and then Navajo tribes. Today the canyon floor is still farmed by a few Navajo families, some living in hogans - a traditional, octagonal dwelling made of timber. Alfalfa, corn and fruit are grown in the fertile soil and sheep are grazed in the shade of the canyon walls.



Today you make an exploration of Canyon de Chelly on foot, in the company of a local Navajo guide. Apart from one very short trail to a view point on the canyon rim, there are no way-marked trails in Canyon de Chelly. Your Navajo guide will therefore take you on a route used primarily by canyon dwellers over many, many centuries. Over the first hour or so you can expect to be walking upon the bare sandstone rock - following the natural curves of the rock and dried up water courses. In places you'll descend steps, cut by the Navajo, and reach vantage points that reveal some of the well camouflaged cliff dwellings. Upon reaching the sandy canyon floor your guide will take you to see further cliff dwellings and occasional petroglyphs of animals and people, telling the story of day to day life in times past. The chances are your guide will have lived in the canyon at some point in his life and along the way you'll be able to find out more from him about Navajo life, past and present.

Your walk will end at the visitor centre, at the mouth of the canyon, after around five hours of walking. There is an interesting interpretive display, film and bookshop here. Before returning to your hotel you will make the return drive along the south rim of the canyon, to Spider Rock Overlook. There are a couple of scenic viewpoints along the way, which are well worth taking in as the sun begins to set. Spider Rock is an 800 foot sandstone spire that stands proud of the canyon floor at the junction of Monument Canyon and Canyon de Chelly itself.

Overnight: Holiday Inn Chinle or Thunderbird Lodge, Canyon De Chelly (Meals: B L)

Day 9: Drive to First Hopi Mesa - 1½ hours. Explore Hopi Mesas and museum. Drive to Grand Canyon - 3 hours.

Your discovery of Native American heritage and culture continues today as you head west through the Hopi Reservation. The Hopi is Arizona's oldest tribe, first arriving in the region around 1,200 AD and making their home on three mesas (hill tops) which they have been continuously inhabited ever since. Known for their strong religious beliefs, many Hopi still observe a cycle of ceremonies which follow the lunar calendar including the Spring Bean Planting Ceremony and the Home Dance Ceremony of the summer.

A couple of hours drive from Chinle brings you to First Mesa and the small villages of Sichomovi and neighbouring Walpi, which is thought to be the oldest of all the Hopi settlements. In the village hall of Sichomovi, you'll meet a local Hopi resident and together make a walking tour of Walpi. Few Hopi live in Walpi all year round now - the village perches quite precariously some 300 feet above the valley floor and is without running water, but one or two hardy souls remain. A number of ceremonial kivas are carefully maintained and some of the older homes are now being renovated for seasonal use. As well as learning about the life and traditions of the Hopi people you'll doubtless have the chance to purchase some of the traditional handicrafts, including carved Kachina dolls, which represent the life giving spirits revered by the Hopi. A short drive on from

Walpi brings you to Second Mesa. You will probably have lunch here and then visit the Hopi Cultural Centre which houses a small museum. From Second Mesa it's around a three hour drive west, crossing the Little Colorado River to reach the eastern entrance to Grand Canyon National Park, at Desert View.

The first sight of the Grand Canyon is one likely never forgotten. The travel writer Pete McCarthy once declared it the one place on the planet that actually managed not just to live up to all of the associated hyperbole, but to actually exceed it. The scale of the canyon is simply immense. Over a mile deep, 10 or more miles across and 227 river miles long. There is a watchtower at Desert View from which you will be able to take in your first view of the canyon and capture the first of no doubt countless photographs. From Desert View the road follows the south rim of the Canyon, with occasional lay-bys, offering further views into the canyon. Just before Grand Canyon Village which has a collection of visitor services including bookshops, gift shops etc, you turn south to reach the small town of Tusayan, at the south entrance to the National Park. Tusayan is the main lodging area serving the Grand Canyon with a range of hotels and restaurants for visitors. It's just a stone's throw from the park entrance and less than 10 minutes' drive from the south rim itself.

Overnight: Red Feather Lodge or Similar, Grand Canyon (Meals: B L)

Day 10: Grand canyon National Park. Day walk to Plateau Point 19.7km/12.4miles, 951m/3,120ft each of ascent and descent.

During sunrise and sunset, when the canyon walls take on fantastic rich, deep hues of red and gold, are the best times to view the canyon. So this morning, for those that wish, the day begins with a sunrise viewing. One advantage of seeing the sun rise over the canyon is the clarity of the views. Daytime temperatures rise so the longer distance views can become obscured by haze and air pollution. In order to play their part in reducing air pollution the National Park Service operate a shuttle bus service to help limit the number of cars on the rim-side roads. Although you will use your usual transport to enter and leave the park during your stay it is likely that you will use the park shuttle service to get to and from the trailheads.



Today you take a guided walk down into the canyon, along one of the most celebrated paths; The Bright Angel Trail, named after the geological fault it follows through the limestone cliffs. Few visitors who visit the canyon ever actually descend below the rim and even those who do often don't tread more than a short distance. Certainly, once you have passed the first of two rest-houses (toilet blocks) on this trail, you are likely to be well away from any crowds. The first part of the walk takes you steeply down on a series of tight zigzags. The path is good, but stony underfoot and you may need to occasionally keep to one side (the uphill/cliff side) to allow the mules that take supplies and visitors in and out of the canyon, to pass. After around 6 miles of walking and a descent of another series of zigzags known as "Jacob's Ladder", the trail becomes less steep and you reach a broad plateau - formed from the curiously named Tonto strata of rock. A further mile and a half then brings you to a welcome shaded 'oasis', Indian Garden. The spring here was used by the Havasupai Indians who once farmed this area, although the cottonwood trees were specifically planted to offer visitors shade in the early 1900s. If you wish you can rest at Indian Garden whilst the more energetic continue on for a further one and a half miles to reach Plateau Point, a viewpoint overlooking the Colorado River, a further 1,400ft below.

The rule of thumb, promoted by the National Park, is that walkers should expect it to take twice as long to hike up out of the canyon, as it does to hike down. Although keen walkers might find this quite a conservative estimate, it is an ascent of over 3,000ft to regain the crest of the south rim from Plateau Point so it's important to allow plenty of time for the hike out.

Before heading back to your hotel for the night, there should be time to pay a visit to Kolb Studio, located near the Bright Angel trail head. The Kolb brothers, Emery and Ellsworth, built their home, photographic studio and laboratory, right on the canyon edge in 1904. In 1912 the brothers found fame by making the first cine-film of a descent of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, rapids and all. Emery Kolb showed the movie at the studio every day from 1915 until his death in 1976. Today the studio houses a bookshop and a rolling programme of photographic exhibitions.

Overnight: Red Feather Lodge or Similar, Grand Canyon (Meals: B L)

Day 11: Walk along the West Rim Trail of the Grand Canyon - up to 8 miles/12.9km, negligible ascent/descent). Afternoon at leisure in Tusayan .

This morning there's a further opportunity to watch the sun rise from the South Rim and then time to hike along the west rim of the canyon. From Grand Canyon Village the eight mile 'West Rim Trail' leads along the canyon edge to Hermit's Rest, taking in four major viewpoints along the way: Maricopa Point, Hopi Point, Mohave Point and Pima Point. Each of these viewing areas offers superb vistas of the canyon but the best is saved 'till last, with Hermit's Rest offering what many consider the finest of all views in the Park. The small stone building at Hermit's Rest was built by renowned local architect Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter in 1914, as a rest stop for stagecoach passengers taking tours along the West Rim. Colter was responsible for the design of a number of the Grand Canyon's landmark buildings, including the Watchtower seen when you entered the Park, and the Bright Angel Hotel.

You return to Grand Canyon Village using the shuttle bus. There will be some free time and you will be able to visit the Grand Canyon visitor centre. You will then return to your lodge at Tusayan and the afternoon is free for you to perhaps do a bit of shopping or visit the Imax theatre for a stunning look at the Grand Canyon on the big screen.

The Grand Canyon airstrip is located just outside Tusayan and it is possible to arrange an overflight of the Grand Canyon from here. This would be payable locally and if you speak to your guide earlier in the tour he will help to get this arranged.

Overnight: Red Feather Lodge or Similar, Grand Canyon (Meals: B L)

Day 12: Drive to Sedona - 2 hours. Walk Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte loop - 4½ miles.

This morning you leave the Grand Canyon behind and make the 100 mile drive south to Sedona. On the way you will stop off in the attractive college town of Flagstaff for a coffee break. Continuing to Sedona you enjoy a scenic drive through a narrow canyon with vertical walls, verdant green trees and even a babbling brook. The scenery may look quite familiar in places as this area was used as a backdrop for many westerns and you can easily imagine a posse of cowboys or outlaws riding out across the red desert sands.



Upon arrival you will drop your bags off at your hotel and drive to the trailhead for today's walk around the Courthouse Butte. Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte are two prominent sandstone peaks at the south edge of Sedona's red rock formations. The loop has good views of both buttes from all directions, and of higher cliffs to the north, while encountering varying terrain of rocky terraces, dry washes, light woodland and flower-filled grassland.

After your walk you return to your hotel and there will be time to take a dip in the inviting pool or just relax on the sun terraces.

Overnight: Sky Rock Inn, Sedona (Meals: B L)

Day 13: Oak Creek Walk - 6.4 miles. Time at leisure in Sedona.

Today you will walk the best trail in the Sedona area, along the lower end of the west fork of Oak Creek. The route follows a stream that flows through a deep, forested canyon which is quite narrow in places, with many pretty eroded rock formations and plentiful wildlife. Along the way you will pass through the site of a ruined settlement, with overgrown remnants of fireplaces and stone floors still visible. There is also an unusual cliff house; all structures are part of the early 20th century dwelling of Mayhew Lodge, long since abandoned.

The canyon is hundreds of feet deep and moderately narrow from the start; wooded, overgrown and shaded with many fallen trees and old logs, often lying in the stream. The path crosses the creek many times. Wildlife is plentiful with many colourful birds and butterflies, squirrels and lizards to look out for along the way. Red is the dominant rock colour - most of the cliffs are of reddish-orange Coconino sandstone, with white Kaibab limestone much higher up. The sandstone rocks are multi-layered, often eroded into many curving shapes and with frequent short, tunnel-like passages, similar to the famous Subway of Zion National Park. Occasionally the creek has pools 3-4 feet deep which harbour trout and other fish. The stream flows gently, and the hike is beautiful and relaxing.

After your walk, the day is yours to enjoy the many shops, galleries, cafes and bars of Sedona before returning to your hotel.

Overnight: Sky Rock Inn, Sedona (Meals: B L)

Day 14: Morning visit to Red Rock State Park with optional nature walk. Drive to Las Vegas - 4 hours.

This morning you will visit Red Rock State park a 286 acre nature preserve and environmental education centre with gorgeous scenery. Trails wind through manzanita and juniper to reach the rich banks of Oak Creek, whilst verdant meadows are framed by native vegetation and hills of red rock. A pretty creek meanders through the park, creating a diverse riparian habitat abounding with plants and wildlife.



You will have the option of joining the guided nature walk that departs at 9am from the visitor centre or you can explore the network of trails that leave from the visitor centre. The property was acquired by the Arizona State Parks Board in 1986 and the park was opened to the public in 1991. The land was at one time part of the Smoke Trail Ranch, owned by Jack and Helen Frye. September is a great time to visit this park as this is the time the Monarch butterflies undergo a rigorous, long-range migration to their overwintering sites in Mexico and California. Late September is the time they typically move through the state and hopefully a large number will pass through Red Rock State Park.

After your visit you make the return journey to Las Vegas which will feel a complete culture shock after your time spent amidst the many natural wonders of the region. However, a visit to the Strip is an experience not to be missed. Since the 1980s, hotel and casino companies have been engaged in an increasingly garish and outrageous game of 'anything you can do we can do better.' In addition to the Pyramid and Sphinx of the Luxor Hotel, there's the mini city-scape of New York (complete with Statue of Liberty) along the road there's the Paris Hotel, the opulent Bellagio, celebrated Caesar's Palace and across the street the Venetian - complete with gondolas to deliver you from the pavement to check in or the ubiquitous shopping mall. When the sun goes down the entire strip is a cascade of neon and laser light shows, and there are numerous musicals, shows and glitzy restaurants to give you a final night to remember.

Overnight: Mardi Gras Hotel or Golden Nugget Hotel, Las Vegas (Meals: B L)

Day 15: Time at leisure. Group transfer to airport for flight to London.

Flight schedule permitting there may be time this morning for some souvenir shopping and a further wander along the Strip, before transferring to Las Vegas airport for your return flight to the UK.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 16: Arrive UK.

Our grading system

Walking the Grand Canyon & American Wild West is graded as a Moderate trekking holiday, as described below.

Moderate

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ A local driver/guide
- ✓ Services of local Native guides at Canyon de Chelly and Hopi Mesas
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation in main towns, on twin share basis
- ✓ Best available lodging in outlying areas, on twin share basis
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ National Park entrance fees
- ✓ Breakfast and lunches are provided throughout
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ USA airport departure taxes
- ✗ Optional 4WD drive in Monument Valley - prices start from around \$75 per person
- ✗ Optional overflight of the Grand Canyon
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ 14 x evening meals, and lunch on day 15

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Mardi Gras Hotel or Golden Nugget Hotel, Las Vegas

The Mardi Gras Hotel is located a short walk from the north end of the famous Las Vegas Strip and a monorail stop. Although a small, homely hotel by Vegas standards the rooms are still spacious and have free Wi-Fi. The hotel has an outdoor pool with sunloungers plus a casino, bar and full-service restaurant. We may occasionally use the Golden Nugget Hotel instead. This famous Vegas property is situated on Fremont Street where there are numerous casinos, shops and attractions. It is a large hotel with several dining options, a pool complex and a casino. Well-appointed rooms come with a full range of amenities.



Holiday Inn Express Springdale, Zion Park

The Holiday Inn Express Zion Park is located approximately a mile and a half from the entrance to Zion NP in Springdale. The hotel has a relaxed atmosphere and facilities include an open air swimming pool and hot tub. There is a free shuttle bus connecting the hotel to the town.



Best Western Plus Ruby's Inn, Bryce

Ruby's Inn is the successor to Bryce's oldest lodging for visitors - its name is now applied to the small collection of amenities and shops that now cater to visitors to the Park. The Inn has a dedicated National Park shuttle bus stop and a swimming pool/spa complex.



Aarchway Inn, Moab

Located just a couple of miles from Arches National Park, the Aarchway Inn offers a good standard of accommodation and pleasant outdoor areas set amidst the red rocks of the surrounding parkland.



Holiday Inn Chinle or Thunderbird Lodge, Canyon De Chelly

You'll stay at the Canyon de Chelly Holiday Inn at nearby Chinle, the main restaurant, café and reception of which are built in adobe style. There is a good sized outdoor swimming pool in the garden.



Red Feather Lodge or Similar, Grand Canyon

In Tusayan you will stay at the Red Feather Lodge, just 1 mile from the Grand Canyon National Park South Rim entrance. This hotel offers comfortable, contemporary lodging with good amenities including a swimming pool, on site laundry and free wi-fi. Alternatively, you will stay at Holiday Inn Express.



Sky Rock Inn, Sedona

This attractive, adobe style hotel is located on a hilltop just a mile west of downtown Sedona with superb views of the surrounding red rock landscape. The hotel has an excellent range of facilities including a pool, hot tub and large promenade decks, and it offers a complimentary buffet breakfast. The generous, modern rooms come complete with a mini fridge, a tea/coffee maker and free Wi-Fi.

Meal arrangements

Breakfast and lunch are provided until departure from Las Vegas after breakfast on Day 15.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

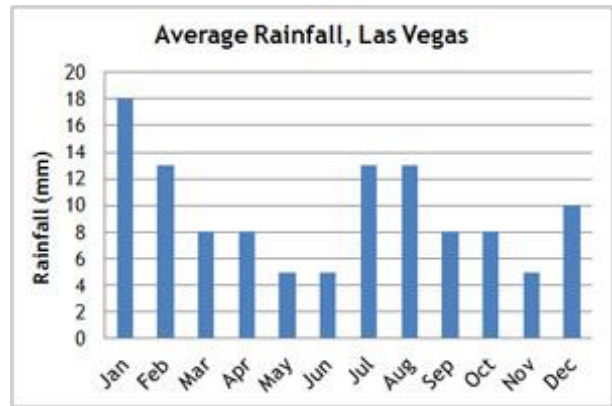
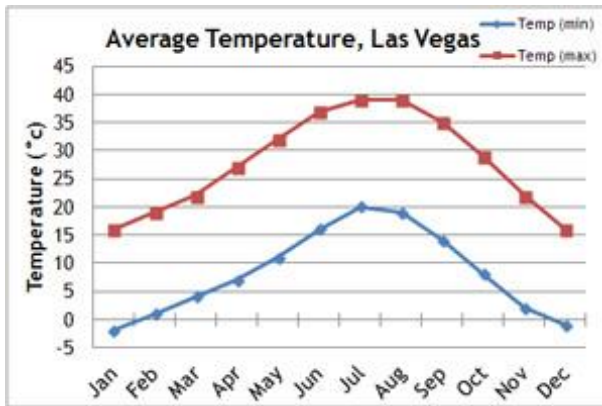
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



There are many ways you can extend your holiday in the States with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- The American Southwest is a region rich in both scenic and cultural interest. We have specially designed this itinerary so that you will see many of the region's most important natural highlights as well as Native American sites.
- We include a good walk on virtually every day of the itinerary.
- Your holiday will be led by a professional local guide who will be delighted to share their expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of their home country. At Canyon de Chelly you will also be accompanied by a native tribal guide.
- The hotels and lodges we use have been selected for their location and comfort. We have kept the number of one-night stays to a minimum, in order to help you relax and enjoy your holiday.
- We have a maximum group size of just 12, which greatly enhances the adventure experience and reduces the negative aspects often associated with larger groups.
- We have a wealth of travel experience at Mountain Kingdoms with a team of friendly and knowledgeable travel experts. If you have any questions about any aspect of this holiday please don't hesitate to give us a call on 01453 844400 or email info@mountainkingdoms.com.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



Thank you for an enjoyable and adventurous trip. The range of sightseeing, walking, Indian culture and general immersion in all the different parks and canyons was very enjoyable and informative.
-Mrs R, Wales

Comfortable transport, good organisation by our Tour Leader, who was always willing to help. Good accommodation and excellent itinerary.
- Mr T, Cumbria



Seamless service; literature comprehensive and delivered in timely fashion.
- Mr F, Hampshire

We had a fabulous holiday and it was amazing to find each National Park different, with a separate special interest; was well organised.
- Mr & Mrs T, Newark

All aspects good - no praise too high!
- Mr A , London

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

