

# best of the west



## trip highlights

- Discover San Francisco on a fun city tour
- Marvel at the larger-than-life views of Grand Canyon National Park
- Witness the soaring cliffs of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park
- Enjoy incredible day hikes in Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks
- Walk among the red rock pillars of Monument Valley
- Take in sweeping vistas of Death Valley National Park
- Walk the trail to Horseshoe Bend
- Feel dwarfed by the Worlds biggest trees - the Sequoias
- Revel in the mountain scenery near Mammoth



Trip Duration	14 days	Trip Code: NPX
Grade	Adventure touring	
Activities	Adventure Touring, Day Walking	
Summary	14 day trip, 11 nights hotel, 2 nights tent cabin	

## welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Best of the West trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience.

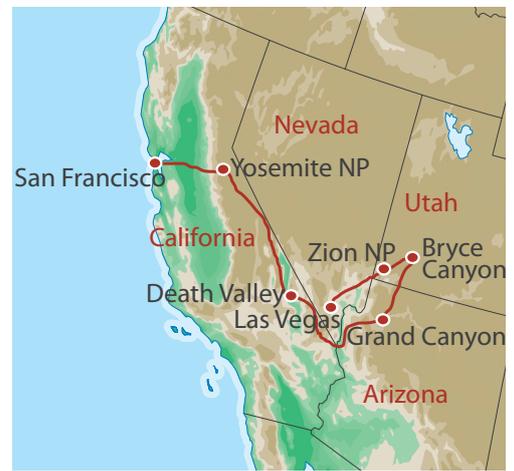
## why travel with World Expeditions?

Our US operators have the experience and enthusiasm to ensure an amazing trip. Our local guides provide excellent value for money. Our group size is small, never exceeding a maximum number of 14 plus guide. Our private vehicles are well maintained and comfortable. We use a mixture of accommodation on this trip, including hotels, cabins or camping that are chosen for their location. Compare our prices, the quality of our hotels and all our inclusions and we feel that few trips can compare in terms of value for money. In addition responsible travel is important to us. Our company was 'Highly Commended' for Best in a Mountain Environment in the Responsible travel awards. Given our local knowledge, experience and leadership, we are quite sure that this trip will be the trip of a lifetime.



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World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

## the trip

It would be hard to improve on this spectacular itinerary combining visits and optional day walks in Arizona, California and Utah's most spectacular National Parks with some optional walks into and around the Grand Canyon and time in the cities of San Francisco and Las Vegas. This is the best of Western USA visiting 4 States and 6 National Parks. During our 14 day trip we explore the trails of Yosemite to view immense glacier carved walls of soaring granite, such as Lembert Dome (2880m) and the famous Half Dome (2680m). We'll ogle at the world's biggest trees, the ancient Sequoias, before continuing to Mammoth with its hot springs. Following a short visit to Death Valley we journey deep into Utah and explore the ancient landscapes at Monument Valley, Bryce Canyon National Park, Zion National Park and view the deep blue waters of Lake Powell. This iconic trip is completed with two days at Grand Canyon National Park.

PLEASE NOTE: DUE TO OVERCROWDING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS PARKING IS AT TIMES IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND. IN THIS CASE THE TOUR DIRECTOR MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE THE GROUP AT THE ENTRANCE AND TRY TO FIND PARKING. IN THIS CASE SOME HIKES WOULD BE SELF GUIDED.

## about your leader/escort

All of our USA tour leaders are certified in First Aid and CPR and registered as official guides with the national parks. All of them are trained to guide hikes. Most are bilingual and many of our departures are conducted in English as well as one other language (typically German or Spanish). Your tour leader is from the USA and may have grown up here or may have moved here from another country - As many Americans do!

## at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO
DAY 2	WALKING TOUR OF SAN FRANCISCO
DAY 3	GOLDEN GATE AND GIANT SEQUOIA TREES
DAY 4	YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK AND BEAR WATCHING
DAY 5	HIKING IN TUOLUMNE MEADOW, BODIE STATE PARK AND MONO LAKE
DAY 6	DEATH VALLEY
DAY 7	TO GRAND CANYON
DAY 8	AT THE GRAND CANYON
DAY 9	MONUMENT VALLEY WITH NAVAJO NATIVE AMERICANS
DAY 10	HORSESHOE BEND AND ANTELOPE CANYON
DAY 11	BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK
DAY 12	TO ZION NATIONAL PARK
DAY 13	HIDDEN TRAILS & DINOTRACKS AT SNOW CANYON STATE PARK
DAY 14	IN LAS VEGAS, TRIP CONCLUDES

## additional deposits required

In addition to the standard World Expeditions deposit, a tour operator deposit of the equivalent of US\$720 in your local currency is required at time of booking. The deposit is non refundable in the event of cancellation or transfer to another trip or date. We recommend you take out travel insurance at the time of booking.

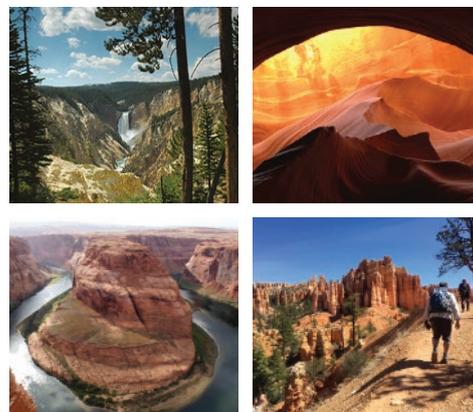
## what's included

- 13 breakfasts, 12 picnic lunches
- 11 nights accommodation in 3 star hotels with private facilities, 2 nights tent cabins
- Private transport



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## trip dates

**2020**  
05 Jul - 18 Jul **IT2**  
18 Jul - 31 Jul **IT1**  
02 Aug - 15 Aug **IT2**  
15 Aug - 28 Aug **IT1**  
30 Aug - 12 Sep **IT2**  
12 Sep - 25 Sep **IT1**  
27 Sep - 10 Oct **IT2**  
10 Oct - 23 Oct **IT1**  
20 Dec - 02 Jan **IT2,1**

**2021**  
01 May - 14 May **IT1**  
16 May - 29 May **IT2**  
29 May - 11 Jun **IT1**  
13 Jun - 26 Jun **IT2**  
11 Jul - 24 Jul **IT2**  
24 Jul - 06 Aug **IT1**  
08 Aug - 21 Aug **IT2**  
21 Aug - 03 Sep **IT1**  
05 Sep - 18 Sep **IT2**  
18 Sep - 01 Oct **IT1**  
03 Oct - 16 Oct **IT2**  
16 Oct - 29 Oct **IT1**  
19 Dec - 01 Jan **IT2,1**

## important notes

**IT1** - Trip starts in San Francisco

**IT2** - Trip starts in Las Vegas

**1** - Christmas departure with slightly amended itinerary day 9-12. Amended itinerary will be added shortly.

- Services of an experienced, multi-lingual driver-guide
- National park entry fees & sightseeing as specified

## what's not included

- Cost of laundry, soft drinks & alcoholic beverages
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Flights, airport taxes, and airport transfers
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Visas
- Medical treatment
- Personal expenses
- Optional excursions
- Tour leader tip (approx USD7-10 per day)
- Half Dome hikes require a permit. These permits have to be reserved by the clients well in advance of their trip, via internet at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). Guides cannot reserve these hikes in advance.

## detailed itinerary

### DAY 1 Arrival in San Francisco

Upon arrival into San Francisco it is recommended that you clear customs and take the shuttle bus (approx US\$20 per person) to the group hotel specified in your final tour voucher. You will meet with your group leader and other members of the group at 8am the following morning when the group briefing will take place. NB: If you wish to spend more time in San Francisco then we are able to book additional nights for you.

Overnight: Whitcomb Hotel or similar.

meals: NIL

### DAY 2 Walking Tour of San Francisco

San Francisco is amongst one of the USA's most cosmopolitan and atmospheric cities. Located on the bay its suburbs are linked by a series of expansive bridges, one of those being the famous Golden Gate Bridge. Trams run major routes along the foreshore and into the hilly heights in a city where quaint wooden houses contrast sharply with the sophistication of modern skyscrapers. In the morning we explore the city on foot (3-4 hours) and cable car, and explore its hidden wonders as well as all the famous sights, such as Union Square, Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf. Last but not least we enjoy amazing views from Coit Tower. You will be given a day pass for the cable car allowing you to explore the city in the afternoon on your own. In the afternoon we recommend a harbour cruise on the bay (boat tours are not included, various fees apply), a tour of Alcatraz (recommend booking in advance) or a ferry ride to Sausalito (optional).

City tour: approx. 3-4 hours, 2-3 miles / 4-7 km, elevation difference: +/-100 m

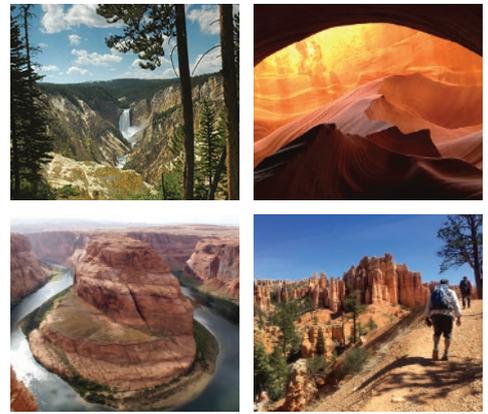
meals: B,L

### DAY 3 Golden Gate and Giant Sequoia Trees

This morning we depart San Francisco via the famous Golden Gate Bridge, providing the opportunity to walk across for those who wish to savour the views. We will then head for the amazing grove of giant Sequoia, the world's largest trees where we enjoy a leisurely walk amongst the giants. We continue onto the Yosemite Valley where we stay in tent cabins in the heart of Yosemite Valley at Half Dome Village,

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## fast facts

### Countries Visited:

United States of America

### Visas:

Yes\*

### Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

### Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip\*

### Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip\*

### Leader:

Expert local leader

### Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

the hub of activity in the valley. The accommodation here is in rustic twin share tent cabins with beds and communal bathrooms. The benefit of this accommodation is the direct access to hiking trails for those who wish to hike Half Dome. Depending on availability of the tent cabins, some groups may be staying at nearby motel - Additional drive time would apply.

Drive time approx 4-5 hrs, 250 miles / 400 km  
meals: B,L

## DAY 4 Yosemite National Park and bear watching

Yosemite National Park which was established in 1890 in the Sierra Nevada, encompasses stunning mountain vistas and valleys housing meadows and forests (including groves of giant sequoias) surrounded by high cliffs and waterfalls. The forest of giant Sequoias, the world's biggest trees and the soaring cliffs of Half Dome are just some of the highlights of the park. During our days in the park several options are offered. For those wanting to climb Half Dome (2680m) you can do so self-guided, as long as you have obtained the permits well in advance (permits must be obtained through Park's online lottery system in March\*), or for others there is a more leisurely option to drive up to Glacier Point, the most impressive view point in the park. From here we can marvel at the valley as well as the impressive walls of Half Dome. There are three very different walks offered at this point each varying in difficulty; two of them descend down into the valley while the third traces the rim of the valley. In the evening we may also have the opportunity to look for wildlife such as bears and coyotes.

Panorama Trail from Glacier Point (4-6 hrs, ca. 7 miles / 12 km, +200m/900m)

Four Mile Trail (4-5 hrs, ca 6 miles / 10 km, -900m)

Sentinel Dome & Taft Point Loop (ca 4 hrs, ca 6 miles / 10 km, +/- 200m)

\*Half Dome (8-10 hrs, ca 13 miles / 20 km, +/- 1500m) -- Please visit <https://www.recreation.gov> - "Cables on Half Dome" to obtain permits and reserve your self-guided hike. Tour operators are not allowed to reserve this for you and there are only 225 permits per day.

meals: B,L

## DAY 5 Hiking in Tuolumne Meadow, Bodie State Park and Mono Lake

In the morning, we depart Yosemite National Park via Tioga Pass, crossing over the Sierra Nevada Mountains at 10,000 feet (3048 m). Time and weather permitting, we may hike and scramble to the top of Lembert Dome, offering expansive views over the Tuolumne Meadow. We then continue our journey down rutted dirt roads to Bodie State Park, a remote gold rush era town in the high desert and one of the most famous ghost towns in the West. The day will conclude with a short exploration of Mono Lake, one of the world's oldest lakes, famous for its white Tufa towers formed by hot springs.

Drive time: 180 miles / 280 km or 4 hrs

Lembert Dome: 3 hrs, approx. 5 miles / 8 km, elevation difference: +/-300 m

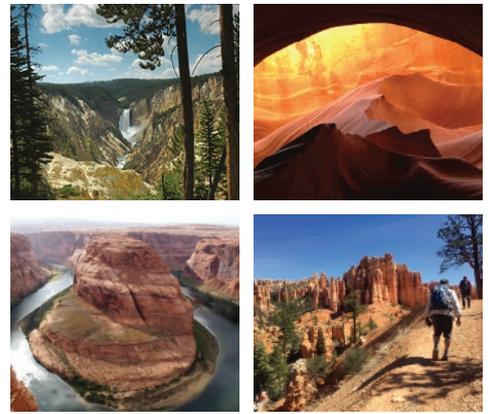
Note: Trips starting before the end of May or in late October may have to detour via Sonora Pass due to snow closure on Tioga Pass Road in Yosemite National Park.

Tioga Pass generally opens Memorial Day, which is the last weekend in May. It closes with the first heavy snow of the year.

meals: B,L

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## thoughtful travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

## trip grading Adventure touring

This trip has been graded adventure touring and includes a series of day walks to explore the national parks of western USA. The trails used are well defined and the walking distance will generally not exceed 3-6 hours.

However there are stages of the trip which are certainly more demanding including the descent from Glacier Point in Yosemite and the descent/ascent into the Grand Canyon where the vertical distance will be around 800m. Walkers should carry walking sticks to assist with steep ascents and descents, particularly if you have a history of back or knee problems. The touring component of the trip is fast paced with long drives on some days. However, the vehicle will be air-conditioned and relatively comfortable, and the scenery quite stunning. It is well worth taking the time to prepare physically and mentally for the journey in order to get the most out of the trip. We suggest that you undertake regular exercise – power walking, swimming or cycling three times a week for at least three months prior to your departure.

It is also a good idea to take in some day walks in hilly areas near to your home to prepare yourself for walking with a day pack.

### DAY 6 Death Valley

This morning we drive to Death Valley National Park where more than 3.3 million acres of spectacular desert scenery, rare desert wildlife, complex geology, undisturbed wilderness and sites of historical interest abound. This area is known for extreme weather conditions and temperatures, and is one of the hottest places on earth. In summer, temperatures can reach 50° Celsius. Additionally, being in a rift valley, Death Valley is also the lowest location in the Western Hemisphere at 100 m below sea level. We explore the golden sand dunes which contrast with the stark brown and black hillsides, Badwater with its poisonous springs, the Devil's Golf Course formed by salt deposits and the colourful formations at Zabriskie Point. If time and weather permit, there is also an optional walk through the Badlands.

Badlands: 2-3 hrs, ca. 3 miles/ 5 km, elevation difference: +/- 200m

Drive time: 240 miles / 400 km or approx. 4 hr

meals: B,L

### DAY 7 To Grand Canyon

In the morning, we travel via Route 66 through the hot deserts of Nevada and into the world famous Grand Canyon. The opportunity for a breathtaking helicopter flight over the Grand Canyon (not included, flights start at approx. \$180) will be available. Our hotel is located close to the entrance of the park.

Drive time approx 5 hours, 320 miles / 500 km

meals: B,L

### DAY 8 At the Grand Canyon

We have all day to spend at this amazing sight. The Grand Canyon is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site and although plenty of tourists visit the area, few hit the trails. If you prefer, you can hike into the canyon to Plateau Point or walk along the West Rim, where incredible views await. There will be time to enjoy an unforgettable sunset.

\*Note: Hikes in Grand Canyon National Park are self-guided due to permit regulations.

Kaibab Ridge: 3-4 hrs, approx. 3 miles/ 5 km, elevation difference: +/-300 m

Plateau Point: 8-12 hrs, approx. 12 miles/ 20 km, elevation difference: +/-1150 m

Hike along the rim: up to 4 hrs, up to 8 miles/ 13 km, elevation difference: +/-50 m

meals: B,L

### DAY 9 Monument Valley with Navajo Native Americans

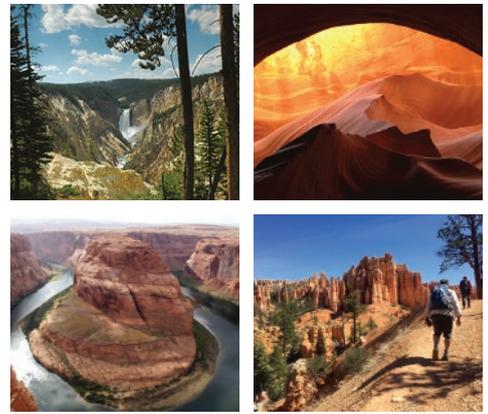
In the morning, we depart via the east entrance, stopping to see the sights of the East Rim, and head for the world famous Monument Valley of the Navajo tribe. Here giant rock domes and mesas rise out of the valley into the blue sky, offering impressive photo opportunities. For decades, the area has been used by Hollywood as a favorite movie backdrop. We highly recommend an unforgettable Jeep tour with the Navajos through the valley (not included, approx. \$70) to hidden beauty spots such as "Ear of the Wind" and "Big Hogan". From here, after a short drive, we reach Lake Powell, where we spend the night in Page, AZ.

Drive time: approx. 300 miles / 450 km or 5 hrs

meals: B,L

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## adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

## important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price.

### DAY 10 Horseshoe Bend and Antelope Canyon

After an early breakfast, we depart towards Page and the Lake Powell area. On our way we will stop to walk the short trail to famous Horseshoe Bend. After taking in the stunning views we continue to the next highlight. Lake Powell was created through the damming of the Colorado River. Here dark blue waters reflect sheer red stone towers in an amazing colour, offering unforgettable impressions. We have most of the day to explore the area with a range of optional activities such as a jeep tour to Antelope Canyon, "the" classic slot canyon (allow US\$70). Antelope Canyon is known for its incredible rock formations, colours and lights and is one of the most photographed slot canyons in the world. In the late afternoon we drive to our next destination, Bryce Canyon.

Overnight Bryce View Lodge or similar.

Drive time approx 3 hours, 150miles / 240km

meals: B,L

### DAY 11 Bryce Canyon National Park

For many visitors Bryce Canyon ranks among the most beautiful in the USA. A full day has been reserved to explore the surreal formations that characterise the park where erosion has shaped colourful Clarion limestones, sandstones and mudstones into thousands of spines, fins, pinnacles and mazes. Hiking trails wind through red and pink stone towers glowing in the sunlight. The colour contrast between the red rocks, green of the pines and blue of the sky delight every photographer and nature lover. The hike today is Queens Garden. Additional walks are available. Also for those wanting to explore the formations on horseback can do so (approximately \$65, not included).

Overnight: Bryce View Lodge or similar.

Queens Garden / Peek-A-Loop: 5 hrs, approx 8 miles / 13 km, Elevation difference: +/- 300m

meals: B,L

### DAY 12 To Zion National Park

In the morning, we drive to the spectacular Zion National Park where you may take a hike to Angel's Landing (self-guided), a huge sandstone dome that rises over the narrow valley of the Virgin River offering unforgettable views. If you wish, you can hike all the way to the top. Time permitting, we may rent river boots and wade through the famous Narrows of the Virgin River. We then drive on to our next destination, St George near Snow Canyon State Park.

Drive time: approx. 120 m / 190 km or 2.5 hrs

Angel's Landing: 4-5 hrs, approx. 5 miles / 8 km, elevation difference: +/-450 m

Narrows: 1-2 hrs, approx. 2-3 miles / 3-5 km, elevation difference: +/-0 m

meals: B,L

### DAY 13 Hidden trails & Dinotracks at Snow Canyon State Park

Today, we hike over beautiful slick rock, past a lava tube and across moqui marbles. Then we marvel at the remarkable dinosaur footprints. We then drive the final leg of our adventure into Las Vegas.

Overnight: La Quinta or similar.

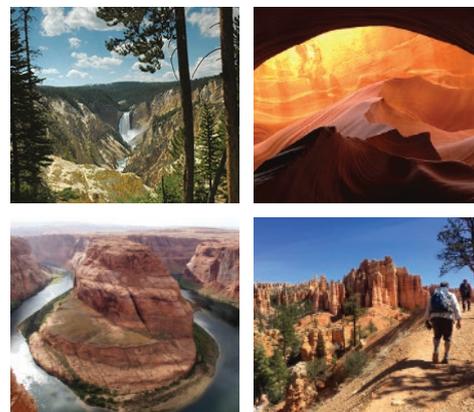
Drive time: approx. 100 miles / 160 km or 2 hr

Lava Tube Loop: 2-3 hrs, approx. 3 miles / 5 km, elevation difference: +/-100 m

meals: B,L

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## DAY 14 In Las Vegas, trip concludes

Departure is at your leisure and the trip concludes upon check out from the hotel before 12 noon. There is a complimentary shuttle from the hotel that you may sign up for at the front desk. Please let us know if you would like to spend additional days in this vibrant city.

PLEASE NOTE: DUE TO OVERCROWDING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS PARKING IS AT TIMES IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND. IN THIS CASE THE TOUR DIRECTOR MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE THE GROUP AT THE ENTRANCE AND TRY TO FIND PARKING. IN THIS CASE SOME HIKES WOULD BE SELF GUIDED.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## itinerary at a glance – Reverse Itinerary commencing in Las Vegas (2)

DAY 1	ARRIVAL IN LAS VEGAS
DAY 2	HIDDEN TRAILS AND DINOTRACKS AT SNOW CANYON STATE PARK
DAY 3	HIKING IN ZION NATIONAL PARK
DAY 4	BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK
DAY 5	HORSESHOE BEND AND ANTELOPE CANYON
DAY 6	EXPLORING MONUMENT VALLEY
DAY 7	INTO THE GRAND CANYON
DAY 8	THROUGH THE DESERT
DAY 9	DEATH VALLEY
DAY 10	MONO LAKE, BODIE STATE PARK & HIKE TUOLUMNE MEADOWS
DAY 11	EXPLORING YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
DAY 12	GIANT SEQUOIA WALK AND TO SAN FRANCISCO
DAY 13	IN SAN FRANCISCO
DAY 14	TRIP CONCLUDES IN SAN FRANCISCO

## detailed itinerary: Reverse Itinerary commencing in Las Vegas (2)

### DAY 1 Arrival in Las Vegas

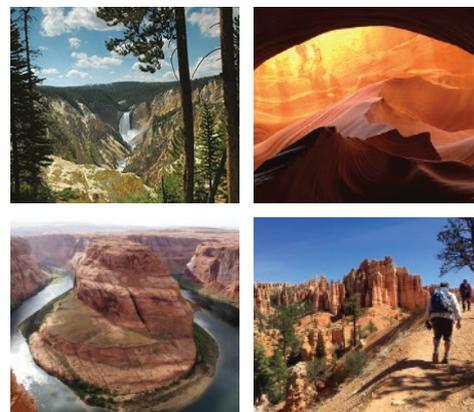
Upon arrival into Las Vegas you will clear customs and make your way to the group hotel specified in your final tour voucher. You will meet with your group leader and other members of the group at 8am the following morning (day 2) when the group briefing will take place.

Overnight: La Quinta Hotel or similar.

meals: NIL

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## DAY 2 Hidden Trails and Dinotracks at Snow Canyon State Park

Your guide will welcome you at the hotel at 8am. Today we will drive to nearby St George. We hike over beautiful slick rock, past a lava tube and across moqui marbles. Then we marvel at the remarkable dinosaur footprints.

Overnight: Ramada St George or similar.

Drive time: 100 miles/160 km or 2 hrs

Lava Tube Loop: 2-3 hrs, approx. 3 miles / 5 km

Elevation difference: +/-100 m

meals: B,L

## DAY 3 Hiking in Zion National Park

Zion National Park is located at the junction of the Colorado Plateau, Great Basin and Mojave desert provinces. It is known for its soaring red cliff walls of deep red sandstone that have been sculptured by the Virgin River and that soar as high as 800 metres.

Today we take the opportunity to explore this dramatic landscape of canyons, domes and soaring cliffs and a hike to the Angel's Landing, a huge sandstone dome rising over the narrow valley of the Virgin River adds a further dimension to our day. If you wish to, you can hike all the way to the top. Time permitting, we will wade through the famous narrows of the Virgin River. In the afternoon we drive to Bryce Canyon in time for an amazing sunset.

Overnight: Bryce View Lodge or similar.

Our hiking options today include:

Angel's Landing (4-5 hrs, ca. 5 miles / 8 km, Elevation difference: +/- 450m) and Narrows (1-2 hrs, ca. 2-3 miles / 3-5 km, Elevation difference: +/- 0m)

Drive time approx 2 hours, 120 miles / 190 km

meals: B,L

## DAY 4 Bryce Canyon National Park

For many visitors Bryce Canyon ranks among the most beautiful in the USA. A full day has been reserved to explore the surreal formations that characterise the park where erosion has shaped colourful Clarion limestones, sandstones and mudstones into thousands of spines, fins, pinnacles and mazes. Hiking trails wind through red and pink stone towers glowing in the sunlight. The colour contrast between the red rocks, green of the pines and blue of the sky delight every photographer and nature lover. The hike today is Queens Garden. Additional walks are available. Also for those wanting to explore the formations on horse back can do so (approximately \$65, not included).

Overnight: Bryce View Lodge or similar.

Queens Garden / Peek-A-Loop: 5 hrs, approx 8 miles / 13 km, Elevation difference: +/- 300m

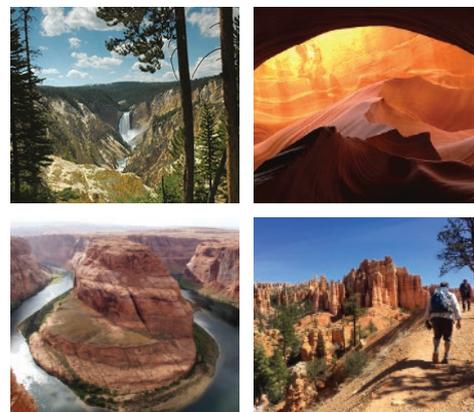
meals: B,L

## DAY 5 Horseshoe Bend and Antelope Canyon

After an early breakfast, we depart towards Page and the Lake Powell area. On our way we will stop to walk the short trail to famous Horseshoe Bend. After taking in the stunning views we continue to Page. Lake Powell was created through the damming of the Colorado River. Here dark blue waters reflect sheer red stone towers in an amazing colour, offering unforgettable impressions. We have most of the day to explore the area with a range of optional activities such as a jeep tour to Antelope Canyon, "the" classic slot canyon (allow US\$70). Antelope Canyon is known for its incredible rock

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formations, colours and lights and is one of the most photographed slot canyons in the world. Time permitting you can also take a boat tour on Lake Powell for an additional fee.

Overnight Quality Inn Page or similar.

Drive time approx 3 hours, 150miles / 240km

meals: B,L

## DAY 6 Exploring Monument Valley

We journey on by road through the Painted Desert to the world famous Monument Valley of the Navajo tribe. Here, giant rock domes and mesas rise out of the valley into the blue sky and offer the opportunity for excellent pictures. For decades, the area has been used by Hollywood as a favourite movie backdrop. We highly recommend an unforgettable jeep tour with the Navajos through the valley (allow approx US\$70) to the hidden beauty spots such as 'Ear of the Wind' and 'Big Hogan'. In the afternoon we head for the Grand Canyon through the Painted Desert, which we reach via the East entrance. We stop to see the sights on the East Rim and are hopefully rewarded with an impressive sunset before heading to our lodge at the entrance to the park.

Drive time approx 5 hours, 300 miles/450km

meals: B,L

## DAY 7 Into the Grand Canyon

We have all day to spend at this amazing sight. The Grand Canyon is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and although plenty of tourists visit the area, few hit the trails. If you prefer you can hike into the canyon to Plateau Point, or follow the leader along the West Rim, where incredible views can be enjoyed. There is time to enjoy another unforgettable sunset.

Kaibab Ridge (3-4 hrs, ca. 3 miles/ 5 km, elevation difference: +/- 300m)

Plateau Point (8-12 hrs, ca. 12 miles/ 20 km, elevation difference: +/- 1150m)

Hike along the rim (up to 4 hrs, up to 8 miles / 13 km, elevation difference: +/- 50m)

\*Note: Hikes in Grand Canyon NP are self-guided due to permit regulations

meals: B,L

## DAY 8 Through the desert

In the morning you have the opportunity for a breathtaking heli flight over the Grand Canyon (optional and approximately US\$200-\$300). Then we travel via Route 66 through the hot deserts of Nevada. Our hotel is close to the entrance of Death Valley National Park.

Drive time approx. 5 hrs, 320miles/500km

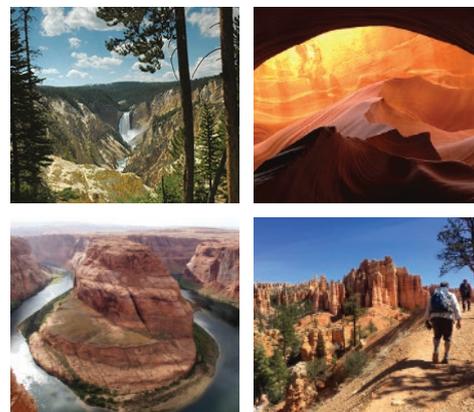
meals: B,L

## DAY 9 Death Valley

This morning we drive to Death Valley National Park. This national park is in stark contrast to the red and green deserts of Utah. Here we encounter extreme weather conditions and temperatures, as this is one of the hottest places on earth. In summer, temperatures can reach 50C. In addition, being in a rift valley, Death Valley is also the lowest location in the Western Hemisphere at 100m below sea level. We explore the golden sand dunes, in contrast with the stark brown and black hillsides, Badwater with its poisonous springs, the Devil's Golf Course formed by salt deposits, and the colorful

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formations at Zabriskie Point. Temperature permitting we hike through the “Badlands”. In the afternoon we continue along the 4400m crest of the Sierra to the small town of Bishop or Mammoth for the night.

Drive time approx. 4 hrs, 240miles/400km

Badlands hike: 2-3 hours, 3 miles/5km, elevation difference +/- 200m

meals: B,L

## DAY 10 Mono Lake, Bodie State Park & hike Tuolumne Meadows

In the morning we explore Mono Lake, one of the world’s oldest lakes. Mono Lake is famous for its white Tufa towers, formed by hot springs. We continue our journey to Bodie State Park, one of the most famous ghost towns in the West. It seems the entire town was suddenly abandoned 150 years ago with all belongings left behind. Finally up Tioga Pass (subject to weather conditions - Sonora Pass will be used as an alternative route), and over the crest of the Sierra Nevada at 3030m we reach Yosemite National Park. Weather permitting we hike to the top of Lembert Dome (2880m), where we enjoy expansive views over Tuolumne Meadow. We reach our accommodation in the heart of Yosemite Valley, in Half Dome Village. Half Dome Village is the hub of activity in the valley. It also provides direct access to all of the hiking trails. We will spend 2 nights in “tent cabins”, which are rustic cabins with beds and bedding, concrete floors, but canvas walls, with communal bathrooms. The benefit of this accommodation is the direct access to hiking trails needed for those wanting to hike Half Dome (2680m). In rare cases the tent cabins are sold out and we will stay at a nearby motel - additional driving applies in this case.

Lembert Dome Hike: 3 hrs, ca 5 miles / 8 km, elevation difference: +/- 300m.

Driving time approx. 4 hrs. 180 miles/280km

NB: May and Oct tours may have to detour via Sonora Pass as Tioga Pass is closed until Memorial Day or later, and closes sometime in Oct/Nov.

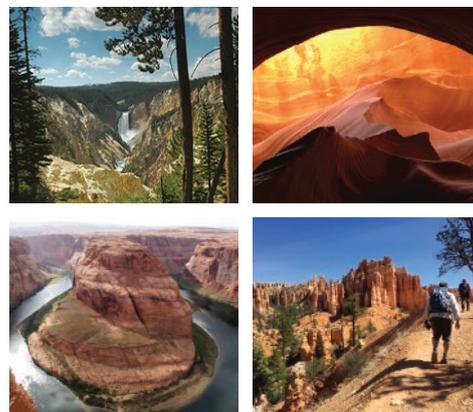
meals: B,L

## DAY 11 Exploring Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park which was established in 1890 in the Sierra Nevada, encompasses stunning mountain vistas and valleys housing meadows and forests (including groves of giant sequoias) surrounded by high cliffs and waterfalls. Our day here offers several options and our accommodations are located in the center of the park. Those wanting to climb Half Dome can leave at 6am to challenge themselves on this peak (Must obtain a permit well in advance of your vacation\*). The rest of the group takes a more leisurely morning and drives up to Glacier Point, the most impressive view point in the park. From here we marvel at the valley as well as the impressive walls of Half Dome. From Glacier Point, 3 very different hikes are offered that are different in length, difficulty and views: two head down to the valley, and one hike along the rim of the valley. We recommend you enjoy the afternoon relaxing in

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the valley, rent a bike and visit the waterfalls, or raft down the Merced river on a hot day enjoying the scenery from a float trip (floating is possible only during certain safe water levels). In the evening we look for bears and coyotes in the apple groves.

Panorama Trail from Glacier Point (4-6 hrs, ca. 7 miles / 12 km, elevation difference: +200m/-900m)

Four Mile Trail (4-5 hrs, ca 6 miles / 10 km, elevation difference: -900m)

Sentinel Dome & Taft Point Loop (ca 4 hrs, ca 6 miles / 10 km, elevation difference: +/-200m).

\*Half Dome (8-10 hrs, ca 13 miles / 20 km, elevation difference: +/- 1500m) -- Please visit [www.nps.gov Yosemite](http://www.nps.gov/Yosemite) - Half Dome to obtain permits and reserve your self-guided hike. Tour operators are not allowed to reserve this for you.

<https://www.recreation.gov> - "Cables on Half Dome" to obtain permits and reserve your self-guided hike. Tour operators are not allowed to reserve this for you and there are only 225 permits per day.

meals: B,L

## DAY 12 Giant Sequoia walk and to San Francisco

In the morning we head for the amazing grove of giant Sequoia and allow for a leisurely walk through an amazing forest of ancient giants. Then we head for San Francisco, draped sinuously over coastal cliffs on the shore of the Pacific Ocean. There is time to walk across the famous Golden Gate Bridge. Our hotel is centrally located.

Overnight: Whitcomb Hotel or similar.

Drive time approx. 4-5 hrs, 250miles/400km

meals: B,L

## DAY 13 In San Francisco

San Francisco is amongst one of the USA's most cosmopolitan and atmospheric cities. Located on the bay its suburbs are linked by a series of expansive bridges, one of those being the famous Golden Gate Bridge. Trams run major routes along the foreshore and into the hilly heights in a city where quaint wooden houses contrast sharply with the sophistication of modern skyscrapers. In the morning we explore the city on foot (3-4 hours) and cable car, and explore its hidden wonders as well as all the famous sights, such as Union Square, Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf. Last but not least we enjoy amazing views from Coit Tower. You will be given a day pass for the cable car allowing you to explore the city in the afternoon on your own. In the afternoon we recommend a harbor cruise on the bay, a tour of Alcatraz (recommend booking in advance) or a ferry ride to Sausalito (optional).

Overnight: Whitcomb Hotel or similar.

City tour (approx. 3-4 hours, ca. 2-3 miles / ca. 4-7 km, elevation difference +/-100 m)

meals: B,L

## DAY 14 Trip concludes in San Francisco

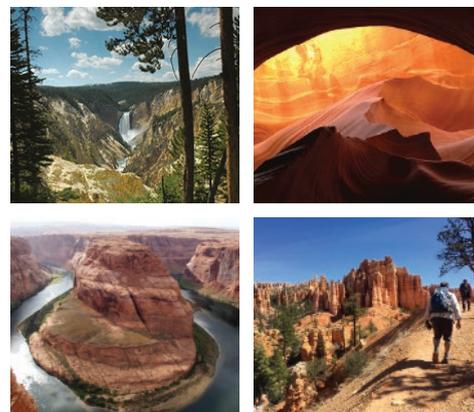
Trip concludes today in San Francisco after breakfast. For those wishing to go to the airport, we recommend you take an airport shuttle to the airport for approx. USD\$15 per person.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

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## country information

The United States is a vast country. However, most of the National Parks are located in the Western part of the country, reducing the area of interest to the walker significantly. The West (anything west of the Rocky Mountains) consists of 10 large states. Two mountain ranges cut the area from north to south along the lines of plate tectonics. While the Pacific Northwest has active cone shaped volcanoes, the rest of the area does not. Here we only see the remnants of ancient volcanic activities – in lava flows, hot springs, volcanic fissures and calderas (Mammoth Lake and Yellowstone). World famous is the area of red rocks known as the “Colorado Plateau”, “Canyon Country” or the “Grand Circle”. This area is the size of the United Kingdom and spans 4 states: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. It is a wonderland of eroded sandstone rock like no where else on earth. Layers of different colored sandstone in hues of red, pink and purple, thousands of feet thick have been exposed by ice age erosion. Glacier run off 12,000 years ago have carved a true wonderland of rocks into these amazing sandstone deposits. These include 800 metre tall sheer dark red cliffs, slot canyons carved by flowing water into sinuous slots, tall mesas rising out of flat valleys and rock spires glowing in hues of pink and purple, arches, formed by frost erosion standing free above an abyss. Although many parks are only 1-2 hours apart, most travelers are utterly amazed at the difference of the scenery in each park, making this area one of the most scenically rewarding area to travel in the world. Major national parks, many of them UNESCO World Heritage Sites, dot the West. Yosemite, Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon must be among the most famous parks in the world. Yet the entire area is protected through numerous wilderness areas, nature preserves, and vast stretches of public land, making the entire area an endless playground for the outdoor minded person. A few paved roads give access to the main points of interest, leaving large stretches of roadless canyon country and mountains that can best be explored on foot.

Last not least, among all the parks and wilderness we find the alluring cities of San Francisco and Las Vegas. San Francisco, the West’s most culturally sophisticated city, is a historic city sinuously draped over rolling hills above the blue pacific. This city resembles the new spirit of the country, a true multicultural melting pot vibrant with local culture and diversity. Las Vegas on the other hand was built to indulge in people’s desires, resembling Hollywood’s dream world and people’s aspirations in one compact location.

## climate

Please be prepared for a wide range of temperatures while on tour. Remember that Western USA experiences a wide range of temperatures, depending not only on season and location but also on altitude. This trip will travel through areas of wide differences in climates. Western USA is as far south as southern Europe, experiencing strong sunshine. Make sure you protect yourself against the strong sun. At altitude, and in spring and autumn, morning temperatures are often brisk or cold, warming up fast after the strong sun rises. Therefore we recommend a layering system for clothing, so you can adapt to the temperature changes without problems. As in most deserts, it is the sun that determines the temperatures, making night time temperatures much colder than daytime.

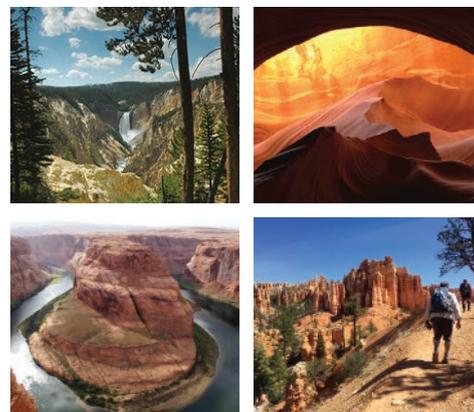
Summer (June – early September) temperatures are always hot. However even at altitude, like in Yosemite, Bryce and Grand Canyon, temperatures can be cold at night and in the morning!

## a typical day

As this is a hotel based journey (except 2 nights of tent cabins) we will be having breakfasts in the hotel restaurants. Starting time for each day varies depending on the season and the program for the day. Typically we will leave the hotel between 7am and 9am depending on the days activities. We then drive to the trailhead for the day’s hike. Drive time could be a few minutes or longer, depending on the park and the location of the hotel. Some of the national parks are huge and therefore require more driving time to get to the best and more scenic trails. We then hike between 3-6 hours, depending on the trail, the park and the destination. We can vary the duration of the

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hike to accommodate the group's fitness levels and the weather conditions. A few self guided hiking options are available, such as Half Dome in Yosemite and the Grand Canyon on well marked trails. As the scenery is outstanding, some of the hiking may be slower due to amount of photos people take. Lunch is carried in your daypack and eaten on the trail in a scenic location or as picnic lunches en route from place to place. Please note that this trip involves some participation, for example preparing your own packed lunch. In the afternoon we often have time to relax, read a book or take part in the optional excursions. Your tour leader knows the locations best and apart from hiking the indicated trail, will also decide what to do in addition to the walks each day - depending on the group's wishes, weather conditions and location.

## dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

## accommodation on the trip

This trip offers 11 nights hotel accommodations in 3-star hotels with private facilities plus 2 nights in tent cabins in Yosemite Valley / Half Dome Village with communal baths. Changes and substitutions are possible if the original accommodation is sold out; this may result in increased drive time.

## pre and post tour accommodation

There is a variety of accommodation available in Las Vegas and San Francisco; prices and advice are available from World Expeditions reservations staff or your travel agent, who will be happy to make any accommodation bookings for you.

## what you carry

During the day hikes on the Best of the West trip you will be required to carry your daypack with extra warm clothing, a rain jacket, water bottle, camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip balm etc.

## equipment required

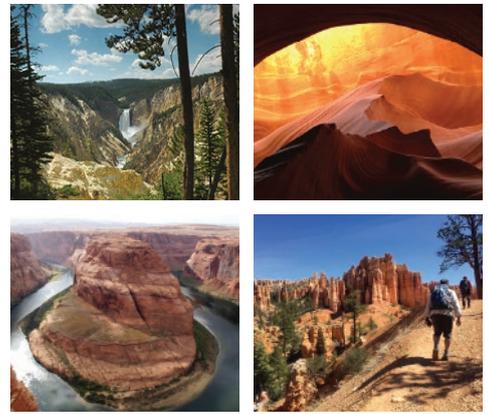
Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## special visa requirements

Many travellers to the USA (including those from Australia, New Zealand & the UK) must have a pre arranged travel entry authorisation in place. This is obtained electronically for passport holders from countries eligible for the Visa Waiver Program. The authorization must be in place prior to arrival to the USA and can be obtained at the following website <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Please consult your World Expeditions reservation consultant if you have any questions regarding your eligibility for the Visa Waiver Program. All other nationalities should check with your nearest embassy or consulate.

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## non exclusive trips

This trip has been operating for over 10 years and is not exclusive to World Expeditions clients. This trip is conducted in English, German, and Spanish. Designated English-only departures are available in certain months beginning in 2017. Should these departures not reach minimum, there will be an option to transfer to a mixed language group, subject to availability. All other departure dates will be conducted in two or more languages.

Please note that everyone on this trip is required to sign a release of liability waiver and assumption of risk form supplied by our local operator. It is a prerequisite before you may join the trip. Please note that this is in addition to the World Expeditions standard terms and conditions. If you would like a copy of this form prior to booking, then please let us know.

## wildlife

Wildlife depends on habitat. In the mountains of California and the Rockies we find: black bear, elk, herds of mule deer, coyote, and the occasional wolf along with a wide range of rodents (marmots, beaver, etc). There are a lot of birds here, including eagles, hawks, jays and blue birds. In the Rockies you are also likely to see herds of wild bison, brown bear, wolf packs, moose, antelopes, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, porcupines, skunks and fox. The Rockies are a birder's paradise, producing birds such as cranes, singing swans, white pelican, bald eagles and many migratory species.

In the desert, wildlife is more elusive. Due to the heat, it is mostly nocturnal. The most common animals to see while hiking are birds: hawks, eagles, vultures, road runners, jays, blue birds, and the majestic California condor. Ground squirrels and deer are often seen near trails. However, with a little luck we will also see coyotes, ring tail cat, cactus mouse. At times groups see mountain lions, bobcats, or the elusive and endangered big horn sheep.

## visas

All travellers will require a valid passport to enter the United States and your passport should still be valid for 6 months after you return from your trip. If you are travelling on more than one passport, please use the same passport for the entire trip. The following information also applies to visitors entering the USA under the Visa Waiver Program (including Australians, New Zealanders, and British):

From 1 April 2016, all travellers wishing to enter the US under the VWP will need to hold a passport with the following criteria:

If your passport was issued before October 26, 2005, it must be 'machine readable' (with 2 lines of letters, numbers and <<< at the bottom)

If your passport was issued between October 26, 2005 and October 25, 2006, it must be machine readable and include a digital photo

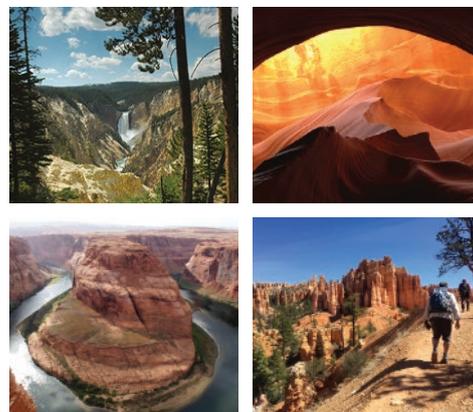
If your passport was issued on or after October 26, 2006, it must be an e-passport with a digital photo and an integrated chip (with this internationally recognised symbol <<http://www.dhs.gov/e-passports>> on the front cover).

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct passport and that there are sufficient blank pages for any visas required and for entry/departure stamps.

Many travellers to the United States (including Australians, New Zealanders and British) entering the country require a prearranged, approved Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA). This is obtained electronically for passport holders from countries eligible for the Visa Waiver Program. Travellers must apply at least 72 hours before departure and it can be obtained at the following official website <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> for a fee of US\$14, payable by credit or debit card. It is very important to make payments through the official website. Visa Waiver travellers who have not obtained approval through ESTA should expect to be denied boarding on any air carrier bound for the United States.

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From 21 January 2016 most people who have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria since March 2011, or are dual nationals of these countries, will no longer qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program and existing ESTAs could be revoked. You will instead need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. Certain exemptions apply on a case-by-case basis. Bottom line: If in doubt, please contact the nearest US Embassy or Consulate.

Please consult your reservation consultant/travel agent if you have any questions regarding your eligibility for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) or the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

All other passport holders should check with the relevant consul.

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit. Visa costs and requirements do change regularly so we suggest you check with your travel agent or World Expeditions reservations consultant. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary visas.

## info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com). Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two.

## private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

## subscribe to our e-newsletter

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## social networking

Connect with us on social

FACEBOOK: [@worldexpeditions](https://www.facebook.com/worldexpeditions)

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YOUTUBE: World Expeditions

Subscribe to our channel at [youtube.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.youtube.com/worldexpeditions)

Share the love

Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

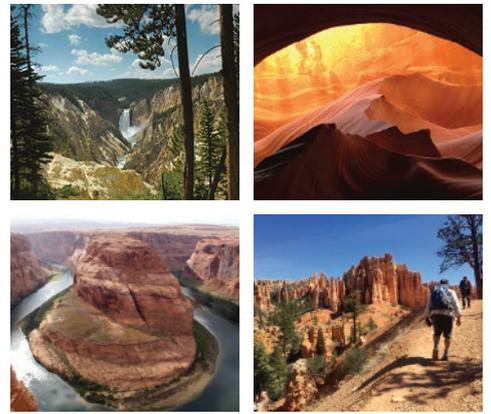
## trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Many of our adventures require us to secure



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services on your behalf; such as trekking permits, train travel and visa invitation letters. The demand is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

## how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form and pay a non refundable deposit which you can do by using our online booking function for most trips, or if you prefer, download a booking form from the website and return to us by fax, or mail your booking form and deposit to your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as competitive airfares to get you to your destination, stopovers, pre or post trip accommodation or any additional tours that you wish to take in conjunction with the main World Expeditions trip.