

South West National Parks of the USA

Trip Code: USA

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk the best day hikes in Joshua Tree, Mojave, Zion, Bryce Canyon and more as we seek out quiet trails with amazing views.
- Explore natural wonders from Death Valley to the Grand Canyon.
- Experience unique Americana with visits to famous restaurants, abandoned ghost towns and iconic Western film locations.

AT A GLANCE

- Join at Las Vegas

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Overview

Welcome to the enchanting realm of the South West National Parks of the USA, a breathtaking collection of natural wonders that beckon adventurers, nature enthusiasts, and curious souls alike. This remarkable region boasts a tapestry of diverse landscapes, from the arid deserts of Joshua Tree to the majestic sight of the Grand Canyon, and from the mystical hoodoos of Bryce Canyon to the iconic sets of timeless Western films. Each park is a testament to the raw beauty and geological wonders that have been carved by time, wind, water, and the hand of nature itself.

This adventurous walking holiday takes us beyond the main tourist spots as we delve into the nature, history and culture of the American South West. Starting from Las Vegas we head west into California to explore the desert environments and unique geological formations of Death Valley, Joshua Tree and Mojave National Preserve. Next we head back east and to the higher ground of Nevada and the Colorado Plateau. With a landscape that ranges from sculpted red rock canyons to captivating towering mesas we enjoy daily walks throughout the National Parks, taking in the stunning highlights of Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon and, of course, the Grand Canyon itself.

Whether you seek stunning hikes amidst towering sandstone monoliths, peaceful moments of reflection while gazing into vast chasms, or a chance to marvel at the fiery hues of a desert sunset, the South West National Parks offer a remarkable escape into the heart of untamed beauty.

Is this holiday for you?

This touring adventure is designed to explore the best of the US South West's National Parks, with a mix of walking, sightseeing and history along the way. Taking in parks in Arizona, Nevada and California. We get around the parks by private minibus taking in a lot of the main sights as well as some lesser trod walking trails and unique experiences. The selected walks are designed to be achievable for anyone of reasonable fitness, although some walking experience will go a long way to increase your enjoyment of the holiday. The longest walking days are around 4-6 hours and include some steep sections such as the Kelso Sand Dune and climb to Scout Lookout, however any of the day walks can be sat out if you prefer to rest and meet the group after the walk.

Driving times between the parks are generally around 2-3 hours, but stops for rests and additional visits are made along the way.

During this holiday we will be using the well-appointed national park campgrounds, staying in tents. The campgrounds have good shared facilities such as toilets, showers and kitchen facilities and are a

splendid way of spending time in the great outdoors.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional guide (+ assistant guide for groups over 8)
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned except where specified as 'optional'
- National Park entrance fees

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Departure Taxes (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Sleeping Bag Hire

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Las Vegas.

Airport transfers are not included. There is a frequent shuttle service to/from the airport to downtown hotels (around \$20 each way) that can be used.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

Meals when in Las Vegas are not included. Outside of Las Vegas all meals are provided except for 2 lunches and 3 dinners. These meals are either in places with a choice of restaurants (Our tour leader will recommend good establishments and we can eat together as a group) or in special eateries chosen to enhance the trip, by not including the meals here you can choose from the menu yourself.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

There is a wide selection of food in the USA. In the cities you have unlimited fresh veggies, fruits, meats and fish. Once you travel in rural areas, the selection can be more limited. Whilst camping, meals will be prepared by the guide with the help of the group; you can still expect a delicious and varied home cooked dinner. Lunches are self-made, your tour leader will buy food for sandwiches (bread, cheese, cold cuts), varied salads and snacks that you can use to make your own lunches. There will also be snacks for mid morning and mid-afternoon breaks, such as nuts, pretzels, fruit. When staying in hotels in the towns and cities, where there are a wide range of dining options and budgets, evening meals are not included. The tour leader will recommend several dinner choices and you can decide where you would like to dine either as a group, or individually.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

The group will have one night at the start and end of the holiday in a hotel in Las Vegas where we stay in comfortable twin-bedded rooms with private bathroom. The rest of the accommodation will be on a camping basis, staying at well provisioned National Park Campgrounds.

Comfortable 3 person tents are used on a 2 person basis while camping. Sleeping mats are provided, but you must bring your own sleeping bag, travel pillow, towel etc.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex for the 1 hotel night. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost for these nights. You will also be paired up to share a tent with another single client of the same sex, Single tents are also available at a supplementary cost for the nights camping.

If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional guide. For groups of 8 and over there will also be an assistant guide. The guides will also drive the minibus.

Spending Money

You will need to budget for the non included meals on this trip (meals in Las Vegas - including breakfasts, lunch on day 4 & 12, and dinner on day 4, 7 & 10). We estimate to allow around \$30 per meal. You will need to allow for tips for the local guide, together with miscellaneous items such as bar bills, souvenirs etc. Approximately \$400-\$500 should be sufficient to cover all needs, including any airport transfers you may require on arrival and departure. Your money should be carried in the form of currency (US Dollars).

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' for good service. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. In North America it is the norm to tip for most services and we recommend that you may wish to set aside around USD\$6-\$12 per day per guide and have a few dollars to tip for meals and other services.

Baggage Allowance

There is no strict weight limit on this holiday other than that imposed by your airline. We do ask you to restrict your luggage to one main bag and a rucksack/backpack. Your main bag will be transported in the support vehicle or attached trailer.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice for each country visited before travel.

Visa USA

UK passport holders, in general, do not require a visa for short stays. You DO require an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any US-bound aircraft or ship. The fee is USD\$14 and you should apply for it at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. With the ESTA complete, the majority of British Citizen passport holders can enter the US under the Visa Waiver Programme, VWP. Note that if you have travelled to Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since March 2011 you will have to apply for a visa rather than the Visa Waiver Programme.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a walking holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. We suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Regular hiking in hill country is the best preparation but running, cycling and swimming are also good.

Climate

The climate across the Southwestern USA is characterised by a diverse range of conditions due to the region's varying landscapes and elevations. In Death Valley you'll find one of the hottest and driest climates on Earth, with summer temperatures exceeding 40°C. Autumn and winter days are milder than this and nights can be chilly. Joshua Tree and Mojave have a similar warm and dry climate, often exceeding 30°C in summer and presenting comfortable hiking temperatures in winter. Again the nights and mornings can be chilly when camping. Zion and Bryce present cooler temperatures due to their elevation with average summer temperatures around 20°C and rarely dropping below 10°C.

For this trip our departures avoid the extreme temperatures of the summer, opting instead of the more pleasant spring and autumn climate. Most of the hiking days should be warm with little chance of rainfall, but you will still need to be prepared for some warmer days and cooler nights when camping.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Desert Solitaire. Edward Abbey

Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water. Marc Reisner

I Am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People. Stephen Hirst

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Please take only one main bag and one rucksack/backpack.

YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Hiking boots
- Trainers for travelling and casual wear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Baselayer shirt(s)
- T-shirts / casual shirts / tops
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Gloves
- Daypack
- Sleeping bag (comfort rating 0 degrees Celsius)
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottle (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Travel towel
- Small padlock
- Insect repellent
- Emergency Whistle
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, insect repellent, plasters, and blister treatment.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Shorts
- Gaiters
- Travel clothes
- Travel pillow (inflatable)
- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Pen-knife (always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in Las Vegas.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Las Vegas. Outbound flights depart the UK in the afternoon arriving later the same day (day 1 of the Land Only itinerary) and return flights depart Las Vegas in the evening of the last day of the Land Only itinerary, arriving in the UK in the morning of the following day. Direct flights are available, please contact the office for a quote.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

This unique-to-KE itinerary takes in the best of the South West National Parks. Striking a balance between bucket-list sites and quieter hiking trails, we immerse ourselves in a dazzling variety of landscapes and environments - from the arid below-sea-level desert to standing atop 2000m high canyons. Putting a KE twist on a classic American road trip, we have included the best day hikes in the national parks as well as memorable experiences woven throughout the itinerary - from exploring the interesting history of the area to quirky food and cultural visits along the way. With full days of activity each day this 13-day itinerary packs a lot in and is a great way to see this magnificent region, each day is sure to include its share of jaw-dropping views and off-the-beaten track adventure.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 10/05/2025 and the trip is subject to change