

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Western USA Highlights (YG 2017)



TRIPDURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: YG

Trip Highlights - Western USA Highlights

- ✓ San Francisco - Explore the city highlights including the Golden Gate Bridge
- ✓ Yosemite National Park - Fabulous scenery of the world's first protected area
- ✓ Bryce Canyon - Discover the remarkable multi-coloured landscape of the ancient rock formations
- ✓ Monument Valley - Visit the iconic and majestic vistas of Monument Valley and the surrounding Navajo Lands
- ✓ Grand Canyon - Discover one of the planet's greatest natural wonders
- ✓ Las Vegas - America's surreal and extravagant playground

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 12 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Premium Hotel

Included Meals: 0 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: San Francisco

End Point: Trip ends: Las Vegas

Transport: Maxiwagon

Countries: USA

Western USA National Parks Explorer

This trip combines the dramatic and diverse landscape of Western USA's greatest national parks with visits to the bustling cities of San Francisco and Las Vegas. We explore narrow gorges in Zion, discover the wilderness of Yosemite National Park and enjoy breathtaking views from the edge of the Grand Canyon.

If two-weeks aren't enough, from 2018 we have 17-day itineraries available which also include visits to the ancient cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde, and watching the sun set over Arches National Park, as well as itineraries in the early Spring and late Autumn, allowing us to explore America's great outdoors for much longer in the year. From the drop-down menu below, select the 'Inc Moab & Mesa Verde' itinerary, or the Spring/Autumn itinerary.



Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others. Please note that the Tour Leader will also drive the touring vehicle on this tour.

DAY 1 Join tour in San Francisco

Join tour San Francisco and check-in at the hotel. Hugging the shores of San Francisco Bay, the city has a fascinating mix of culture, commerce and character that cannot fail to charm.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Sightseeing tour including the Golden Gate Bridge, free afternoon

Today is spent exploring some of the city's highlights as we wander its famous streets, taking in the delightful Victorian architecture of Alamo Square and the colourful eccentricity of Haight Ashbury, San Francisco's once thriving 'hippie district' of the 1960s. We'll also drive up into the elegant Twin Peaks district of the city to enjoy some of the stunning views across the city and the bay (weather dependant), before moving on to the Golden Gate Bridge and finally the eclectic bustle and resident sea lions of Fisherman's Wharf. The afternoon has then been left free to continue exploring at your own leisure, perhaps paying a visit to Lombard Street and Coit Tower, before returning by the city's famous cable cars back to Union Square and Market Street. This evening there is the option to walk to Chinatown, taking in the palm lined Union Square with its famous department stores, as we make our way into the labyrinthine chaos of the largest Chinatown outside of Asia.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 3 Transfer to Yosemite National Park, walks in the park

This morning we leave San Francisco behind and drive east, heading through the fertile landscapes of Stanislaus County towards Yosemite National Park, passing the highly productive agricultural region of the Central Valley, where numerous orchards and vineyards line the roads. As we climb into the Sierra Nevada, we begin to witness the fabulous natural beauty of Yosemite National Park, a region which in 1864 became the first protected land in the world, a landscape which caused one of the first white men to see it to gasp in admiration. As we arrive in the valley, the towering presence of the two most demanding peaks of the park will be visible - Half Dome (the sheerest cliff in North America) and the vast granite bulk of El Capitan (twice the size of the Rock of Gibraltar) - both of which attract serious rock climbers from all over the world. The central valley is a mere 20km long by 5km wide but is hemmed in on either side by dramatic 2km-high sheer cliffs, its cascading waterfalls and skyline of jagged pinnacles and smooth domed granite presenting an awe-inspiring backdrop. We spend some time visiting various viewpoints in the valley this afternoon, perhaps even taking a walk to the base of Yosemite Falls (739m), the highest waterfall in the States and Bridal Veils Falls, before continuing to follow the course of the Merced river to our final destination in Mariposa, just outside the park boundaries.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 4 Explore Yosemite National Park on foot

Covering over 3000 sq km, more than 90% of Yosemite is designated wilderness area and today we will take the opportunity to explore it in a little more depth. Away from the main tourist areas of the Yosemite Valley the park is filled with a myriad of options to make the most of its spectacular natural charms. One possibility is a drive up to Glacier Point then hike along the Panorama and Mist Trail back down into the valley (a challenging walk of some 4-6 hours). The hike takes in an ever-changing tableau that includes the impressive cascades of Nevada and Vernal Falls, as well as some breathtaking views of Half Dome and the High Sierras. There are a number of other possibilities available, some scenic cycling options or a relaxing day along the riverbanks. As well as some of the most beautiful mountain landscapes on earth, the park is filled with a variety of wildlife too, including hummingbirds, deer and of course the ever present black bears, ensuring you a captivating encounter whatever you choose to do. It is not possible to do all the options, so your Tour Leader will explain the possibilities and you can choose the ones that interest you most.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 5 Travel via Mono Lake to Bishop

Leaving the park this morning we plan to drive across the scenic Tioga Pass (3032m), taking in the sub-alpine meadows of the Toulumne Meadows, an area that has been christened America's very own Switzerland. We continue through the dramatic mountain vistas down towards the alkaline waters and surreal volcanic 'tufa' rock formations of Mono Lake at the base of the High Sierras. This incredible body of water is two and a half times as salty and eighty times as alkaline as seawater and whilst its waters can sustain

no fish life it does abound in brine shrimp and flies, which provide food for millions of migratory birds and waterfowl. At the height of summer the shrimp population alone is believed to number some 4 trillion! Continuing south from here our journey lies in the shadow of a range of towering peaks that rise to over 4200m as we make our way towards our overnight stop in the small settlement of Bishop. On early season departures, if the passes over the Sierra Nevada are closed we may have to amend our itinerary and re-route the tour.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 6 Journey through Death Valley to Las Vegas

Today we have an early start to drive through Death Valley before it gets really hot. En route we will stop for breakfast and for a short visit to Furnace Creek. After lunch we will stop at Pahrump before continuing onto Las Vegas for the night. You will have some free time tonight to visit the strip or you may wish to do this on an optional limousine ride.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 7 Head to Zion National Park, afternoon to explore

This morning we will head to Zion National Park to get there just after lunch. Zion itself was established as a national park in 1919 and can boast an impressive array of natural credentials, encompassing some 8 geological formations, 4 major vegetation zones and a landscape that has been carved and honed by the Virgin River over a million years. This afternoon we will perhaps take a walk along the Watchman's Trail or a visit to Emerald Lakes. The position of the park, at the meeting of the Colorado Plateau, the Great Basin and the Mohave Desert means the region is rich in a vast diversity of flora and fauna that range from desert bush to Ponderosa Pine, cottonwood to red birch. Wildlife includes elk and mule deer, coyotes and black bear and turkey vultures and majestic golden eagles. This evening you may wish to visit the IMAX cinema. We will be staying in Springdale nearby.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 8 In Zion National Park, walks include Angel's Landing or the Narrows

This morning we will continue to explore this magnificent creation, paying a visit to its impressive visitor centre. We will then take the shuttle bus to the start of the walks. You may wish to walk up to Angel's Landing, to take the meandering hike up to one of the most spectacular viewpoints in Zion, a journey of some four hours that affords us some quite breathtaking views down across the valley (please note this is considered challenging). Alternatively you may wish to walk in the Narrows to enjoy a unique walk along the river (walking quite literally in it at some junctures), a return journey of around three hours, most of which is flat but will (depending upon the season) require negotiating the riverbed and waist high water in parts. Those looking for more arduous treks might like to try the hike up to Observation Point (approximately 5hrs return). Your Tour Leader will outline the options to you and you can choose which you want do, it is not possible to do every walk or activity on offer. Later, we drive to Bryce Canyon, travelling via Buffalo and Mt Carmel Junction.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 9 Early morning at Sunrise Point, Bryce Canyon, time to discover this natural wonder

Bryce is without doubt one of the natural highlights of the journey, as we enter a world of surreal formations of multi-coloured sandstone that are steeped in the legend of the Paiute Indian legend has it that the sandstone 'hoodoo's' of Bryce are in fact the petrified followers of the Coyote God, turned to stone as they stood listening to his angry tirade. The reality is somewhat less dramatic, with water playing the main part in the creation of these remarkable landscapes; the constant freezing and thawing and the violent summer storms causing the soft rocks to erode and split into the towering pillars that litter the floor of its great amphitheatre. This morning we see Bryce at its most radiant, in the golden hues of sunrise as we drive up to Sunrise Point to watch the dawn break across the landscape. This afternoon we will explore something of the myriad colours and shapes of this fairytale realm, hiking along the Navajo Loop, or taking in the grandeur of the Queen's Garden. Bryce was created as a national park in 1928 and is actually a part of the Grand Staircase that follows the rim along the Paunsaugunt Plateau. As you look out across the pink, orange and red spires it is easy to sympathise with Ebenezer Bryce, a Mormon farmer who is best remembered for the profound words. 'Well it's a hell of a place to lose a cow!'

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY **10** Drive to Page, visit Lake Powell and Antelope Canyon

Today we drive to the town of Page, situated near the Glen Canyon Dam and backing onto the azure waters of Lake Powell. At a length of 186 miles (and a shoreline length of an incredible 1960 miles - longer than the western coast of the United States), Lake Powell is one of the most scenic lakes in the world. Named after the one-armed civil war veteran John Wesley Powell, who first recorded his travel through the area, the lake is the second largest manmade lake in the U.S.A after Lake Mead. With a surface area of 161,390 acres and reaching a depth of almost 200 meters (when the lake is full) Lake Powell backs up into more than 96 major canyons throughout the south-western United States. This afternoon is free to enjoy the famous Antelope Canyon in Page, a beautiful peach-gold coloured canyon formed by the force of flash floods coming from the plains above or perhaps you would prefer to take a cruise boat excursion.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY **11** Travel to Monument Valley; optional jeep tour with a Navajo guide

Today we drive to the Navajo Reservation, the biggest in the country, founded in 1888 to provide a protected region for the Navajo people. The Navajo Nation constitutes the largest tribe left in the United States, the last survivors of a people who were decimated by the arrival of the white man and his rapacious quest for land and gold. We'll make a stop at the Navajo Monument, where a short walk will bring us to a cliff overlooking of the impressive Anasazi Indian ruins of Betatakin, perhaps the most intact and amazing cliff dwellings to be found in Arizona. Monument Valley, our destination for this afternoon, lies within the heart of this vast tribal area and in spite of its familiarity through the exposure by Hollywood, nothing can truly prepare you for the sheer grandeur and spectacle of this incredible setting. Isolated monoliths, sandstone pinnacles and towering spires rocket skywards, as much as 1000m above the desert floor, the warm embrace of the late afternoon colours altering the landscape's appearance as the sun dips towards the horizon. We offer you the chance to take an optional guided jeep tour of the valley with a Navajo guide, affording a closer exploration of this compelling land before we must depart for our nightstop at Kayenta.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY **12** Drive to the Grand Canyon via Tuba City

This morning we continue our remarkable journey, heading next towards the southern rim of the Grand Canyon. Travelling via the Navajo community of Tuba City we arrive at the canyon this afternoon. Once described by Theodore Roosevelt as 'the one great sight every American should see', the canyon extends some 277 miles from east to west, from the western edge of the Navajo Reservation, to the Nevada border around Lake Mead. Reaching a depth of 1600m the canyon's floor is littered with some of the oldest rocks on the planet and as we take in the views from the Grand Viewpoint and Yavapai Point, we gaze out across a land that has taken over 2 billion years to create. This evening there should be (weather permitting) the option to take a stunning flight across the canyon by plane or helicopter, or perhaps visit the IMAX cinema to learn more about the history of the canyon and its discovery.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY **13** Free day at the Grand Canyon

Today has been left free to make the most of this natural wonder at your own pace. You may want to follow the path down from the South Rim into the canyon itself, walking down to Indian Gardens and maybe even heading out to Plateau Point for some incredible views down onto the Colorado River below. Those not wishing to undertake the walk in and out of the canyon might prefer to make use of the park's shuttle service to explore something of the rim, enjoying the vast panoramas from the crest of this remarkable setting. Sunsets at the Grand Canyon present an altogether unforgettable experience, with the possibility of condors circling on the thermals above to add to the majesty of the moment.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 14 Drive to Las Vegas via Route 66

Today we drive along one of the most historic highway in America, the famous Route 66, a road that during its lifetime has been called the 'Main Street of America' and the 'Mother Road'. Over 200,000 people travelled this route during the 1930s to escape the Dust Bowl of the Depression years and hopefully find a new life in California. A shadow of its former self, the road nonetheless is rich in Americana and its architecture still affords us a rare insight into a time long past and we will travel via the town of Williams before reaching our final destination amidst the bright lights of Las Vegas. Vegas presents us with America in all its flamboyant excess, a desert city that is surely one of the most surreal and extravagant destinations anywhere on earth, let alone the United States. The rest of the afternoon and evening is free to explore this unique location, where you can watch exploding volcanoes and pirate battles, cruise the canals of Venice and take a rollercoaster ride across the New York skyline. Still the most breathtaking view over the city is to be had from the top of the 1149ft Stratosphere Tower, the tallest freestanding observation tower in the United States and you can follow this up with an evening in the gaming rooms and slots of the world famous Caesar's Palace.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 15 Tour ends Las Vegas

The tour ends in Las Vegas this morning.

 **Included Meals:** None

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 0 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

USA

Lunch £: 15.00

Dinner £: 21.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

USA

Bottle of Beer £: Varies for different towns, average £4.00

Water £: 1.10

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

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

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Page - Antelope Canyon jeep excursion US\$ 45; Boat excursion US\$ 45.

Monument Valley - Jeep excursion US\$ 45-75 including dinner.

Grand Canyon - Helicopter overflight approximately US\$ 254-284; IMAX cinema US\$ 13.

San Francisco - If you want to visit Alcatraz, we strongly recommend that you book your tickets in advance, especially during August. Please visit www.alcatrazcruises.com for tickets.

Las Vegas - Limousine ride US\$ 150 per hour (between 13 people).

Moab - Float trip US\$ 55; Jet Boat US \$80 for 1/2 day; Hummer sunset tour US \$90

Tipping - Tour Leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

In North America tipping 15%-20% is a recognised part of life across the service industry, including restaurants, activity suppliers, taxis and guides. Local staff will look to you for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Unlike other Explore trips, during our trips in North America our Explore leaders will not operate a tips kitty. However, they will be more than happy to provide guidance throughout the trip on who to tip when and to suggest appropriate amounts.

Foreign Exchange

USA

ATM Availability: Widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Widely accepted just about everywhere.

Local Currency: US Dollars.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Bring your money in US\$ cash.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities. Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

USA: (Including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). You must apply online for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), here <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip may be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Libya, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen since March 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. If you are a citizen of a country not included in the VWP you cannot apply for an ESTA. In both cases, you will instead need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (This is not necessary if only transitting through the USA)

I-94 - This is only required for completion if entering the USA by land through an official border crossing. For anyone entering by air or sea, you will be advised about this form during your journey if applicable. The i94 is a history of entries and exits to the US. You can get this for free online here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>. Each i94 accessed is only valid for border crossing for 7 days after printed.

Entry requirements for the USA can change regularly, therefore, please ensure you have the most up to date information before you travel by checking the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with

details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

USA

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

USA

There are great variations in the altitude and terrain of the areas visited and this is reflected in the temperatures. Desert areas can be extremely hot in the summer months (49°), though temperatures can drop dramatically at night. The mountains are cooler and wetter especially in the north of the Rockies. At the beginning and end of the season there may still be some snow around in the high passes and it can be cold, whereas in mid-summer the day time temperatures can soar.

Clothing

Pack for hot conditions for June, July and August departures. For departures earlier and later in the year, the weather can be cooler, especially at night in the desert so make sure you bring some warmer layers including a fleece. Include a long sleeved shirt and warm trousers. Also a lightweight waterproof jacket, swimwear and a sun hat.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle (1-2 litre capacity), high factor sunblock, plastic bags to keep things dry and a (head) torch and a towel. You may find a walking pole useful. You may need insect repellent especially in June and July.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, trainers and/or sandals for travelling (ones that can get wet).

Luggage: On Tour

Bring only the bare essentials - one main bag plus a small daysac for walking and for personal items. Main luggage cannot be accessed during the day. Soft luggage is more practical as it is stored in the trailer during travel. Bring plastic bags to keep things dry. Laundry facilities are available at various points during the trip.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

Transport

This tour utilises maxiwagons which can carry up to 14 people plus a driver. Space inside is limited so we try to rotate seating positions regularly and carry a maximum of 13 passengers. Luggage and equipment are generally carried on the roof or in a trailer, so don't bring too much.

General Information

Country details

USA

Population: 312,609,000

Size of Country: 9,826,675 sq km

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -9

Electric Supply & Plugs

USA

2 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking.

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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