

## **Hiking in the American Southwest – Visit the most famous USA National Parks, such as Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Mesa Verde and Monument Valley.**

### **Day 1: Arrival Day**

Transfer from Denver International Airport to our hotel in Denver. Briefing and Welcome dinner.

### **Day2: Rocky Mountain National Park.**

Drive to one of America's most spectacular national parks, Rocky Mountain National Park, and camp at Moraine Park Campground. A short afternoon hike is in order to observe the numerous elk near the campground.

### **Day 3: Rocky Mountain National Park**

Today we take a full day to hike a wonderful trail leading up to a vantage point where we can get views out over the park and nearby surrounding. We will camp once again at the same campsite.

### **Day 4: Great Sand Dunes National Monument**

A few hours of driving will be necessary to cover the distance to this remarkable park. The Great Sand Dunes National Park is one of the most interesting areas we will be discovering together. Hiking along the dunes, catching a glimpse of the abundant wildlife and returning for an evening BBQ with views of the setting sun on the nearby dunes.

### **Day 5: Great Sand Dunes National Monument**

Six hours of hiking will be needed to complete our loop hike today. A fairly strenuous hike on the Medano Creek Trail, which will take us deep into the heart of the park. The height and sheer size of the dunes will make for a memorable day of walking.

### **Day 6: Mesa Verde National Park,**

A beautiful drive will allow us to reach Mesa Verde National Park, and the cliff dwellings dating back nearly 2000 years. Afternoon off to relax or visit the Park center.

### **Day 7 Mesa Verde National Park,**

Following one of the Park rangers on a guided visit of the cliff dwellings, we will discover how the Anasazi lived in harmony with nature, using both summer and winter dwellings based on the sun's position in the sky. Our afternoon hike will be dedicated to discovering Spruce Tree House/ Petroglyph Point Trails.

### **Day 8: Arches National Park,**

Arches National Park is one of America's most well known and for obvious reasons. Our morning drive will take us through to Moab, Utah, one of the mountain biking capitals of the world. A short afternoon hike in Arches National Park will just be enough to whet our appetites for the following day's walks.

### **Day 9: Arches National Park**

Devil's Garden is far from being diabolic as the name indicates. Our hike will cover some amazing geological formations, sculpted stone and arches of dramatic beauty before returning to our campsite for the evening.

**Day 10: Arches National Park**

Delicate Arch may be one of the most photographed in Arches, as wind and water have sculpted a tiny arch out of the sandstone. Our hike will take us to several vantage points from where we will get some incredible images of the arch. Our afternoon hike will be guided by a park ranger as we will enter the Fiery Furnace, a labyrinth of trails and incredible rock formations.

**Day 11: Canyon Lands National Park**

A much deserved rest day, which will be spent in part driving to Canyonlands.

**Day 12: Canyon Lands National Park**

Our day hike will take us to Elephant Hill and the geological formations of the 'Grabens' a shear fault in the rock. Our hike through the 'Grabens' will lead to a huge, subterranean cave where a welcome respite for the heat and hike will allow us to recover and have lunch. This is a loop hike, which will take us back to the campsite.

**Day 13: Bryce Canyon National Park**

Our drive through the 'painted desert' to Bryce Canyon is one of the most memorable of the trip. Depending on our arrival time, we can take a short hike down to the canyon or simply enjoy the views from the rim top campsite.

**Day 14: Bryce Canyon National Park**

Heading down in to the canyon, we will take one of the well-marked trails, which meander beneath the majestic 'Hoodoos', huge towers of eroded rock, which stand dispersed here and there throughout the park. Loop hike and return to campsite.

**Day 15: Capitol Reef National Park**

Drive to Capitol Reef National Park, free time in the afternoon.

**Day 16 Capitol Reef National Park**

Camp at Fruita campsite. Our day hike will bring us to the Navajo Knobs, from where we will have amazing views over the park.

**Day 17 Capitol Reef National Park**

Drive along the Waterpocket Fold to Cedar Mesa campsite.

Hike to Strike Valley Overlook. The Waterpocket Fold is one of the finest geological features of this trip. The Burr Trail is 150 km of graded road with stunning views on either side.

**Day 18: Glen Canyon Recreation Area / Lake Powell**

Drive to Lake Powell, some free time to go for a swim and relax at the shore, then we continue driving to our campsite, Muley Point, for the night.

From Muley Point, we have stunning views over the San Juan Goosenecks and the buttes and mesas of Monument Valley.

**Day 19: Drive to Monument Valley,**

We will visit Monument Valley, before we continue on our way to Grand Canyon National Park.

**Day 20: Grand Canyon National Park**

The Grand Canyon is one of the most famous National Parks of the US. We are planning a long hike all the way down to the Colorado River, and up again.

Since it can get very hot, we will start well before sunrise, and then have a longer break at Indian Gardens, before heading back up to the rim. Roughly a 10h-day.

**Day 21: Drive to Las Vegas,**

From Grand Canyon, we will drive along Route 66 through Seligman to Las Vegas, where we will be staying at one of the more extravagant hotel/casinos such as Luxor, New York, or Mandalay Bay. Free time in Las Vegas to explore Sunset Strip.

**Day 22: Departure day**

Transfer from the hotel to Las Vegas Int'l Airport