USA West

Tour : car

21 days • 20 nights • 3100 km

Canyon Country





The **America** of your dreams—the one of endless spaces—within reach of your wheels. An **initiatory** journey through **canyon country** and rivers, in the image of the mythical **Colorado River**, never far away throughout this wonderful trip... A pilgrimage to discover the **national parks** and key sites of southern **Utah** and **Arizona**: **Valley of Fire**, **Zion**, **Bryce Canyon**, Capitol Reef, **Canyonlands**, **Arches**, Black Canyon, Durango, **Mesa Verde**, **Canyon de Chelly**, **Monument Valley**, and **Antelope Canyon**... All the magic of the **West**!



Day 1

Arrival at Las Vegas airport, conveniently located just a few kilometers from the famous “Strip”, where most of the iconic resort-casinos are clustered: the Bellagio, the Venetian, Caesars Palace, and more.

Pick up your rental car and drive to your hotel on the Strip (about 15 minutes).

Overnight on the Las Vegas Strip.



Day 2

Leave Las Vegas and follow Lake Mead along a beautiful road revealing jagged shorelines here and there (and the water level dropping…), before reaching magnificent Valley of Fire State Park.

Less crowded than its prestigious neighbors Zion and Bryce, you’ll discover it along Valley Drive, which winds through sandstone rocks in red-orange hues, all the way to the White Domes.

Beyond the colors, the park is known for abundant wildlife: bighorn sheep, coyotes, lizards and other reptiles…

Arrival in Utah, in Springdale, at the gateway to fabulous Zion National Park.

Overnight in Springdale.

Note: on this route you cross the Utah–Arizona border several times. Arizona does not observe daylight saving time, so you'll need to account for the time difference between the two states from March to November.



Day 3

Zion is a delight, with the Virgin River winding at the bottom of a valley lined with cottonwoods. Take the free shuttle opposite the Visitor Center and hop off at the various stops along the scenic road through the park.

The best is to go for a hike: sandstone monoliths, suspended boulders, impressive domes, narrow canyons and waterfalls will be part of the experience.

Zion must be earned! Your best emotions will come from landscapes revealed at the price of a good walk. There are options for every level, from easy (Weeping Rock, Emerald Pools) to vertigo-inducing, like the trail to Angels Landing (not recommended if you're afraid of heights).

And if you have time, there are the famous "Narrows": a long, narrow canyon you hike up with water sometimes up to your knees…

Overnight in Springdale.



Day 4

Leave Springdale via the spectacular road linking it to Mt Carmel Junction on the east side of Zion.

After a winding ascent, stop at Zion Overlook. A 30-minute round-trip walk — well worth it!

After a detour to Cedar Breaks National Monument and Panguitch Lake, continue to Red Canyon. Drive beneath a beautiful sandstone arch before reaching Bryce City, gateway to Bryce Canyon National Park, one of the trip's highlights.

Follow the scenic road along the amphitheater and stop at viewpoints before returning to Bryce. Watch for deer, especially at dusk.

Overnight in Bryce City.



Day 5

Start early with a beautiful walk in the park's amphitheater to get up close to the famous "hoodoos": incredible sandstone spires that look like giant stalagmites.

You can also take an easy horseback ride in the amphitheater (contact us).

In the afternoon, head east on Scenic Byway 12, one of the most beautiful roads in the West! After a detour via Kodachrome State Park, you cross Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument, with the impressive canyons of the Escalante River. It's a real treat.

After Escalante Petrified Forest State Park and its petrified wood specimens, the road continues to Torrey, at the gateway to Capitol Reef National Park.

Overnight in Torrey.



Day 6

Capitol Reef is one of the least visited parks in the American West.

Its contrasting rock colors reminded the Paiute of a sleeping rainbow.

The white sandstone domes gave it its name, evoking the U.S. Capitol.

Explore the south via Scenic Drive from Fruita Valley.

The remote Cathedral Valley requires time and ideally an SUV.

Overnight in Torrey.



Day 7

Head to Moab and the fabulous parks around it: Dead Horse Point, Canyonlands and Arches.

On the way, detour to surprising Goblin Valley State Park, with thousands of compact-earth formations shaped like mushrooms or goblins. Careful: it's crumbly and therefore very fragile.

Arrival in Moab, on the Colorado River. The town is the gateway to two of America's most beautiful national parks: Arches and Canyonlands.

Moab is lively, rather pleasant, and has a few great places. Above all, it's

the ideal base to explore the huge playgrounds nearby. Activity providers abound: buggy rides, rafting, ATV, horseback riding…

Overnight in Moab (or along the Colorado in a superb lodge about 15 minutes away / supplement applies).



Day 8

Arches National Park is right next to Moab. Note: you must reserve your entry time slot in advance (contact us).

Arches is home to more than 2,000 natural sandstone arches, although the number changes over time as old ones collapse and new ones form.

The most famous is Delicate Arch, and the best time to go is at sunset. Arrive early — spots are limited. Before that, continue to the splendid arches of Devil's Garden.

For early risers, it's possible to combine Arches with a half-day of rafting (family-friendly) on the Colorado. It's a fun activity, and you can even jump off the raft and let the current carry you (with a life jacket).

Overnight in Moab (or along the Colorado in a superb lodge about 15 minutes away / supplement applies).



Day 9

Canyonlands spans 1,400 km² and includes Island in the Sky, The Needles and The Maze.

The Island in the Sky section offers spectacular views: Dead Horse Point, Grand View Point, Mesa Arch.

Adventure options include rafting, 4x4 tours or biking.

Overnight in Moab.



Day 10

Follow the Colorado River along a scenic road.

Drive the stunning Rimrock Drive in Colorado National Monument.

Visit dramatic Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

Overnight in Montrose.



Day 11

Head into the San Juan Mountains.

Visit Ouray and drive the famous Million Dollar Highway.

Cross Red Mountain Pass and Molas Pass.

Arrival in Durango.

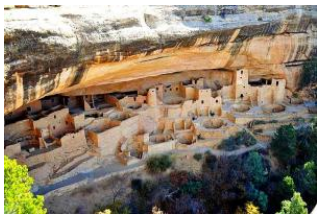


Day 12

Enjoy Durango and its lively Main Street.

Ride the historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad through the mountains.

Overnight in Durango.



Day 13

A short stage to fully explore Mesa Verde National Park.

Discover the world of the Anasazi, ancestors of the Pueblo people.

Over 4,000 archaeological sites and 600 cliff dwellings.

Guided ranger visits include Cliff Palace, Balcony House or Long House.

Overnight in the park.



Day 14

Visit Four Corners Monument in Navajo territory.

Stop at Shiprock, sacred to the Navajo.

Continue to Canyon de Chelly, with spectacular viewpoints and ancient dwellings.

Overnight in Chinle or nearby.

Day 15



Head north into Utah. Option to cross the beautiful Valley of the Gods, a smaller and quieter Monument Valley.

Climb the impressive Moki Dugway, a 5 km gravel switchback road.

At the top, enjoy one of the most breathtaking views in the American West, overlooking Valley of the Gods and Monument Valley.

Continue to Muley Point for views over the San Juan canyons and Shiprock.

Before reaching Mexican Hat, stop at Goosenecks State Park to admire dramatic river meanders.

Overnight in Mexican Hat.



Day 16

Reach Monument Valley from the north, with iconic viewpoints along the way, including the famous Forrest Gump point.

Visit sacred Monument Valley, land of the Navajo. Explore Valley Drive in a 4x4 pickup among the emblematic mesas.

Countless movies were filmed here: Stagecoach, Once Upon a Time in the West, Easy Rider, Thelma & Louise…

Stops include opportunities to purchase local crafts.

Continue toward Lake Powell, with a suggested detour to Navajo National Monument, home to stunning 13th-century cliff dwellings built by the Anasazi.

Overnight in Page.



Day 17

Straddling Arizona and Utah, Lake Powell covers 700 km², most of which is only accessible by boat.

Swimming, speedboats, houseboats, kayaking, cruises… Lake Powell is the perfect place to cool off between two canyons!

A visit to Antelope Canyon is one of the highlights of the trip. The two slot canyons, Upper and Lower Antelope, can only be visited with a Navajo guide. It can be crowded in high season, but the spectacle is truly mesmerizing.

The Rainbow Bridge, an 83-meter-high red sandstone arch sacred to the Navajo, can be reached by boat cruise (contact us).

Don’t miss fabulous Horseshoe Bend, one of the most photographed sites in the West, where the Colorado River winds beneath towering sandstone cliffs.

Overnight in Page, on Lake Powell.



Day 18

Head to the superstar of the Western parks: the Grand Canyon, covering 4,856 km²… You’ve dreamed of it — here you are!

The South Rim, home to Grand Canyon Village, is far more visited than the North Rim. In high season, expect crowds — use the free shuttle buses.

The best way to explore the canyon is to walk along the Rim Trail, bordering the village.

Viewpoints follow one another along its 21 km, or head toward Hermits Rest (accessible by shuttle).

Helicopter flights have become expensive, though still popular (contact us).

Overnight at Grand Canyon Village.



Day 19

Optional sunrise at the Grand Canyon.

Drive along historic Route 66 via Williams and Seligman.

Arrival in Kingman.



Day 20

Head to Oatman, a former mining town on Route 66, where wild donkeys roam freely.

Continue to Laughlin and the impressive Hoover Dam.

Return to Las Vegas. Enjoy the Strip: Bellagio fountains, Treasure Island, Venetian canals.

Climb the Stratosphere for night views, or visit Fremont Street Experience downtown.

Overnight in Las Vegas.



Day 21

Return your rental car at Las Vegas airport.

End of your Western fly & drive.

Return flight to Europe.

Accommodation