USA West

Tour : car

21 days • 20 nights • 3100 km

From San Francisco to Yellowstone





Starting from **San Francisco** on the **Pacific**, set off on an unforgettable ride through the great **parks of the West**: **Yosemite** and **Death Valley** in **California**, then a stop in **Las Vegas**, **Nevada**, followed by the must-see sites of **Utah** and **Arizona**: **Zion**, the North Rim of the **Grand Canyon**, **Bryce Canyon** and its “**hoodoos**”, **Capitol Reef**... Continue north to the **Rockies** in **Wyoming** to discover **Grand Teton** and **Yellowstone** National Parks! End of the trip in **Bozeman** , **Montana**.



Day 1

Arrive at San Francisco airport. Private transfer downtown and check-in at your hotel.

Enjoy the end of the day to get acquainted with this very European-feeling city. It's impossible not to fall in love with 'Frisco'!

Overnight in San Francisco, in the Fisherman's Wharf area.



Day 2

Why not treat yourself to a walk around Fisherman’s Wharf, or a trip to Alcatraz…

'The Rock' is a small island in the middle of San Francisco Bay. It served successively as a lighthouse, a military fortification, and finally a federal prison, until 1963. Reservations are essential (contact us).

Stroll in Golden Gate Park and discover the Conservatory of Flowers and the Japanese Tea Garden, among other attractions.

Return toward the Golden Gate Bridge via the beautiful coastal trail starting from Seals Rock.

From Powell or Mason, hop on a cable car and explore Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Pacific Heights, Telegraph Hill, and Italian-flavored North Beach…

Take the opportunity to walk down or up the famous switchbacks of Lombard Street.

Overnight in San Francisco, in the Fisherman's Wharf area.



Day 3

Hop on a bike to explore San Francisco Bay... You'll enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of Frisco from the pier before riding safely across the Golden Gate Bridge! Crossing the bridge is worth the trip by itself.

On the other side, continue to Sausalito, a chic little town known for its boutiques, restaurants and floating homes, the famous 'houseboats'.

Then you can either board the ferry back to San Francisco, or extend the ride to friendly Tiburon, where you catch the return ferry with your bike. During the crossing, you can get a close look at Alcatraz!

You can also wander through the bohemian Mission and Castro neighborhoods—two of our favorites—and take a nap with a view over the lawns of Dolores Mission Park...

Overnight in San Francisco, in the Fisherman's Wharf area.



Day 4

Private shuttle transfer to the airport to pick up your rental vehicle. Drive to Yosemite National Park via the Bay Bridge and Mount Diablo State Park.

The route includes a short stretch of the Golden Chain Hwy, with a few typical small towns born from the California Gold Rush in the 19th century, such as Jamestown.

Yosemite is one of the most beautiful and largest parks in the United States. It features magnificent, towering granite cliffs and a wide green valley carpeted with Ponderosa pines.

Its waterfalls are among the highest on the continent! In the southern part, you'll find the giant sequoias at Mariposa Grove… In season, it can get quite busy—shuttles are best.

Overnight near the park (El Portal, Mariposa, or Oakhurst, etc.). ????? to stay inside the park (subject to availability / supplement).



Day 5

Among the must-sees, the short walk to Lower Yosemite Falls is pleasant, though popular.

If you're up for it, hike to Upper Yosemite Fall, the park's most impressive waterfall, 425 m high. It's longer (allow about 6 hours round trip). It climbs—but what a view! Naturally, there are many other, easier walks.

Head to Glacier Point for an exceptional view over the valley (the road is closed in winter).

In the far south, Mariposa Grove is home to centuries-old sequoias.

Wherever you walk, keep your eyes open: you'll spot squirrels, and with some luck, a black bear (the park's emblem).

Overnight near the park (El Portal, Mariposa, or Oakhurst, etc.). Possibility to stay inside the park (subject to availability / supplement).



Day 6

Cross Yosemite from west to east via the road and Tioga Pass. It is one of the most beautiful roads in the USA, revealing remarkable views along the way, notably over the meadows of the Tuolumne plateau and its river.

Descending toward the eastern entrance, you open up onto Mono Lake and its lunar landscape.

Before returning there in more depth, head north to Bodie, one of the famous ghost towns born from the Gold Rush in the 19th century. Fairly well preserved, it is one of the most authentic in the West!

Back on the shores of Mono Lake, admire the famous 'tufas', chimney-like limestone formations emerging from the water... The lake's very high salinity makes aquatic life impossible. Continue to Mammoth Lakes, a lovely mountain resort on the eastern flanks of the Sierra Nevada.

Overnight in Mammoth Lakes.



Day 7

Drive to Lone Pine along the foothills of the Sierra. The town is known as the base camp for adventurers tackling the highest peaks in the United States (excluding Alaska), including Mt Whitney at 4,417 m.

Leave the Sierra Nevada behind and enter a completely different world: vast, desert and mountainous. Welcome to one of the hottest places on Earth: Death Valley National Park.

Incredible views follow one after another, notably at Father Crowley Point. Reach Panamint Springs then Stovepipe Wells, the ideal spot to grab a drink (there's a General Store), before walking on the dunes at Mesquite Sand Flats, a bit further on.

Arrive in the heart of Death Valley toward late afternoon. Drop your bags at the hotel, then head out again at day's end to reach Badwater and the magnificent Artists Drive, an open-sky impressionist canvas!

Overnight in the heart of Death Valley National Park.



Day 8

Death Valley... the name may sound scary, but the dramatic scenery will make you forget everything.

Get up early to enjoy the splendid sunrise colors, especially at Zabriskie Point, not far from the hotel. The hues are magical in the morning light.

A bit further, the route takes you to the top of Dante's View, for an incredible panorama over Death Valley, with the Panamint Mountains in the background. Sublime!

After Shoshone, a small no-frills town at the edge of California and Nevada, then the very solitary Old Spanish Trail road, you reach the colorful cliffs of Red Rock Canyon before the abrupt transition into Las Vegas. Welcome to Fabulous Vegas!

Overnight in Las Vegas, on the Strip.



Day 9

Leave the lights and noise of Las Vegas behind to regain the calm of the Western parks. Take the beautiful road along Lake Mead, then reach Valley of Fire State Park.

Located just outside Las Vegas, Valley of Fire is the largest park in Nevada. It offers a stunning mineral setting, a perfect synthesis of what the American West has in store: arches, petroglyphs, canyons, desert flora and fauna, and rocks in multicolored shades...

Continue toward Zion National Park in neighboring Utah (note the time difference between Utah and its neighbors in summer).

Arrive in Springdale, at the park's gateway. It's a very pleasant small town, popular with Las Vegas residents (among others) who come for cooler mountain air, especially in summer.

Overnight in Springdale.



Day 10

Very different from its neighbor Bryce Canyon, Zion is a gem—an open-air geological museum!

The Virgin River winds along the bottom of a magnificent valley lined with cottonwoods (poplars) and surrounded by steep, colorful cliffs. Take the free shuttle and hop off at the various stops along the park road.

Simply looking up is enough to grasp the breathtaking beauty of this setting, but the best is to hike and gain (a little or a lot of) elevation: sandstone monoliths, hanging blocks, impressive domes, narrow slot canyons and waterfalls await...

Your strongest emotions will come from landscapes you can only admire after a good walk. There are hikes for all levels, from easy (Weeping Rock, Emerald Pools) to the most vertiginous: the legendary Angels Landing...

Overnight in Springdale.



Day 11

Leave Springdale via the beautiful Mount Carmel Road. After the tunnel, park and walk to Canyon Overlook. The view over Pine Creek Canyon is truly superb!

After the friendly town of Kanab, you enter Arizona, in the heart of the vast Kaibab National Forest.

Following the road to the North Rim (closed in winter), crossing the beautiful Kaibab Plateau, you'd never imagine the Grand Canyon's cliffs are just nearby. Average altitude is about 2,500 m, so temperatures can be cool.

Unfortunately, the Grand Canyon Lodge, a historic property on the Rim, was completely destroyed by a major wildfire in 2025. It should be rebuilt.

Overnight in Jacob Lake, about 1 hour from the North Rim (or at Kaibab Lodge, about 30 minutes away).



Day 12

Grand Canyon National Park doesn't stop at the edge of the great chasm nor on the banks of the Colorado, whose winding meanders flow 1,500 m below.

The North Rim is less accessible than the South Rim, but it is also less crowded. Views from both rims are different—but all are exceptional. On the North Rim, don't miss Point Imperial and Cape Royal (sunset is magnificent!).

Since the Grand Canyon Lodge burned down, you'll need to do the round trip from Jacob Lake or Kaibab Lodge.

Hiking is possible, including on the Bright Angel Trail, which connects the two rims—go down for a few hours (and back up), on foot or by mule, or both.

Overnight in Jacob Lake, about 1 hour from the North Rim (or Kaibab Lodge, about 30 minutes away).



Day 13

This short stage takes you to Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah.

The classic route goes back via Kanab. The magnificent Cottonwood Canyon Road is a graded dirt road crossing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, with great surprises along the way—including the striking Yellow Rock. Allow a few hours to enjoy it properly.

By the classic route, after Mt Carmel, you enter the world of red sandstone monoliths on scenic Highway 12, one of the West's most beautiful roads. You drive beneath the arch that spans the road.

Arrive in Bryce City, a small village at the park entrance. After check-in, consider driving the (only) road along the Bryce amphitheater for great viewpoints. Watch for mule deer, especially late in the day...

Overnight in Bryce City.



Day 14

Descend into the Bryce Canyon amphitheater in the morning to beat the crowds. It's magical! You can also take a horseback ride (2 hours: contact us).

Leave Bryce via the magnificent Scenic Byway 12, crossing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the impressive Escalante River canyons. Detour recommended via Kodachrome Basin State Park, with its tall sandstone chimneys in red and orange hues.

Back on Highway 12, Escalante Petrified Forest State Park is little visited and features petrified wood specimens, like a smaller version of Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona (about 1 hour walk).

The road climbs above 3,000 m, revealing views over 60 km, with the La Sal Mountains in the background. Then descend to Torrey, gateway to Capitol Reef National Park.

Overnight in Torrey.



Day 15

Leave Torrey toward the Wasatch Range, via the Manti–La Sal National Forest.

The Wasatch are a major mountain range bordering Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake. The region includes some of the West's largest ski areas, around Park City.

The small roads you take offer lovely views, notably toward Strawberry Peak (2,961 m) and the large reservoir beside it.

Reach Midway, a pleasant town in the Heber Valley, about 1 hour east of Salt Lake. It was founded by a few families from Switzerland, who left their mark... Midway is home to the Homestead Crater, a natural bowl about twenty meters deep. Its crystal-clear waters are around 32–35°C—perfect for swimming and diving!

Overnight in Midway.



Day 16

Leave early for this stage, which will take you to Jackson Hole in Wyoming.

This pleasant small town, located at the gateway to Grand Teton National Park, is very popular with winter sports (and summer) lovers. Enjoy strolling among the shops, bars and great addresses...

Overnight in Jackson Hole.



Day 17

Enjoy a beautiful day dedicated to Grand Teton National Park and its surroundings. This stunning park — whose name origin we will let you discover — lies just south of its big brother Yellowstone, whose south entrance is less than 2 hours from Jackson Hole.

The park offers breathtaking landscapes and viewpoints, especially along the scenic Teton Park Road. There are numerous accessible hiking opportunities.

Head up to Signal Mountain, overlooking Jackson Lake, or drive along the Moose–Wilson Road, which passes by Teton Village ski resort.

We recommend taking the lovely Jenny Lake Road to enjoy a drink at the beautiful lodge of the same name, or cross the lake by boat to reach the starting point of magnificent hikes.

Overnight in Jackson Hole.



Day 18

Cross Grand Teton National Park one last time before reaching its prestigious neighbor Yellowstone—the Holy Grail!

Yellowstone National Park covers an area about the size of Corsica, with several regions, each offering many highlights. The southwest part will take up a large portion of your time.

Overnight in the southern part of the park, or nearby in West Yellowstone.



Day 19

In the south are most of the impressive geysers and hot springs, with rainbow-like colors.

These wonders offered by Mother Nature also testify to volcanic activity with potentially devastating consequences... This supervolcano is closely monitored by scientists.

The famous Old Faithful geyser and the photogenic Grand Prismatic Spring are among the park's stars, which concentrates about 2/3 of the geysers listed on the planet!

Further east, go for a walk at the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. The site, of dramatic proportions, offers a hypnotic spectacle, with powerful Lower

Falls plunging into a deep canyon, topped by narrow yellow-orange walls. You can observe the show from overlooks on both sides.

Overnight in the southern part of the park, or nearby in West Yellowstone.



Day 20

The northern part of Yellowstone also holds wonderful surprises...

Starting with the astonishing and sumptuous travertine terraces of Mammoth Hot Springs, set in an exceptional environment rich in wildlife. Boardwalks allow you to wander through this landscape worthy of The Lord of the Rings...

The Lamar and Hayden valleys are ideal spots to observe Yellowstone's wildlife. It was in Lamar that wolves were reintroduced in 1995, though sightings remain rare. You will undoubtedly encounter other wildlife in the area: black bears (sometimes a grizzly), elk, bison...

Mammoth Hot Springs also includes the park's historic Victorian-style buildings. Fort Yellowstone was occupied by the U.S. Army from the late 19th century to protect this unique area.

Overnight in the northern part of the park, or nearby in Gardiner.



Day 21

Drive to Bozeman airport (about 1h30) and return your rental vehicle. End of this beautiful fly & drive tour in the West.

Return flight to Europe (arrival the next day).

Note: possibility to add 1 night in Gardiner (or 1 night in Bozeman).

Stay extension or itinerary change: contact us

Accommodation