

9 Days | Canyons & Mesas of the Southwest

Visiting 9 of our Nation's National Parks & Monuments



BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK

1 FLIGHT TO PHOENIX • SEDONA: Our flight today will take us to Arizona's capital, Phoenix. Our motorcoach meets us here and transports us to our first overnight, Sedona. As we approach this beautiful town, known worldwide for the beauty of the red rocks, we can easily see why it's one of Hollywood's favorite movie locations.

2 OAK CREEK CANYON • GRAND CANYON • DINNER: Leaving Sedona, we travel north quickly ascending the 2,000 foot gorge of Oak Creek Canyon. At the overlook, Native American vendors will display authentic turquoise jewelry or pottery for purchase. We continue to the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park and are awed by its vastness and the Colorado River winding almost a mile below. We take the park shuttle buses along the West Rim Road making stops at several overlooks and look across to the North Rim, about 10 miles away. We overnight just outside the park. Dinner is included tonight. **D**

3 LAKE POWELL • BOAT CRUISE • DINNER: We see more Grand Canyon as we exit via the east entrance and head to Page, Arizona. We have a tranquil cruise on Lake Powell which was formed by harnessing the Colorado River at the Glen Canyon Dam National Park. We continue to enjoy this dramatic landscape during our included dinner at the Lake Powell Lodge. **D**

4 UTAH • ZION CANYON • DINNER: Some of the most enormous rock formations are found at Zion National Park. To get there we travel through the mile-long Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel before descending a series of switchbacks on our way to the Visitors Center. Here we'll board a tram for our tour into the canyon where we find ourselves surrounded by massive rock formations. These formations, described as temples, cathedrals and thrones, rise to great heights, the highest reaching 8,726 feet.

We head east to Bryce Canyon, our overnight destination. Dinner is included tonight. **D**

5 BRYCE CANYON • GRAND STAIRCASE ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT • DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST • CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK • GREEN RIVER: Towering rocks worn to odd sculptured shapes and multicolored limestone may not sound beautiful, but once you see them in Bryce Canyon, you'll agree. There isn't a canyon anywhere in the world more beautiful. But Bryce, although termed a canyon, is actually a series of breaks in 12 large amphitheatres. Our route today takes us along Highway 12, one of Utah's most beautiful scenic byways. It takes us through the Grand Staircase Escalante which is a series of great geological steps of alternating cliffs, slopes and terraces ascending more than 6,000-feet. This masterpiece of geological and biological diversity, designated a National Monument in 1996, was one of the last mapped areas of the continental US. We'll continue through the towering Ponderosa Pines in the Dixie National Forest. Afternoon finds us visiting ancient petroglyphs in Capitol Reef National Park, so named because the rocks formed a natural barrier to pioneer travel, and the white sandstone domes resemble the dome of the US Capitol Building. Our overnight is in the Green River area.

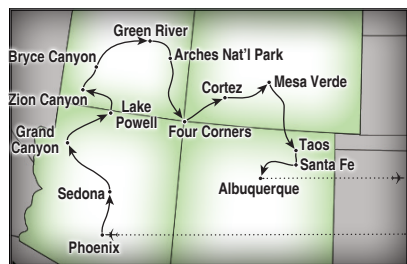
6 ARCHES NATIONAL PARK • FOUR CORNERS • COLORADO • CORTEZ: Be prepared to be amazed this morning. At Arches National Park we see a natural landscape of giant stone arches, pinnacles, spires, fins, and "windows" that was once the bed of an ancient sea. Over time, erosion laid bare the skeletal structure of the earth, making this area a spectacular outdoor museum. The Four Corners is a unique place. It's the only place in America where you can stand in four states at the same time. Located within the Navajo Indian Reservation,

this is the exact place where Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico come together. Today has been a feast for our eyes as we've seen countless vistas and natural formations. It's a short drive to Cortez, Colorado, and our overnight.

7 MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK • NEW MEXICO • TAOS • RIO GRANDE RIVER GORGE BRIDGE • DINNER: Mesa Verde, sure to be one of the highlights of our tour, awaits us today. Mesa Verde, Spanish for "green table," is a large plateau towering 2,000 feet above the surrounding valleys, and is famous for the well-preserved, pre-Columbian cliff dwellings in the shallow alcoves of its many canyon walls. We'll stop to explore these dwellings before making our way to New Mexico, "the land of enchantment." On a high plateau flanked by mountains is where we find Taos, the home of many artists and writers. Our overnight will be Taos, and tonight's dinner is included. **D**

8 SANTA FE • ALBUQUERQUE • SANDIA PEAK TRAMWAY • OLD TOWN • DINNER: We head south to Santa Fe, New Mexico's capital city. It's the oldest capital in the US, and dates back to the year 1607. We'll tour this lovely city, and have free time at the Plaza for shopping and sightseeing. This afternoon we take a ride on the Sandia Peak Tramway three miles up the west slope of Sandia Mountain. Next, we stop at Old Town. The original settlement, it still retains a lovely Spanish flavor with many interesting shops and is a popular tourist shopping area. An included dinner awaits us tonight. **D**

9 FLIGHT HOME: This morning we're transported to the Albuquerque airport for our flight back to North Carolina.



Activity Level
Easy Strenuous
4

Departure: May 14
September 15
PRICE PER PERSON:
DOUBLE \$2239 TRIPLE \$2039 QUAD \$1969 SINGLE \$2899
May Airfare from Charlotte, NC: \$449
September Airfare from Charlotte, NC: \$415
(including transfers)

Meals Included:
8 Cont. Breakfasts & 5 Dinners