

SOUTHWEST NATIONAL PARKS DISCOVERY

Classic Flex Tour | 17 Days | Physical Level 2

Scottsdale 2N – Sedona 1N – Williams 2N – Grand Canyon NP - Page 1N – Monument Valley 1N – Moab 2N – Canyonlands & Arches NP – Torrey 1N – Capitol Reef NP – Bryce Canyon NP 1N – Springdale 2N – Zion NP – Las Vegas 1N

Delve deep into the Red Rock Country of Arizona and Utah, to explore some of the USA's most extraordinary and protected landscapes. Taking in Utah's Mighty 5 National Parks, Monument Valley, the Grand Canyon and Antelope Canyon, you'll also experience Navajo culture and Route 66 vibes as you travel from Scottsdale to Las Vegas.

- Take in Sedona's spectacular red rock scenery
- Marvel at the iconic Grand Canyon
- Explore Antelope's spectacular slot canyons
- Stand before Zion's towering cliffs
- Admire Arches' formations
- Discover Bryce Canyon's hoodoos

TOUR MAP



TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Most meals
- Most sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC FLEX TOURS:

Classic Flex tours let you see the iconic sites and signature experiences of each destination on an excellent-value, fully escorted group tour, with a little more freedom to do things your own way. Your international flights, accommodation, transportation, touring and most meals are all arranged, so you can travel with complete peace of mind. Where it works best for the destination, personal time is woven into the itinerary, giving you the chance to explore independently, seek out a local restaurant, or simply relax at your own pace.

Throughout, your National Escort's unparalleled knowledge will bring each destination to life and turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique landscapes and attractions of Canada.

'Southwest National Parks Discovery' is rated as a physical level 2. A reasonable level of fitness is required, with regular sightseeing on foot and some longer days exploring towns, national parks and natural attractions. You will be getting on and off coaches and trains, walking on a variety of surfaces, climbing steps and occasionally spending several hours on your feet. Some sightseeing may involve gentle inclines or uneven ground.

Please consider:

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods, including in Scottsdale, Sedona, Williams, Grand Canyon Village, Springdale and other towns and national parks.
- Some excursions involve walking on uneven, rocky or unpaved surfaces, particularly at Horseshoe Bend, Antelope Canyon, Arches National Park, Bryce Canyon and other natural attractions.
- You will need to get on and off coaches and trains independently, sometimes using steps.
- Some visits, including Grand Canyon viewpoints, Meteor Crater and national park sites, involve walking between viewpoints, visitor areas and outdoor attractions.
- Some days involve longer journeys by coach through the Southwest, with stops along the way to visit towns, viewpoints and national park attractions.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour and they are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travellers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

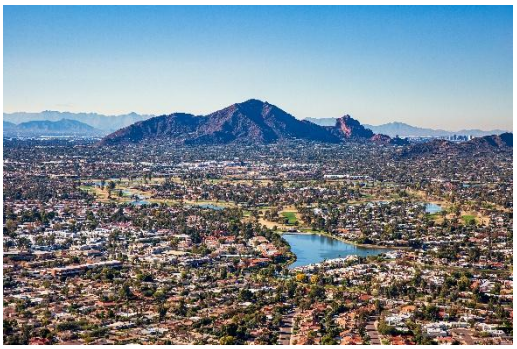
JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 17 days in duration including international flights or 15 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Join the tour on Day 1 in Scottsdale and end the tour on Day 15 in Las Vegas.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly to Phoenix Meals: D



On arrival in Phoenix International Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours, or a representative. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer to your Scottsdale hotel.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our reservations team to book.

An informal Welcome Dinner will be held tonight.

Destination Information

Scottsdale – Located in the Sonoran Desert east of Phoenix, Scottsdale is known for its Old Town district, art galleries and Southwestern architecture. The city sits at the foot of the McDowell Mountains and is also home to Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright's former winter residence and architectural school.

Day 2: Desert Botanical Tour Meals: B, L



Explore the fascinating plant life of the Sonoran Desert on a guided botanical tour, discovering the distinctive cacti and desert flora that thrive in this unique landscape. Then take a walking tour of Old Town Scottsdale, allowing around 1 hour to see its historic buildings, galleries and shops, before stopping for lunch at one of the neighbourhood's restaurants. This afternoon, enjoy Flex time for independent exploration of Scottsdale.

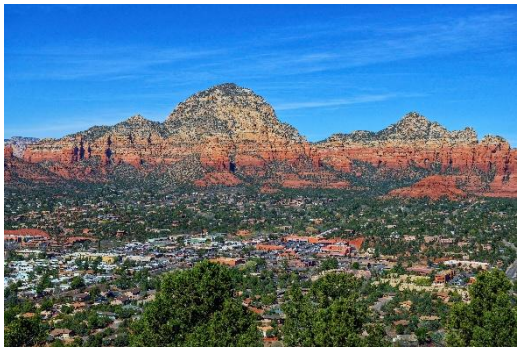
Destination Information

Sonoran Desert – Covering parts of Arizona, California and northwestern Mexico, the Sonoran Desert is one of North America's most biologically diverse deserts. It is particularly known for its giant saguaro cacti, which can grow to more than 12 metres tall and live for over 150 years.

Old Town Scottsdale – The historic centre of Scottsdale, combining preserved buildings from the early 20th century with galleries, shops and restaurants. The area includes the Old Adobe Mission, built in 1933, and Scottsdale's former Main Street, which reflects the city's development as a small agricultural community.

Day 3: Sedona Meals: B

Travel approximately 2 hours to Sedona, set among striking red rock formations, and take an orientation tour of the town on arrival. Head out into the surrounding desert to admire the towering red cliffs and pine forests of the magnificent Oak Creek Canyon and the iconic rock formations of Red Rock State Park. Browse the art galleries and shops of Tlaquepaque, a replica Mexican village, before enjoying the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.



Destination Information

Sedona – Set among the red rock formations of northern Arizona, Sedona developed as a small farming and trading community before becoming known for its tourism and arts scene. The town is surrounded by landmarks including Cathedral Rock, Bell Rock and Airport Mesa, with hiking trails and viewpoints throughout the surrounding landscape.

Oak Creek Canyon – A 19-mile canyon carved by Oak Creek through the red rock country north of Sedona. The canyon connects Sedona with Flagstaff and is known for its steep sandstone cliffs, pine forests and Oak Creek, which runs through the valley.

Tlaquepaque – A distinctive arts and shopping village in Sedona, designed in the style of a traditional Mexican settlement. Opened in the 1970s, its stucco buildings, archways, courtyards and cobbled walkways house galleries, craft shops and restaurants.

Day 4: Meteor Crater & Williams Meals: B, D

This morning, make the most of some Flex time to browse Sedona's shops and galleries. This afternoon, travel approximately 1 hour 30 minutes to Meteor Crater Natural Landmark, a huge impact site created about 50,000 years ago, before continuing for around 1 hour 15 minutes to Williams, the gateway to Grand Canyon National Park and a historic Route 66 town. Tonight, dine in a classic diner serving American comfort food.



Destination Information

Meteor Crater Natural Landmark – One of the best-preserved meteorite impact sites on Earth, formed around 50,000 years ago when an iron meteorite struck the Arizona desert. The resulting crater is approximately 1.2 kilometres across and 170 metres deep.

Williams – A historic town in northern Arizona located along the original Route 66 and known as the 'Gateway to the Grand Canyon'. Its historic downtown retains buildings, signs and businesses associated with the famous highway, while the Grand Canyon Railway departs from the town for the South Rim.

Route 66 – One of America's most famous highways, Route 66 originally ran for around 3,940 kilometres from Chicago to Santa Monica. Established in 1926, it became an important route for travellers heading west and is remembered for its roadside diners, motels, petrol stations and small-town communities.

Day 5: The Grand Canyon

Meals: B



All aboard the historic Grand Canyon Railway for a 65-mile, 2 hour and 15 minute journey to the Grand Canyon Depot, with scenic views and Old West entertainment along the way. On arrival, take an orientation tour of Grand Canyon Village, stopping at landmark buildings and iconic viewpoints before enjoying around 4 hours to explore one of the world's most famous natural wonders at your own pace. Return to Williams for an evening at lesiure.

Destination Information

Grand Canyon Railway – Running between Williams and the South Rim, this historic railway has carried passengers towards the Grand Canyon since 1901. The 105-kilometre journey passes through the high desert and ponderosa pine forests, with vintage-style carriages and onboard entertainment recreating the experience of travelling by rail in an earlier era.

Grand Canyon – Carved by the Colorado River over millions of years, the Grand Canyon stretches for around 446 kilometres through northern Arizona and reaches depths of more than 1,800 metres. Its exposed layers of rock reveal almost two billion years of geological history, while the South Rim provides access to some of the canyon's best-known viewpoints.

Day 6: Upper Antelope Canyon & Page

Meals: B,L



Visit the Cameron Trading Post, a 1916 landmark that serves as a cultural hub and features authentic Native American arts and crafts.

Continue for approximately 1 hour to Horseshoe Bend, where the Colorado River curves around a red sandstone canyon some 300 metres deep, allowing around 1 hour for the walk to the viewpoint and return.

Stop in Page for lunch before heading to Upper Antelope Canyon, the world-famous slot canyon set within the Navajo Nation. Here, enjoy a guided tour to discover more about its geology and hear the traditional stories associated with these unique formations.

Destination Information

Cameron Trading Post – Established in 1916 along the historic route between Flagstaff and the Navajo Nation, Cameron Trading Post began as a trading post serving local Navajo communities. Today, it includes a historic trading post, restaurant and gallery displaying Native American jewellery, pottery, rugs and other crafts.

Horseshoe Bend – A horseshoe-shaped bend in the Colorado River near Page, where the river curves around a sandstone plateau. The viewpoint stands around 300 metres above the river and provides a clear view of the distinctive meander.

Upper Antelope Canyon – A narrow sandstone slot canyon on Navajo Nation land near Page, formed by water erosion over thousands of years.

Day 7: Monument Valley

Meals: B, L, D



Spend the morning at the Navajo National Monument; a protected area surrounding 13th-century cliff dwellings built into sandstone alcoves by Ancestral Puebloans. Still a place of deep cultural and spiritual significance for Indigenous peoples, it offers a fascinating connection to the past. Travel on through the Navajo Nation to Monument Valley, where you'll embark on the Dream Catcher Tour. Led by a Navajo guide, you'll discover awe-inspiring landscapes, enjoy cultural demonstrations, watch the sun set over the iconic sandstone buttes and spires and sit round a campfire to enjoy dancing, drumming and chanting.

Destination Information

Navajo National Monument – Located in northern Arizona, this protected area preserves three ancient cliff-dwelling sites built by Ancestral Puebloan people between around 1250 and 1300. The best-known site, Betatakin, is built within a natural sandstone alcove beneath towering cliffs.

Monument Valley – Spanning the Arizona-Utah border within the Navajo Nation, Monument Valley is recognised for its large sandstone buttes and mesas, some rising more than 300 metres above the valley floor. The landscape has featured in numerous Western films and remains an important cultural and spiritual place for the Navajo people.

Day 8: Canyonlands by Night Meals: B, D



Travel on into Utah, a journey of approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, pausing for a photo at the distinctive Mexican Hat Rock. Drive through the magnificent scenery of the Valley of the Gods, a sandstone valley of red-rock buttes and pinnacles, sometimes called 'miniature Monument Valley'.

Continue to Bluff Fort Historic Site, an open-air museum centred around a reconstructed 19th-century settlement founded by Mormon pioneers. This evening, venture into Canyonlands National Park, where you'll jet down the river by boat, tuck into a hearty cowboy-style dinner and watch a dramatic sound-and-light show beneath the night sky.

Destination Information

Valley of the Gods – Located in southeastern Utah, this remote valley contains sandstone buttes, mesas and pinnacles rising from the desert floor. The formations include distinctive landmarks such as Castle Butte and Lady in a Tub, and interestingly, the area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management rather than as a national park.

Bluff Fort Historic Site – Built in 1880 by Mormon pioneers who established the settlement of Bluff, this reconstructed fort contains a collection of historic cabins surrounding a central courtyard. Exhibits tell the story of the settlers' difficult journey and early life in southeastern Utah.

Canyonlands National Park – Utah's largest national park, where the Colorado and Green rivers have carved deep canyons through the surrounding sandstone plateau. The park is divided into distinct areas including Island in the Sky, The Needles, The Maze and Horseshoe Canyon, each with different landscapes and geological features.

Day 9: Arches National Park Meals: B, L



With over 2,000 natural stone arches, soaring pinnacles, rock fins and giant balanced rocks, spend this morning exploring the formations of Arches National Park. Return to Moab for lunch before travelling approximately 1 hour to Canyonlands National Park to see this extraordinary river-hewn rock wilderness in the light of day.

Destination Information

Arches National Park – Located just north of Moab, Utah, this national park contains more than 2,000 documented natural sandstone arches, including the famous Delicate Arch. The formations were created by erosion over millions of years, with the park also containing pinnacles, fins and balanced rocks.

Day 10: Capitol Reef National Park

Meals: B

Explore the sandstone hoodoos, or 'goblins,' of the surreal Goblin Valley State Park, a geological wonder shaped over millions of years. This afternoon, head into Capitol Reef National Park to admire colourful canyons, soaring cliffs and the fascinating Fruita Historic District, a pioneer settlement set among historic orchards.



Destination Information

Goblin Valley State Park – Goblin Valley contains thousands of hoodoos shaped by erosion into mushroom-like figures known as 'goblins'.

Capitol Reef National Park – A landscape of sandstone cliffs, canyons and domes centred around the Waterpocket Fold, a geological wrinkle in the Earth's crust stretching for almost 160 kilometres. The park is also known for its historic orchards, petroglyphs and the Fremont people, who inhabited the area around 1,000 years ago.

Day 11: Bryce Canyon National Park

Meals: B, D

Drive to Escalante, a journey of approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, along Utah's Scenic Byway 12, taking in the panoramic views along the way. Continue to Bryce Canyon National Park, home to the world's largest collection of hoodoos and spires, displaying vibrant shades of red, orange and white. Return to the national park this evening for a ranger-led stargazing experience, learning about the life cycles of stars, space exploration and Native American stories written in the constellations.



Destination Information

Bryce Canyon National Park – Famous for its vast amphitheatres filled with thousands of tall, narrow rock formations known as hoodoos. Formed by erosion of the park's colourful limestone over millions of years, the hoodoos create one of Utah's most distinctive landscapes, with viewpoints along the Bryce Amphitheater overlooking the formations.

Day 12: Zion National Park Meals: B, D

From Escalante, drive approximately 1 hour 30 minutes to Zion National Park, renowned for its towering sandstone cliffs in shades of cream, pink and red, carved by the Virgin River. Sit back and soak up the views on a narrated open-air tram tour through Zion Canyon, before heading to Zion Brewery for a tour and beer flight tasting, followed by dinner.



Destination Information

Zion National Park – Utah's first national park, centred around the deep sandstone canyon carved by the Virgin River. Its towering cliffs rise more than 600 metres above the valley floor, with landmarks including the Great White Throne and Angels Landing, while the canyon is known for its distinctive red and cream-coloured rock formations.

Day 13: Zion – Mt. Carmel Highway Meals: B

Journey along the scenic Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway towards the park's East Gate, taking approximately 1 hour, with views of Zion's distinctive rock formations along the way. This afternoon, take some Flex time to enjoy Springdale independently.



Destination Information

Springdale – A small town at the entrance to Zion National Park in southwestern Utah, surrounded by the park's towering sandstone cliffs. Founded by Mormon settlers in the 1860s, Springdale now serves as a base for visiting Zion.

Day 14: Viva Las Vegas! Meals: B, D

Bid Red Rock Country goodbye and travel approximately 2 hours 30 minutes from Springdale to Las Vegas, crossing the border into Nevada.

On arrival, the rest of the day is yours to spend as you wish before a farewell dinner this evening.



Destination Information

Las Vegas – Nevada's largest city, internationally known for its casinos, entertainment and resort hotels along the Las Vegas Strip. Founded in 1905, the city grew rapidly from a small railway settlement after the legalisation of gambling in 1931.

Days 15 - 17: Fly Las Vegas to New Zealand

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to Las Vegas International Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight arriving home two days later.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

NORTH AMERICA TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders are currently permitted entry to the United States without a visa for stays of up to 90 days, but must obtain an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) online before departure. The ESTA must be completed by each traveller and is not included in the cost of your tour. Wendy Wu Tours can offer general guidance on the application.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back in New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 16 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. On Classic Flex Tours, there will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu Tours groups while you are travelling.

EATING IN THE UNITED STATES:

On our Classic Flex tours, most meals are provided from your arrival until the day of departure, giving you the opportunity to experience the wide range of regional flavours and specialities found across the United States. American cuisine varies considerably between regions, from fresh seafood and clam chowder in New England to barbecue in the Deep South, Cajun and Creole dishes in Louisiana, Tex-Mex in the Southwest and fresh produce and seafood on the West Coast. You may also encounter classic American dishes such as burgers, steaks, fried chicken, apple pie and regional specialities along the way.

Breakfasts are generally served buffet-style at hotels, with a choice of cooked and continental options. Lunches may be served at restaurants, cafés or as packed lunches on longer touring days. Evening meals are typically served in local restaurants or hotels, with menus offering a mixture of regional American and international dishes.

The United States is well equipped for a wide range of dietary requirements, although choices can become more limited when travelling through rural areas or smaller towns. If you have specific dietary needs, please let us know when booking so these can be communicated to our local partners in advance.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation in the United States is carefully selected for its location, comfort and character, with a mixture of well-established hotels, locally owned properties and larger city hotels possibly used throughout your journey. Accommodation will generally be of a good three- to four-star standard, comparable with what you would expect in New Zealand, although individual hotels may vary in style, facilities and size.

All group tour hotels have private Western-style bathroom facilities, air conditioning or heating, a TV and Wi-Fi. In some smaller towns or more remote areas, hotel facilities may be simpler than those found in the major cities, but all properties are selected to provide a comfortable base from which to explore the destination.

If you experience any difficulty during your stay, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide. All hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly reviewed by our staff and local partners to ensure they meet our standards.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Air-conditioned coaches are used for sightseeing, excursions and longer journeys throughout this tour. Coaches generally have comfortable reclining seats and an onboard toilet, although facilities vary between vehicles. The US is a vast country and some journeys involve several hours of driving, particularly when travelling between national parks and smaller towns. Journey times are approximate and may be affected by traffic, road conditions, weather and scheduled stops.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and the United States is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time.

In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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