



U.S. National Parks & the Albuquerque Balloon Festival



Each year, the skies outside Albuquerque play host to a one-of-a-kind celebration.

DAY 1: FLIGHT TO NEW MEXICO

Your trip begins with a regularly scheduled flight to Albuquerque, New Mexico, aboard a major airline. A Go Ahead representative greets you at the airport and then accompanies you to your hotel. Tonight, get acquainted with your fellow travelers at an included Welcome Dinner.

Included meals: dinner

DAY 2: ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FESTIVAL

Rise and shine early today to watch balloons ascend en masse at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the largest hot air balloon festival in the world. At 7am, the first of the balloons begins its graceful ascent into “the Albuquerque box,” a unique set of air currents that allow the balloons to parade through the sky and return to the site from which they launched. While you’re at the festival, you’ll have access to a heated hospitality tent stocked with drinks and snacks. After the mass ascension, the majority of the day is free to explore the city of Albuquerque on your own. This evening, you’ll return to the festival around dusk, as the sky begins to fill with illuminated globes as part of the festival’s Twilight Twinkle Glow event.

Included meals: breakfast

DAY 3: DURANGO & MESA VERDE

Cross the Colorado border and stop for lunch in

Durango, an authentic Old West mining town. Then continue on to Mesa Verde National Park, home to the cliff dwellings of the Pueblo Indians. Along the way, you’ll pass through the scenic southwestern landscapes that inspired Georgia O’Keeffe.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 4: MESA VERDE & MONUMENT VALLEY

This morning, visit Mesa Verde National Park. On your guided tour, you’ll view the fascinating 800-year-old cliff dwellings that honeycomb the canyon walls. Later today, pass through Monument Valley before arriving in Kayenta, Arizona, where you’ll spend the night.

Included meals: breakfast

Included entrances: Mesa Verde

DAY 5: THE GRAND CANYON

Reach the Grand Canyon. One mile below the rim runs the Colorado River, while the rocky canyon sides reflect millions of years of geological evolution in their striated patterns. Begin your exploration of the canyon with this afternoon’s visit to the South Rim. Dinner is included tonight.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Included entrances: Grand Canyon

DAY 6: FREE DAY AT THE GRAND CANYON

With a full free day to explore the Grand Canyon at your leisure, you might choose to walk along the

12-DAY TOUR INCLUDES

- Round-trip air transportation with a major airline, airport transfers
- The services of a Go Ahead Tour Director
- A professional local guide in Mesa Verde
- 11 nights accommodations in comfortable, well-located hotels with private bath or shower
- All hotel service charges and tips, baggage handling and local taxes
- Buffet breakfast daily; 4 three-course dinners
- Private deluxe motorcoach
- Guided sightseeing and entrance fees to select sights as described
- Go Ahead travel gift and membership in our World Traveler Club, which includes credit toward your next tour

GUIDED SIGHTSEEING

DAY 4: Mesa Verde

Tour Highlight

The mountains outside Albuquerque create a unique airflow known to balloonists as “the Albuquerque box.” It’s this “box” that draws balloonists here each year, and when wind conditions are just right, balloonists can achieve the rare feat of two takeoffs in a single day.

Insider’s Tip

Jackson Hole takes its name from early fur trappers who entered this low-lying valley by descending its steep northeastern slopes. The verdant valley is framed by the snow-capped crags of the Grand Tetons, and the contrasts in color and elevation have inspired countless photographers, including Ansel Adams.



Shop for handmade Native American stoneware and pottery in the markets of the Southwest.

rim, or hike down to a plateau. Alternatively, consider joining our optional Grand Canyon Helicopter Ride to take in spectacular bird's-eye views of one of our nation's most awe-inspiring sites.

Included meals: breakfast

DAY 7: ZION NATIONAL PARK

Pass by Lake Powell, a favorite southwestern vacation destination, on your way to Zion. During your visit to Zion National Park—including a tram ride—discover why the Mormon settlers of the 19th century named it after their heavenly city. Zion is famous for its dramatically eroded sedimentary rocks, whose yellow and orange hues create magnificent vistas contrasted with the thick green foliage along the riverbanks.

Included meals: breakfast

Included entrances: Zion National Park, tram ride

DAY 8: BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Your journey through Utah continues with today's visit to Bryce Canyon National Park. Bryce Canyon is known for its distinctive pink sandstone, which forms awe-inspiring arches, spires, steps and bridges across the landscape. Tour the park by bus and by foot for up-close views of this fascinating phenomenon. Later today, reach Salt Lake City, capital of Utah and host city of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, for an overnight stop.

Included meals: breakfast

Included entrances: Bryce Canyon National Park



Thanks to determined conservation efforts, the American bison once again roams the grasslands of Yellowstone National Park.

DAY 9: GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Cross into Wyoming and visit Grand Teton National Park. The Grand Teton, which is the highest mountain of the Teton range, rises to 13,770 feet above sea level, while 12 other Teton peaks are higher than 12,000 feet. This range is particularly interesting to geologists because it is the youngest range in the Rockies but displays some of North America's oldest rocks. Reach the town of Jackson, a colorful resort town popular with skiers, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Included meals: breakfast

Included entrances: Grand Teton National Park

DAY 10: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Today's destination is Yellowstone, the world's first national park (so designated in 1872). See the park's famous hot springs and geysers, including Old Faithful. Wildlife within the park includes grizzly bears, wolves, bison and elk. You'll spend the entire day experiencing the majesty of Yellowstone's awe-inspiring views and terrain.

Included meals: breakfast

Included entrances: Yellowstone National Park

DAY 11: JACKSON

Enjoy a free day in Jackson. Peruse the shops and restaurants. Alternatively, opt for our unforgettable hot air balloon ride above the Jackson Hole area. This afternoon, opt for a scenic float down the Snake River. Join your fellow travelers tonight for

an included Farewell Dinner.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 12: RETURN HOME

This morning, a Go Ahead representative escorts you to the airport for your return flight home.

Included meals: breakfast

(In the case of early morning departures, breakfast may not be provided.)



Travel Pace: 3

Travel pace levels are based on criteria such as length of tour, number of cities visited, number of included activities, as well as length of flights and land transfers.

- 1 - leisurely
- 2 - comfortable
- 3 - active
- 4 - challenging

Walking on Tour

Most sightseeing on this tour is combined private motorcoach tours with up-close walks, including tours of Mesa Verde National Park, the Grand Canyon and Zion, Bryce Canyon and Grand Teton national parks. Walks are not lengthy but can be uphill on uneven, sometimes rocky or slippery terrain. If you choose to venture out in the Grand Canyon area or when visiting Yellowstone National Park, make sure to follow trail routes and guidelines indicated by your Tour Director.

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Climate

The following guide provides the average temperatures for a sampling of the regions on your itinerary.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Jan-Feb	20°-45°F / -7°-7°C
Mar	25°-51°F / -4°-11°C
Apr	32°-60°F / 0°-16°C
May	39°-70°F / 4°-21°C
June	46°-81°F / 8°-27°C
July-Aug	54°-84°F / 12°-29°C
Sep	47°-76°F / 8°-24°C
Oct	36°-65°F / 2°-18°C
Nov	27°-52°F / -3°-11°C
Dec	20°-43°F / -7°-6°C

BRYCE/ZION

Jan	20°-37°F / -7°-3°C
Feb	24°-43°F / -4°-6°C
Mar	31°-52°F / -1°-11°C
Apr	38°-62°F / 3°-17°C
May	46°-72°F / 8°-22°C
June	54°-83°F / 12°-28°C
July-Aug	62°-92°F / 17°-33°C
Sep	61°-90°F / 16°-32°C
Oct	40°-66°F / 4°-19°C
Nov	30°-50°F / -1°-10°C
Dec	22°-39°F / -5°-4°C

JACKSON HOLE

Jan	5°-27°F / -15°-3°C
Feb	8°-32°F / -13°-0°C
Mar	14°-39°F / -10°-4°C
Apr	24°-51°F / -4°-11°C
May	31°-63°F / -1°-17°C
June	37°-72°F / 3°-22°C
July-Aug	40°-80°F / 4°-27°C
Sep	31°-71°F / -1°-22°C
Oct	23°-59°F / -5°-15°C
Nov	16°-39°F / -9°-4°C
Dec	7°-28°F / -14°-2°C

Pre-departure information for “U.S. National Parks & the Albuquerque Balloon Festival”

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

No official documentation is required for U.S. citizens, although we strongly recommend having your driver's license or passport with you at all times for identification purposes. If you are not a U.S. citizen, please be sure to have your required identification with you as well.

AIRPORT AND DEPARTURE TAXES

All airport and departure taxes are included in the total trip cost printed on your invoice.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Airlines have varying weight restrictions on luggage. Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies. Bear in mind that your luggage will probably weigh more on your return trip due to souvenir shopping. We allow only one suitcase per person. One carry-on bag is also permitted, provided that it does not exceed 45 inches (length + width + height). There may be times when you will have to handle your own bags, and you'll find that lightweight luggage provides a distinct advantage. Make sure you label your baggage and carry valuables, medication and documents in your carry-on luggage.

CLOTHING AND PACKING TIPS

Light, loose-fitting clothing that provides comfort when exploring the sights is essential for your tour. A sun hat, sunglasses and a sturdy pair of walking shoes are recommended for sightseeing. Hiking boots might come in handy, if you plan to do any extensive walking or hiking. It's always a good idea to be prepared for any eventuality—a lightweight sports jacket and emergency rainwear are advised. Restaurants are typically informal in this region of the United States.

HEALTH

Please be aware that you will be traveling at altitudes between 7,000 and 9,000 feet above sea level on this tour. These high altitudes can sometimes cause difficulty breathing and other health problems with travelers who have heart problems or respiratory ailments. If you suffer from any of these conditions, please speak to your doctor regarding any potential health risks.

Even healthy travelers may sometimes experience altitude sickness, a temporary condition featuring symptoms of headache, fatigue, nausea and lightheadedness. Until your body acclimates to the high-

er altitudes, we suggest that you drink plenty of fluids and limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol.

Otherwise, there are no major health risks when traveling to this region. During the summer months, take care for sun exposure and heat. It is always advisable to check with your doctor or health-care provider for the latest updates and personal travel requirements.

CUISINE

One of the most enjoyable aspects of traveling is the delightful variety of local cuisine—even if you're not traveling abroad. After all, the United States contains some of the most varied food in the world, and your tour will hit many different historic regions. Most of the cuisine is well-known to Americans, but look out especially for delicious Mexican and Spanish food in New Mexico.

TRANSPORTATION

Flights arrive in Albuquerque, where a Go Ahead representative escorts you to your hotel for check-in. Flights depart from Jackson. All included transportation on “U.S. National Parks & the Albuquerque Balloon Festival” is by private motorcoach.

ELECTRICITY

All regions operate on the U.S. standard 110 volts.

TIME ZONES

Most of your tour will fall on Mountain Standard Time (MST), which is two hours behind Eastern Standard Time (EST). Arizona is on Pacific Standard Time (PST) in the summer, which is three hours behind EST; and MST in the winter. For most of your tour, when it's noon in New York City, it's 10 a.m. on tour.

CURRENCY

U.S. dollars will be the currency on your tour.

TIPPING

At the conclusion of your tour, it is customary to offer your Go Ahead Tour Director and driver a gratuity. We recommend tipping in your tour country's currency, the equivalent of \$3USD/CAD per person per day for your driver and \$6USD/CAD to \$9USD/CAD per person per day for your Tour Director. If applicable, we also recommend the equivalent of \$2USD/CAD per local guide. Tips can only be paid in cash. Please keep current local currency exchange rates in mind when tipping.

PURCHASING OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS ON TOUR

If you have not yet purchased your optional excursions, you may be able to do so while on your tour. Your tour director will only accept cash (in U.S. dollars only), Visa, MasterCard or American Express as payment for optional excursions. Please be advised that if you pay for an excursion by credit card while on tour, it may take up to three months for your card to be charged. Some optional excursions may only be purchased in advance. See the separate “Optional Excursions” sheet for more information.

Travel is, by its very nature, unpredictable. We must therefore reserve the right to change this itinerary without advanced notice to meet with local conditions at the time of travel. We appreciate your understanding. Please refer to the current catalog for terms & conditions, dates and prices.