



Wonders of America's National Parks

17 Night Self Drive Tour

Set out on an epic road trip from Denver to Las Vegas, a journey brimming with iconic landmarks and breathtaking natural wonders.

Begin your adventure in the vibrant city of Denver, then head north to the majestic Mount Rushmore, where the granite faces of four U.S. presidents gaze out over the Black Hills. Continue to the untamed beauty of Yellowstone National Park, home to geysers, hot springs, and diverse wildlife. Just south lies the stunning Grand Teton National Park, with its towering peaks and serene lakes.

As you travel through Utah, explore the striking landscapes of Arches, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Parks, each offering unique geological formations and scenic vistas. Finally, reach the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon, a natural marvel carved by the Colorado River. Conclude your trip in the dazzling city of Las Vegas, where the neon lights and vibrant nightlife provide a stark yet exciting contrast to the natural beauty you've experienced.

Highlights:

- Drive along the breathtaking Peak to Peak Scenic Byway in Colorado, and the Bighorn Scenic Byway in Wyoming
- View Mount Rushmore, where the faces of four presidents emerge from granite
- Marvel at the sacred Devils Tower
- Explore Yellowstone geysers, geothermal pools and an abundance of wildlife
- Admire the jagged peaks of the Teton National Park
- Discover Utah's 'Mighty 5' – Canyonlands, Arches, Capitol Reef, Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks
- Catch sunrise from Mather Point at the Grand Canyon's South Rim
- Go back in time and drive along the longest original stretch of Route 66 between Ash Fork and Kingman

What's included:

- Getting there: Flights to Denver, return from Las Vegas
- Transport: Car hire inclusive of GPS
- Accommodation: 17 nights total (including 1 night on the inbound flight) - 16 nights accommodation at different hotels along the route. In remote or less populated areas, such as near national parks or along scenic routes, hotels and lodges may be more basic in amenities and facilities. This could mean simpler rooms, limited dining options, or fewer services compared to urban centres.
- Meals included: as per accommodation booked, most hotels will only offer room only or breakfast

Not included:

- Any meals, drinks, tips, expenses of personal nature
- Anything not mentioned in the "What's Included" column

Full Itinerary

DAY 1 - UK TO DENVER

Fly to Denver, Colorado then pick up your rental car and check in to your hotel in Denver.

Denver, the Mile-High City, offers a vibrant mix of attractions. Explore the historic Larimer Square with its charming boutiques and eateries or stroll through the lush Denver Botanic Gardens. The Denver Art Museum boasts impressive collections, while the Museum of Nature & Science features interactive exhibits. Relax at your hotel before your road trip starts tomorrow.

ACCOMMODATION: 4* The Curtis Denver - a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel or similar



DAY 2 - DENVER TO CHEYENNE

Driving from Denver to Cheyenne in Wyoming via the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway offers a breathtaking journey through Colorado's stunning landscapes. Start by heading west from Denver to Black Hawk, where you'll join the byway. This route winds through the majestic Rocky Mountains, offering panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, dense forests, and alpine meadows. Pass through charming mountain towns like Nederland, and catch glimpses of iconic landmarks like Longs Peak.

Arrive in Estes Park, where the Stanley Hotel, famous for its role in inspiring Stephen King's "The Shining," awaits atop a hill. After exploring its Victorian architecture and stunning surroundings, continue north towards Loveland and on to Cheyenne, enjoying the scenic landscapes that make this drive unforgettable.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Little America Hotel and Resort, Cheyenne or similar

DRIVING TIME: 4 hrs / 186 mi



DAY 3 - CHEYENNE TO CUSTER

Embark on a picturesque drive from Cheyenne to Custer in South Dakota, weaving through the heart of the American West with maybe a stop at the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs.

The Mammoth Site offers a unique glimpse into the prehistoric world with its fossilized mammoth remains. After exploring this archaeological treasure, continue east through the scenic Black Hills, passing through Custer State Park's rugged landscapes and perhaps catching sight of its resident buffalo herds.

You will spend the next 2 nights in the historic town of Custer, where the spirit of the Old West still thrives amidst breathtaking natural beauty.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Best Western Buffalo Ridge Inn, Custer or similar

DRIVING TIME: 4.5 hrs / 265 mi

DAY 4 - MOUNT RUSHMORE, CRAZY HORSE AND CUSTER STATE PARK

Begin your day at Mount Rushmore, where the faces of four presidents emerge from granite, a testament to American history and ingenuity. Marvel at the colossal sculptures and stroll the Presidential Trail for a closer view.

Next, visit Crazy Horse Memorial, honoring Native American culture with its massive unfinished sculpture and educational center. Learn about the vision behind this ambitious project amid the Black Hills' scenic grandeur.

Conclude your adventure at Custer State Park, renowned for its wildlife and scenic drives. Encounter bison roaming freely, drive the Needles Highway for stunning rock formations, or hike among the park's tranquil forests and lakes. You can also visit the Wind Cave National Park, featuring one of the world's longest and most complex caves, with unique boxwork formations and diverse wildlife above ground.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Best Western Buffalo Ridge Inn, Custer or similar



DAY 5 - CUSTER TO SHERIDAN

Today you will drive from Custer to Sheridan in Wyoming, starting with a visit to Deadwood, a historic Wild West town known for its gold rush past and lively Main Street.

Continue north through scenic Black Hills landscapes, heading towards Devils Tower National Monument. Marvel at this iconic geological wonder, a towering monolith sacred to Native American tribes.

As you journey further north, witness the changing scenery of Wyoming's open plains and rolling hills. Arrive in Sheridan, nestled at the base of the Bighorn Mountains, where western charm meets outdoor adventure in this picturesque Wyoming town.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Hampton Inn Sheridan or similar

DRIVING TIME: 5 hrs / 320 mi



DAY 6 - SHERIDAN TO WEST YELLOWSTONE VIA CODY

Leave your hotel after breakfast and embark on a scenic drive from Sheridan to Cody via Route 14, known as the Bighorn Scenic Byway. Departing Sheridan, head west into the Bighorn Mountains, where the road winds through lush forests, towering granite cliffs, and alpine meadows. As you ascend to over 9,000 feet, stop at viewpoints like Granite Pass for breathtaking panoramic views of the rugged landscape below.

Descend into the Bighorn Basin, passing through charming towns like Greybull and Shell, known for their Western heritage and outdoor recreation. As the road descends towards Cody, the landscape transitions to expansive prairies and rolling foothills, providing glimpses of the rugged beauty that defines this region.

Stop for lunch in Cody, and if you are interested you can visit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, housing five museums dedicated to Western art, history and natural science. It showcases artifacts, exhibits, and interactive displays that celebrate the life and legend of Buffalo Bill Cody and the American West.

Then head back on the road enroute to Yellowstone National Park, America's oldest national park, known for geysers, geothermal pools and an abundance of wildlife.

Arriving at Yellowstone's eastern entrance, you'll encounter dramatic vistas and glimpses of wildlife like elk and bison. The road winds through the park's diverse ecosystems, leading to iconic attractions such as Yellowstone Lake and the geothermal wonders around Old Faithful.

You will stay in West Yellowstone, Montana for the next 2 nights, a stone's throw away from the park.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Explorer Cabins at Yellowstone, West Yellowstone or similar

DRIVING TIME: 3 hrs / 148 mi to Cody, and then 3 hr / 133 mi to West Yellowstone



DAY 7 - YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Begin your day exploring Yellowstone National Park by entering through the park's west entrance. Drive to the nearby Madison Junction, then head south towards the Lower Geyser Basin. Here, you can marvel at the Fountain Paint Pot's bubbling mud pots and vibrant hot springs.

Continue your journey to the Midway Geyser Basin, home to the mesmerizing Grand Prismatic Spring, with its vivid colours and steaming surface. A short hike to the overlook provides an incredible view of this natural wonder.

Next, proceed to the Upper Geyser Basin to witness Old Faithful's iconic eruption. Explore the boardwalks around this area, featuring numerous other geysers and hot springs. Enjoy a picnic lunch in the Old Faithful area, soaking in the unique geothermal landscape.



In the afternoon, drive to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. Stop at the various viewpoints, such as Artist Point and Lookout Point, to take in the breathtaking vistas of the canyon and its stunning waterfalls, including the powerful Lower Falls.

Finish your day with a visit to Hayden Valley, renowned for its abundant wildlife. Keep an eye out for bison, elk, and possibly bears. As the sun sets, head back to your hotel, reflecting on the day's incredible sights and experiences in America's first national park.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Explorer Cabins at Yellowstone, West Yellowstone or similar

DAY 8 - YELLOWSTONE NP TO JACKSON

Today you can head south towards Jackson, Wyoming, beginning with a journey south towards Mesa Falls. Marvel at Upper and Lower Mesa Falls, cascading over rugged cliffs amid serene, forested surroundings.

Continue south into Idaho, then east towards Teton Pass. Ascend through winding mountain roads, offering panoramic views of the Teton Range and its dramatic peaks. Descend into Jackson Hole Valley, where the landscape opens up to expansive meadows and grazing bison.

Arrive in Jackson, a charming Western town nestled beneath the majestic Grand Tetons, offering a blend of outdoor adventure and Old West charm.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Virginian Lodge, Jackson or similar

DRIVING TIME: 2hr 45min / 136 mi



DAY 9 - GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Enjoy a day at leisure exploring Grand Teton National Park.

You may wish to start with a scenic drive along Teton Park Road. Marvel at the jagged peaks of the Teton Range reflected in the tranquil waters of Jenny Lake. Embark on a hike to Hidden Falls and Inspiration Point for breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and lush forests.

After a picnic lunch by the lake, drive north to explore the historic Mormon Row, where iconic barns frame the majestic backdrop of the Tetons. End your day with a leisurely stroll along the shores of Jackson Lake, soaking in the serenity and grandeur of this remarkable landscape.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Virginian Lodge, Jackson or similar

DAY 10 - JACKSON TO SALT LAKE CITY

Today you will head towards the state capital of Utah, Salt Lake City. Drive south, soaking in the last breathtaking views of the Teton Range.

Stop for lunch in Soda Springs to explore its historic sites and natural geothermal wonders, and then continue west, joining the Pioneer Historic Byway.

Wind through historic towns and scenic valleys before entering Utah, driving through picturesque canyons and past the Great Salt Lake towards vibrant Salt Lake City.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* evo Hotel, Salt Lake City or similar

DRIVING TIME: 4.5 hrs / 280 mi



DAY 11 – SALT LAKE CITY TO MOAB

Embark on a scenic drive from Salt Lake City to Moab, enjoy views of the Wasatch Mountains as you journey through Provo, and wind through the picturesque Spanish Fork Canyon, offering stunning rock formations and forested landscapes. The approach to Moab showcases dramatic red rock vistas and the rugged beauty of the Utah desert.

Arrive in Moab, the gateway to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, where outdoor adventure and striking landscapes await.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn, Moab or similar

DRIVING TIME: 3.5 hrs / 234 mi

DAY 12 - CANYONLANDS AND ARCHES NATIONAL PARKS

Start your day early at Arches National Park to catch the sunrise over the iconic Delicate Arch. This 3-mile round-trip hike offers stunning views of the arch and surrounding landscape bathed in morning light. Next, drive to the Windows Section, where you can explore the accessible trails leading to North Window, South Window, and Double Arch, some of the park's largest and most photogenic formations.

After a morning of hiking, have a picnic lunch at one of the park's designated areas, enjoying the unique red rock scenery.



In the afternoon, head towards Canyonlands National Park, specifically the Island in the Sky district. Begin your visit with a short hike to Mesa Arch, a perfect frame for panoramic views of the canyons and La Sal Mountains in the distance.

Continue to the Grand View Point Overlook, where a moderate 2-mile round-trip trail offers expansive vistas of the canyons and the Colorado River below. Next, explore Upheaval Dome, a mysterious geological structure with a 1.7-mile round-trip hike to its two overlooks, providing insights into its unique formation.

Conclude your day at the Green River Overlook, where you can witness a spectacular sunset over the expansive canyons. This serene spot offers a perfect end to a day of exploring the natural wonders of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.

ACCOMMODATION: 3* Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn, Moab or similar

DAY 13 - MOAB TO KANAB VIA CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

Today you will head on a scenic drive from Moab to Kanab via Capitol Reef National Park. Enjoy the iconic red rock landscapes as you head towards the quaint town of Hanksville and into the heart of Capitol Reef. In the park, explore the towering cliffs, vibrant rock formations, and lush orchards in the historic Fruita district. Visit the visitor centre and hike trails such as Capitol Gorge or Hickman Bridge to immerse yourself in the park's natural beauty.

When you are ready to leave head west towards Torrey, and then take the scenic UT-12 south. This byway offers stunning views of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, with its rugged terrain and unique rock formations. Drive through the charming towns of Boulder and Escalante, known for their scenic beauty and slot canyons.

Arrive in Kanab, a welcoming town that serves as a gateway to southern Utah's further adventures.

ACCOMMODATION: 4* Best Western Red Hills, Kanab or similar

DRIVING TIME: 6 hrs / 339 mi



DAY 14 - BRYCE CANYON AND ZION NATIONAL PARKS

Depart Kanab early for Zion National Park, and enter Zion Canyon via the scenic Zion-Mount Carmel Highway, stopping at viewpoints like Checkerboard Mesa. Explore Zion Canyon on the park shuttle, hiking trails like Emerald Pools or Riverside Walk.

In the afternoon, drive north to Bryce Canyon National Park. Visit the Bryce Canyon Visitor Centre and take in the panoramic views from Sunrise Point and Sunset Point. Hike among the hoodoos on trails like Navajo Loop or Queens Garden.

Return to Kanab, ending the day with memories of Zion's towering cliffs and Bryce's otherworldly formations.

ACCOMMODATION: 4* Best Western Red Hills, Kanab or similar



DAY 15 - KANAB TO TUSAYAN

Embark on a scenic journey from Kanab to Tusayan, the gateway to the Grand Canyon's South Rim. Traverse through the picturesque Vermilion Cliffs and enjoying expansive views of the Arizona desert landscape, proceeding towards the town of Page. You will drive through the Navajo Nation territory, offering glimpses of the vast desert plains and unique geological formations characteristic of northern Arizona.

Arrive in Tusayan, just outside the park entrance, where you can explore viewpoints and prepare for an unforgettable experience at one of the world's most spectacular natural wonders, the Grand Canyon.

ACCOMMODATION: 4* Squire Resort at Grand Canyon Signature Collection or similar

DRIVING TIME: 3.5 hrs / 214 mi

DAY 16- TUSAYAN TO LAS VEGAS

Begin your morning at the Grand Canyon by catching the sunrise from Mather Point on the South Rim. Watch as the first rays illuminate the canyon walls, creating a breathtaking spectacle of colours and shadows. Take a leisurely walk along the Rim Trail to Yavapai Point for panoramic views of the canyon and the Colorado River below.

After soaking in the natural beauty, depart from the Grand Canyon and drive towards Williams, heading west through the Arizona desert. Then head north towards Las Vegas, enjoying expansive desert vistas along the way. Arrive in Las Vegas, where the desert landscape gives way to the bustling cityscape, ready for exploration and entertainment. You may also wish to drive along Route 66 through Seligman.

You only have one night included in Las Vegas, but feel free to extend your stay to be able to explore 'Sin City'.

ACCOMMODATION: 4* Paris Las Vegas or similar

DRIVING TIME: 4 hrs / 273 mi (add an extra half hour to drive Route 66)



DAY 17 - FLY BACK FROM LAS VEGAS TO UK

Today you fly back to the UK, dropping the car back at Las Vegas airport.

DAY 18 - ARRIVE HOME

Your overnight flight arrives back in the UK for you to make your journey home.

FAQs

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL

The best time to travel is from mid June to October. June to August for warm temperatures and long days however the parks are very busy. September and October is less busy and good for spotting fall foliage. Travelling in the winter is possible however some of the roads around Yellowstone may be closed due to snow.

CAR HIRE

Please note to rent a car the lead driver must have a credit card on their name. Debit cards are only accepted in some cases. Please ensure a GPS and zero excess is included in the car rental, as well as multiple drivers, full tank of petrol should you wish to benefit from this. Many of the roads are so vast and straight in the national parks you'd be forgiven for thinking it's okay to drive a little faster than you actually should. There are, however, a lot of police cars and speed checks along the roads so do ensure you stick to the speed limit, which can often be 50 or 55 miles an hour. A one way fee may be applicable to the car rental, which will need to be paid on arrival. This will be confirmed at the time of booking.

MAPS

Your car hire will have a GPS included so you can find your way; physical driving instructions are not included, in order to give you the flexibility to stop and change route at any time.

Please note, due to seasonal conditions and maintenance, some roads along the route may be temporarily closed. We advise checking local road conditions and planning alternative routes where necessary to ensure a smooth and enjoyable journey.

ESSENTIALS

Some of the areas you'll be travelling are quiet remote, you may like to bring with you lots of water and snacks.

ACCOMMODATION

Around National Parks and near remote areas, the standard of accommodation is fairly basic. Treat them just as a place to sleep, as you won't be spending much time in them.

VISA

British citizens do not require a VISA to visit the US, but they do need to apply online for an electronic authorization (ESTA). <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>

NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE FEES

Most U.S. National Parks charge an entrance fee, typically around USD \$20–\$35 per vehicle. From 1 January 2026, the "America the Beautiful" Annual Pass will cost USD \$250 for non-U.S. residents, which provides access to most National Parks. In addition, non-U.S. residents without an annual pass will pay a USD \$100 per person surcharge to enter 11 of the most visited national parks, on top of standard entrance fees. Find more information at: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>