



## Trek the Canyons USA



**Activity:** Trek **Grade:** 2 Demanding **Duration:** 7 Days

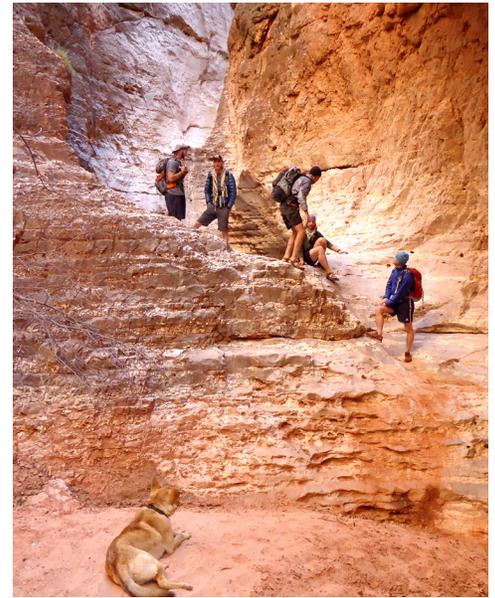
The American South-West is renowned for its National Parks, offering colourful desert, spectacular rock formations, deep canyons – and unforgettable adventure!

The Grand Canyon is an undisputed highlight; at 277 miles long, 18 miles wide and up to one mile deep, this Natural Wonder of the World is a sight on many wish-lists. We spend two days in

the Grand Canyon before moving on to Zion National Park, less well-known than its famous neighbour, but packed with breath-taking and challenging landscapes for trekkers.

We finish with a celebration in energetic Las Vegas, which couldn't contrast more with the natural beauty we have been immersed in!

“*Being put out of my comfort zone and experiencing an amazing part of the world. - Vicky*”



### CHALLENGE GRADING

*Our trips are graded from Challenging (Grade 1) to Extreme (Grade 5).*

**This trek is graded Demanding (2). Main challenges lie in the steep climbs rocky terrain, and the contrast between cold and intense heat.**

Many factors influence the Challenge Grading, such as terrain, distances, climate, altitude, living conditions, etc. The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

Our grading levels are intended as a guide, but span a broad spectrum; trips within the same grade will still vary in the level of challenge provided.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Arrive in Phoenix

We meet in the evening at our hotel in Phoenix, capital of Arizona. **Night hotel.**

### Day 2: Phoenix – Sedona – Grand Canyon

After an early breakfast and a detailed trip briefing we have a scenic drive north (approx 2 hours) through the Sonoran Desert. We arrive in the beautiful area of Sedona, known for its beautiful red sandstone landscapes and dramatic rock formations. We spend the rest of the day walking along the beautiful Oak Creek Canyon, often referred to as the Grand Canyon's small cousin! This is the perfect acclimatisation trek, helping our bodies to get used to the heat and the terrain. We then meet our vehicles and transfer to our campground near the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

**Night camp.**

**Drive approx. 2 hrs; trek approx. 3-4 hrs / 5-6 miles; drive approx. 2.5 hrs**

### Day 3: Grand Canyon

Today we descend into the heart of the Grand Canyon! Bright Angel Trail was originally used by Native Americans to access the vital water source now called Indian Gardens, 3000ft (910m) below. Early western pioneers followed suit, and we follow in their footsteps. As we descend into the Canyon we pass through 750 million years of rock layers – a humbling way to start our trek. Despite the well-maintained trail



it's a challenging day, but the magnificent views that greet us the length of the trail are well worth it! We trek to the giant cottonwood trees of Indian Gardens; depending on conditions and group pace we may continue to Plateau Point, where the Colorado River can be seen below. We then return, with an arduously steep climb back up to the Rim, pausing to find rock art created by Havasupai Indians hundreds of years ago. **Night camp.**

**Trek approx. 6-8 hrs / 9-12 miles**

#### **Day 4: Grand Canyon – Zion National Park**

We have an early breakfast and break camp, before descending once more into the depths of the Grand Canyon. A shorter trek does not diminish the views; we come to the aptly-named Ooh-Ahh Point, then continue our downhill trek through magnificent vistas to Cedar Ridge. The downhill walking should soften up any aching muscles before the tough uphill climb back to the Rim! After this spectacular morning's trek, we leave the Grand Canyon for our next National Park adventure. En route we break our journey with a walk over Jurassic-era sand to the famous viewpoint at Horseshoe Bend, where the tremendous blue-green Colorado River curves widely around a sandstone escarpment. The contrasting colours of the river and the red-pink rocks, which change with the sun and shadows, make this a real highlight of our adventure. We drive on, crossing from Arizona into Utah, and to Zion National Park. **Night camp.**

**Trek approx. 4-5 hrs / 6-7 miles; Drive approx. 3.5 hrs**

#### **Day 5: Zion National Park**

Zion National Park is known for its wide open spaces and spectacular deep, narrow 'slot' canyons. Today's adventure takes us steadily uphill as we zig-zag steeply up the red sandstone slopes of Mt Baldy and through the deep gorge of Echo Canyon. Our destination is Observation Point, where we are rewarded by magnificent vistas over the surrounding cliffs, mountains and monoliths. We can admire the rock sculptures eroded by the elements into striking formations, and the lush valley of the Virgin River far below. It's a tough day, with a descent that's tiring and tough on the legs, but once more the views and sense of achievement are unforgettable. We enjoy our last night of camping under the clear Utah skies. **Night camp.**

**Trek approx. 5-7 hrs / 8 miles**

#### **Day 6: Zion National Park – Las Vegas**

Our last day sees us tackling The Narrows, often described as one of the best hiking experiences in the US. The cool shade of this deep chasm, carved through rock by the north fork of the Virgin River, is wonderful on a hot day. We walk upstream through the slot canyon, often wading through shallow water, admiring the sculpted rock and the perpendicular canyon walls towering above us – so narrow that in places we can touch both sides. Although the ground is only gently sloping, the going can be strenuous at times as we negotiate mossy boulders and water channels – a real adventure for our last day. Coming back to the trailhead and our vehicles, we drive through wonderful wilderness scenery for the last time as we cross into Nevada and arrive in Las Vegas, entertainment capital of the world. On arrival we are free to relax and explore – check out the famous sound-and-light fountain shows, fake erupting volcanoes, Elvis impersonators and replicas of everything from the Eiffel Tower to the Sphinx! It's not subtle, but it's a real contrast to the past few days and great fun! We enjoy a slap-up meal to celebrate our achievements of the past week. **Night hotel.**

**Trek approx. 3-4 hours / 5-6 miles; drive approx. 3 hours**

#### **Day 7: End of service**

Depending on whether the arranged time is suitable, the option to join the main group airport transfer is available.

*Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.*

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