

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive anytime today. First meeting is tomorrow morning.

Today is arrival day! You are free to arrive in El Paso anytime today. Your group meeting will be tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. at breakfast. More details about meeting place will be in pre-trip letter. Tonight's lodging is included in your trip fee. Dinner is on your own.

DAY 2

Meet and drive to Marfa

We start our trip at our El Paso hotel at 9am! Your guides will meet you at the hotel and after brief introductions the group will begin the journey east with a three-hour drive to Marfa- a former sleepy ranching town that has exploded onto the art scene. We'll check into our lodging at the historic Hotel Paisano, chat about the trip, share dinner downtown and maybe even spy the mysterious Marfa Lights. (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Leave Marfa and hike in Big Bend State Park

Leaving Marfa, we'll depart for Big Bend Ranch State Park, stopping at the Fort Leaton ranger station before driving the scenic River Road along the Rio Grande. From the Fresno Creek trailhead, we will hike approximately 9 miles on a loop trail through the Chihuahuan Desert. Before becoming a State Park, this area was home to mining and ranching operations. After our hike we will continue to Terlingua Ghost Town and settle in to our casitas, our home for the next three nights. (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Hike in BB National Park to the top of a mesa atop Santa Elena canyon

After breakfast, we'll take a short drive to the Mesa de Anguila Trail, one of the most spectacular hikes in the National Park. The mesa sits high atop Santa Elena Canyon and serves as the western border of the park. We'll hike from Lajitas about 2 miles to the saddle, which offers a view to the Rio Grande far below us as well as into Mexico. From here, you can choose to continue along the mesa (it goes on much farther than we have time to walk) for an out-and-back hike with 360-degree vistas. (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Paddle the Rio Grande River

From yesterday's eagle-eye viewpoint we spied the Rio Grande and today we'll be paddling in it! We'll drive into the National Park and, depending on water levels, we will kayak through Santa Elena Canyon or Dark Canyon and explore the 2,000-foot cathedral-like walls that create a natural border. This half-day paddle lets us explore the riparian zones of the Rio. Our local outfitter will provide instruction as well as natural history interpretation. We'll return to Terlingua for dinner. (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Chisos Basin and the Window Trail

Today we move from our casitas in Terlingua to Chisos Mountain Lodge, within the National Park. Our first stop is the National Park Visitor Center at Panther Junction. Weâ€™ll continue to Chisos Basin and hike the Window Trail, an out-and-back 5.6-mile route through Oak Creek Canyon. After our hike, weâ€™ll move into our rooms and enjoy the scenery of the basin before meeting for dinner at the lodge. (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Hike the South Rim trail into the Chisos Mountains with dramatic views

We're saving our most spectacular hike for last. Today we explore the South Rim Trail in the Chisos Mountains, the only mountain range that is entirely encompassed in the borders of a US National Park! Our 12-mile loop hike rewards us with dramatic vistas of the Sierra del Carmen Mountains of Mexico as well as the rolling foothills of the Chisos as they settle into the flat floor of the Chihuahuan Desert thousands of feet below. It's a long day and a tough hike, but you won't regret it. (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Time to head home. Drive to El Paso fly out after 3:30pm

The trip may be ending but the journey isn't over! After a breakfast at the lodge we'll load up and drive two hours to Alpine, where we'll stop to stretch our legs before three more hours in the car brings us to El Paso. Weâ€™ll have our last picnic lunch together along the way. You can plan to fly out after 3:30 p.m. (B, L)