



# HIKING THE GRAND STAIRCASE NATIONAL PARKS

## TRIP SUMMARY

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking through two billion years of geologic time as we descent 3000 feet into the Grand Canyon
- Seeing Bryce Canyon's hoodoos as you hike through them
- Experiencing the peace of Zion Canyon from the floor of the canyon and the rim
- Learning about the diverse and fascinating geology of the area
- Gazing upward at more stars than you ever knew existed

## TRIP AT A GLANCE

<b>Location:</b>	North Rim Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce National Parks
<b>Activities:</b>	Hiking
<b>Arrive:</b>	Plan to meet at 12pm at the Las Vegas airport on Day 1
<b>Depart:</b>	Las Vegas airport in time for flights out after 7pm on the last day.

### TRIP OVERVIEW

The Grand Staircase refers to an immense sequence of sedimentary rock layers that stretch from Bryce Canyon National Park and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, through Zion NP and Grand Canyon NP. The rock that is at the bottom of Bryce forms the top of Zion and the bottom rock of Zion is the top layer of the Grand Canyon. We've picked three National Parks along the Grand Staircase to hike: Zion, Bryce and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon National Parks are all spectacular and all very different from the others. The Grand Canyon is vast: it is 10 miles from one side to the other and a mile deep. Bryce is known for amazing hoodoos, the brightly colored spires of varied shapes; and Zion, with the tallest layer of Redwall Limestone of any canyon, is both majestic and a much more intimate canyon that fully deserves its name. We have chosen some of the classic trails in each park, designed to give you an experience and understanding that can only be gained by hiking in them.

### RATING

This trip is rated 4 because, except for the first day and on the Virgin River hiking day, each day's hike is between 4 and 6 hours and with substantial elevation gain and loss. This trip is a great choice for any healthy woman in good physical condition who loves hiking and wants to do lots of it. If you have a significant fear of heights, please call the office before you register. Prior to the beginning of the trip, participants should be engaged in aerobic conditioning for at least 40-50 minutes 4-5 times a week. Additional endurance exercise (e.g. going for a 2-hour hike once a week) and/or strength training is usually required. **Rating:** 1 2 3 [4](#) 5.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 1 - 2 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- Seven nights of double occupancy accommodation
- All meals from dinner on first day thru lunch on the last day
- Transportation during the trip, starting in Las Vegas
- National Park entry fees
- Gear rental for the Narrows

**Not included:** Travel to and from Las Vegas, alcoholic beverages, snacks, guide gratuities and travel insurance

## OUR ITINERARY

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

### DAY 1

Our trip starts today at 12 PM at the Las Vegas airport. It's a busy airport so plan to arrive not later than 11:30 AM. After brief introductions we will pack up the vans and head to St. George, Utah - a small town out of the bustle of Las Vegas. We'll start getting to know each other and have a trip orientation in the evening before sharing our first dinner. Bedtime is likely to be early tonight!

### DAY 2

We'll get an early start this morning and drive the remaining 1 hour to Zion National Park. We will begin with a trip to the Visitors' Center and then into the charming town of Springdale. We'll pick up the gear we need for the Narrows. We'll then head to the Park for our wade up the Narrows. This is the name given to a spectacular gorge in the upper reaches of Zion Canyon that is 16 miles long and up to 2000 feet deep. Our destination is Orderville Canyon, about 2 hours upriver with some of the most spectacular scenery in the Narrows. However, it is an out and back hike so turning around earlier or going a little farther are also options, depending on the weather and our energy. If the weather or the conditions don't permit a hike into the Narrows the guides will take you on one of the other phenomenal hikes in Zion. Overnight Zion National Park.

### DAY 3

Geologically speaking, Zion is the middle of the Grand Staircase. Our hike today is to Observation Point. This steep trail passes Weeping Rock and then climbs through Echo Canyon, gaining 2,150 feet in four miles. Observation Point is aptly named; from here we have a phenomenal view down into the canyon of the Virgin River and across to the plateaus from which it is carved, as well as a clear look at Angels Landing. Overnight Zion National Park.

## DAY 4

Today our choice of hikes starts on the trail to Scout's Landing. This paved trail switchbacks up on a wide trail for about 2 miles. For those who have no fear of heights and want a mental challenge, we offer Angels Landing – a classic Zion hike. From Scouts Landing, the trail follows a narrow ridge (there are chains there for support) out to a fantastic overlook high above Zion Canyon. For many, however, this will be far enough, and you can either wait (the view is amazing) or return to the trailhead and walk along the Virgin River trail. In either case you can make your final decision once you've actually seen the trail. Hiking up to Angels Landing is about .5 miles out and back. If your legs are demanding a bit of a rest today, walking along the Virgin River is always a good choice.

Whichever you choose, we'll regroup for our drive to Bryce Canyon. This is a very scenic drive of about 2 hours. We'll pass Checkerboard Mesa and go through the Zion Tunnel, an engineering marvel from the days when cars were smaller. We'll arrive in time to settle in and, since our rooms are only 5 minutes from the Rim, we can get our first look at this unique landscape. Tonight, we'll enjoy a delicious dinner at the wonderful old Lodge there. Overnight Bryce Canyon.

## DAY 5

Our hike today, the Fairyland Loop, will leave you breathless - both by the brightly colored rock spires that have been carved into a myriad of fascinating shapes by erosional forces, and from the altitude. Bryce is at the top of the Grand Staircase, and the rim of the canyon is around 8,000 ft. The loop will help us understand the concept that Bryce Canyon is not truly a canyon. This 8-mile trail, which follows a loop around a major formation with constantly changing views, provides an excellent opportunity to see hoodoos from the bottom up. The trail starts with 2.5 miles along the rim before plunging down into the hoodoos of Fairyland Canyon. The scenery is spectacular; along the way we get a great view of the Chinese Wall, hike past Sinking Ship Mesa, and take a short spur to Tower Bridge. With much less traffic here than other trails in the park, it may be one of the park's best kept secrets.

Or you can choose the equally spectacular Peekaboo Loop. This 6-mile hike includes the Navajo Trail, Peekaboo Loop, and the Queens Garden Trail. The Navajo Trail descends into the canyon in a series of dramatic switchbacks, winding under hoodoos, and down to a trail junction at the bottom. From here it's a short distance to the Peekaboo Loop, an undulating 3-mile trail that gets its name from the "windows" along it. Returning to the junction with the Queen's Garden Trail, we'll follow it along the foot of the escarpment for about a mile.

This evening we can gaze at the sunset over some of the most amazing geology you will ever see. Bryce is also known for having one of the most glorious nighttime skies of anyplace in the U.S. and if stargazing appeals to you, this is the perfect place to do it. Overnight Bryce Canyon National Park.

## DAY 6

Today we say good-bye to the top of the Grand Staircase and drive to the top of the bottom of the staircase. The 4-hour drive will take us to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. At 8,000 feet it is 1,000 feet higher than the South Rim. Its distance from metropolitan areas results in 10 times fewer visitors than its southern counterpart.

We start our visit here with a hike on the Widforss Trail, a relatively flat trail that follows the rim of the Transept and is 10 miles. However, the first 3 miles are the most scenic and there are numbered stops and a brochure that are a great introduction to some of the natural and human history of the Grand Canyon. Overnight, North Rim of the Grand Canyon

## DAY 7

We will hike down into the Canyon on the North Kaibab Trail. The North Kaibab Trail is the least visited but most difficult of the three maintained trails at Grand Canyon National Park. If we hiked all the way to the Colorado River (which we do not because it is 14 miles one way), we would pass through every ecosystem to be found between Canada and Mexico. Initially we hike through fir trees and aspen. Next we descend through the Redwall Limestone where the trail is blasted directly into the cliff. Most likely we will stop at Roaring Springs, where water gushes directly out of the canyon walls to form Bright Angel Creek. After a long drink and a chance to soak our feet, we retrace our steps up the 4.7 miles and 3,000 feet we came down. Some women prefer going up steep trails, some prefer going down; both will get their wish today. Overnight Grand Canyon National Park.

## DAY 8

Oh no! Can this be our last day? Yes, so we will not waste it! We start with the very short hike out to Bright Angel Point. Following that we'll drive Cape Royal Road, one of the most scenic drives in the park. We'll turn off onto the 3-mile road to Point Imperial, at 8803' the highest point on either rim, and then go on to Vista Encantada at the end of the road. Our last hike is a 1/2-mile nature trail that goes by Angels Window, an eroded opening that frames a view of the Colorado River, the perfect way to end our time here.

It's about a 5-hour drive back to Las Vegas. We'll have you at the airport by 5:30 PM and you can fly out any time after 7 PM.

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### GETTING THERE

The trip starts and ends in Las Vegas, NV (LAS), which is serviced by all major airlines. Please arrive by 11:30am in order to meet the group at 12PM. More details on the meeting location will be included in the pre-departure information. If you are driving, you can meet the group at the airport and leave your car at any of the long-term parking lots.

**If you would like help with any travel plans**, we recommend contacting our travel agency, [Exito Travel](#). If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

We will be staying in double-rooms in the lodges that are in or near the National Parks every night, which gives us the opportunity to become acquainted with each other. Each room has an ensuite bathroom and two beds, sometimes two queens and sometimes a queen and single. There are limited singles available at an additional cost. This option will be on your registration form, if available.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

WE RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH CAN HELP COVER YOUR COSTS IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP. Travel protection plans can also include coverage for Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. Adventures in Good Company will send you information about travel insurance with your registration information, or you may purchase coverage through your own insurance company. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 20-0016. The product descriptions provided here are only brief summaries. The full coverage terms and details, including limitations and exclusions, are contained in the insurance policy. Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 11.17 83I

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

To qualify for any refunds, we must receive notification in writing, by fax, email or mail to: Adventures in Good Company, 5913 Brackenridge Ave, Baltimore, MD 21212, Fax: 410-435-3084. Cancellation date is the date the notice is received by Adventures in Good Company in writing, either by fax, email or letter.

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

<b>Days Prior to Trip</b>		
<b>International</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Refund</b>
120 + days	90+ days	All but \$50
120 - 60 days	90 - 45 days	50% of trip fee
59 days or less	44 days or less	No refund

If you have paid in full, we have a waiting list, and we can fill your spot from that list, everything but your deposit will be transferred to another trip of your choosing for which you register in the next 365 days. Trip fees may be transferred from one person to another if, in the opinion of the Adventures in Good Company staff, it is determined that the other person is in the proper physical condition to participate in the trip activity.

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances. On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.