
GEEO ITINERARY

X-HIKING WESTERN USA- Summer

Day 1: Las Vegas Arrive at any time.

Arrive at any time today. This tour leaves Las Vegas in the morning on Day 2. If you would like to spend any additional time here, we recommend booking pre-tour accommodation. There are no planned activities today until the evening welcome meeting, so check out the strip or Fremont Street. Upon arrival at the hotel, please check the notice board for information about the group meeting. During the group meeting, the leader will outline the trip itinerary and answer questions.

Day 2: Las Vegas/Capitol Reef National Park (D) Travel to Capitol Reef National Park. Learn about the geology and the ancient inhabitants who created the petroglyphs still visible on the cliff walls. After dark, look up at Capitol Reef's starry night, designated a Gold Tier "International Dark Sky Park".

We leave Las Vegas for a seven-hour drive to Capitol Reef National Park. Known for its geologic monocline, discover the cliffs, canyons, petroglyphs, and orchards that make up the park. At night gaze up at the starry, starry night in this designated gold-tier International Dark Sky Park. Far away from city lights, surrounded by the vastness of Capitol Reef's majestic peaks and valleys, you'll never see the Milky Way (or the night sky) in quite the same way. Approximate travel time: 7 hrs by private vehicle

Day 3: Capitol Reef National Park/Moab (B, L, D) Set off in the morning to hike through the Waterpocket Fold. Climb through canyons and narrows to reach Cassidy Arch and panoramic views of this natural wonder. In the afternoon, continue to Moab. In the evening head to Dead Horse State Park to watch the sunset.

Set off in the morning to hike through the Waterpocket Fold, an 87-mile "wrinkle" in the earth's surface. Formed by a dramatic warp in the earth's crust (known as a monocline), Waterpocket Fold is Capitol Reef's defining geologic feature. Hike through narrow canyons before reaching the trailhead to Cassidy Arch - a dramatic rock formation with incredible views of the valley. With plentiful nooks and crannies carved into the red rock, it's easy to see why the infamous outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid once chose to make the Arch their hideaway. (Hiking distance: 3.4 miles, Elevation change: 670 ft., Duration: 4 hours) We'll stop to look at petroglyphs etched in rock walls (keep an eye for bighorn sheep) dating back to 1300 C.E. when native people of the Fremont Culture made their home at Capitol Reef. You will learn about the geology and the ancient inhabitants who created the petroglyphs. Please note several of the trails we use do not have water accessible. Please bring a bottle/bladder with a capacity of 3 liters. Unexpected trail or road closures may prevent hiking on some of the listed routes. Should this event arise, we will substitute with an alternative hike. In the afternoon, continue to Moab, an adventure capital of the southwest and the gateway to both Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. In the evening, if you still have energy, head to Dead Horse State Park to watch the sunset from one of the most photographed spots in the region. Approximate travel time: 7.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 4: Canyonlands National Park (B, L) Travel to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. Stop at Newspaper Rock State Historic Monument, known for its petroglyphs. Spend the day hiking through desert lands on the Joint Trail to Chesler Park. Return to Moab for a night on the town.

The next day we drive two hours from Moab to Canyonlands National Park. Uncover a wilderness of endless canyons and striking buttes carved by the Colorado River and its tributaries. Four distinct districts make up this National Park, preserving a colorful landscape eroded into countless canyons, mesas, and buttes by the Colorado River, the Green River, and their tributaries. We'll start with a stop at

Newspaper Rock State Historic Monument. With over 650 petroglyphs in a single area, think of a visit to Newspaper Rock as flipping through the news pages of generations past. Created by ancestral Puebloan people who lived, farmed, and hunted along a nearby ancient river, examine the intricate carvings they made to document their way of life. We'll then trek through the desert grasslands of Chesler Park and admire towering sandstone pinnacles that give this area its name: the Needles District. Follow the Joint Trail into deep, sometimes very narrow slot canyons, before emerging back into open space. Now you understand why it's called the Canyonlands. (Hiking distance: 11 miles, Elevation change: 1,750 ft, Duration: 5.5 hours) Return to Moab for a night in the town. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

Day 5: Arches National Park (B, L, D) Rise early for sunrise from Delicate Arch Viewpoint. Enjoy breakfast in the park before starting your hike on the Devil's Garden Trail, exploring the densest concentration of arches in the world. Afterward, drive further to see more arches.

Rise early for sunrise from Delicate Arch Viewpoint. Enjoy breakfast in the park before exploring the densest concentration of arches in the world. Stand in awe at the over 2,000 sandstone arches ranging in size and shape that make up this park. Explore the Arches that make up this national park along the Devil's Garden Trail. Arches form as narrow rock walls (called "fins") erode over time, causing sections of the rockface to fall. Visit Landscape Arch, the longest in North America, with an opening of 306 ft. Continue to Double O Arch, a challenging, steep section that requires hikers to scramble over rocks. Be rewarded with incredible views at the top, before heading back to the trailhead. (Hiking distance: 4.2 miles, Elevation change: 800 ft., Duration: 4 hours) Pass by the famous Balanced Rock, The Windows, and Double Arches before heading west to camp for the night. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 6: Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument/Bryce Canyon National Park (B, L, D) Travel along the scenic highway through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Set off on the Lower Calf Creek Falls hike to see prehistoric petroglyphs and stunning waterfalls. Continue to Bryce Canyon National Park for the night. Enjoy the night sky while making s'mores around the campfire.

Hit the road again, to travel along the scenic highway through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Take in the mesas, canyons, and arches that make up this diverse geological region. Enjoy an easy hike through relatively flat terrain to get to Lower Calf Creek Falls. While you may see a few more hikers than on previous days, this trek is no less spectacular - especially once you sight the clear waters of Calf Creek and its 38m (126 ft) drop into a deep pool. Named for the natural "pen" where early pioneers and ranchers herded their calves for a much-needed drink, today visitors can opt to swim in this cool oasis. (Hiking distance: 6 miles, Elevation change: 200 ft., Duration: 4 hours) Continue to Bryce Canyon National Park for the night. After the sun goes down, don't forget to look up to check out this renowned night sky while enjoying s'mores around the fire. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

Day 7: Bryce Canyon National Park/Zion National Park (B, L, D) Set off early in Bryce Canyon National Park, and stare in wonder at the largest collection of hoodoos in the world as the sun rises! Take a hike into the amphitheater of Queen's Garden and Navajo Loop to walk amongst the hoodoos that make up this geological wonder. Continue to Zion National Park, stopping at several viewpoints along the way. Head to the trailhead for Angels Landing and climb to Scout Landing for panoramic views of the park.

Set off early in Bryce Canyon National Park. See a sight like no other at this giant forest of stone made up of a collection of massive natural amphitheaters. We'll trek through the most popular trail in Bryce Canyon to see its famous hoodoos - tall, thin spires of rock that seem to magically balance upon their

dusty, red rock base. Begin your hike at Sunrise Point and make your way toward Queen Victoria, the trail's namesake rock formation. Continue through the amphitheater on Navajo Loop past Wall Street or Thor's Hammer, depending on trail conditions. Exit at Sunset Point before walking the Rim Trail back to our starting point. Soak in the views one last time - you'll want to take it all in. (Hiking distance: 2.9 miles, Elevation change: 600 ft., Duration: 2.5 hours) After the hike we drive to Zion National Park, traveling past towering cliffs and massive canyon walls, stopping at several viewpoints along the way. Once we arrive in Zion, we'll start off for Angels Landing, an unforgettable hike that makes it to many peoples' bucket lists for a reason. Start your trek on the West Rim Trail and follow the river before sneaking through the scenic canyon. Head up a series of 21 switchbacks called Walter's Wiggles, to arrive at Scout Landing. From here, opt to continue the jaw-dropping climb up to the top of Angels Landing. In some places, the ridge becomes barely wide enough to set two feet in. Hold onto the chain for an incredible reward! (Hiking distance: 5.4 miles, Elevation change: 1,500 ft., Duration: 3 hours) We will spend the night at a campsite just outside of Zion National Park. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 8: Zion National Park (B, L) Spend the day in Zion. Hike the East Rim Trail through Echo Canyon to reach panoramic views. Trek through the river on one of the most popular hikes in the park, the Narrows. After returning to camp, head into the charming town of Springdale to celebrate the accomplishments of the last week.

Spend the day discovering Zion National Park. Admire monumental sandstone cliffs of cream, pink, and red that tower into the sky. Experience diverse plant and animal life in this narrow slot canyon as the park transitions from desert to forest. Gaze at the awe-inspiring beauty of the high plateaus, striking towers, temples, mesas, and the earth's tallest-known sheer sandstone walls. Trek up the East Rim Trail to Zion NP's famed Observation Point, where views of the valley below stretch out to the horizon. Classified as one of the park's strenuous hikes (given its elevation), the route consists of switchbacks before reaching shady Echo Canyon. Continue the uphill climb until the trail levels out towards the peak. Gaze out across the valley to Angels Landing and appreciate just how far you've come. (Hiking distance: 8 miles, Elevation change: 2,150 ft., Duration: 6 hours) Then we'll return to the valley floor to trek through The Narrows. Known as one of Utah's best slot canyon hikes, The Narrows takes you through towering canyon walls along the Virgin River (and yes, this means walking in water!). Enjoy some of the park's best scenery, stop to take photos, and don't forget to watch your footing. Opt to make your way back at any point. Hiking distance: 4 miles, Elevation change: 334 ft., Duration: 2 hours) After returning to camp, head into the charming town of Springdale to celebrate the accomplishments of the last week.

Day 9: Zion National Park/Las Vegas (B) Take the short drive from Zion to Las Vegas. Upon arrival, enjoy a free afternoon and night to explore Vegas. Walk the strip, try your luck at a casino, or take in a glitzy show.

Take the short drive from Zion to Las Vegas. Upon arrival, enjoy a free afternoon and night to explore Vegas. Walk the strip, try your luck at a casino, or take in a glitzy show. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 10: Las Vegas/Sequoia National Park (D) Leave Las Vegas behind and spend the day traveling through the desert to the granite cliffs and ancient giant trees of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. After setting up camp, search the night sky for shooting stars and roast s'mores around the fire.

Leave the bright lights of Las Vegas behind and spend the day traveling through the desert to the granite cliffs and ancient giant trees of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Though these two parks were granted National Park status roughly 50 years apart, they are currently managed together by the National Park system. After setting up camp, slow down to relish the natural setting, search the night sky for shooting stars, and roast s'mores around the fire. The night sky above Sequoia National Park offers one of California's most dazzling opportunities for stargazing, due to minimal light pollution and a higher

altitude. Approximate travel time: 8 hrs by private vehicle

Day 11: Sequoia National Park (B, L, D) Enjoy a full day in Sequoia National Park. Hike to General Sherman, the world's largest tree. Continue to trek through the Giant Forest on Congress Trail and stop for a picnic. Travel to Buena Vista Peak trailhead to continue to explore this park on foot.

Enjoy a full day in Sequoia National Park. Hike amongst some of the most impressive living things on Earth, giant Sequoias. This trip through the misty heights of the Sierras will take you through the home of General Sherman. We'll start with a half-mile hike down to General Sherman, which at 275 feet high is the world's largest tree. We'll then continue of hike among the other enormous trees on Congress Trail and catch some amazing views of the mountains through the forest on this epic hike. Enjoy a picnic lunch amongst the giant trees. (Hiking distance: 7.5 miles, Elevation change: 1800 ft, Duration: 4-6 hours) We then travel to Buena Vista Peak trailhead to continue to explore this park on foot. At just 2 miles, this round-trip hike packs a punch with 360-degree views from the top of the granite peak to see not only the High Sierra, but also the valley below. With minimal elevation change, you'll have plenty of time and energy to explore and take pictures along the mountain top. (Hiking distance: 2 miles, Elevation change: 413 ft, Duration: 1 hour) Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle

Day 12: Kings Canyon National Park (B, L, D) Visit Big Stump Grove before taking the iconic drive from Grant Grove through Kings Canyon to Cedar Grove. Travel through one of the deepest canyons in the US. Hike one of the most scenic trails in Kings Canyon along a cascading river to a waterfall.

We'll start off the day by visiting the Big Stump Grove before taking the iconic drive that takes us through Grant Grove. Grant Grove has the second-largest tree on earth! Then we'll drive through Kings Canyon to Cedar Grove past granite cliffs and vast valleys. Travel through one of the deepest canyons in the US, that continues to be carved by the Kings River. Continue to the end of the road for the Mist Falls Hike, one of the most scenic trails in the park. The moderate walk culminates with an epic 100-foot waterfall with clouds of mist that give the trail its name. (Hiking distance: 8 miles, Elevation change: 600 ft, Duration: 3-4 hours) Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 13: Sequoia National Park/Yosemite National Park (B, L, D) Rise early hike through the trees to the peak of Little Baldy for panoramic vistas of the surrounding Sierra Nevadas. Drive north through the Sierras to Yosemite National Park and Mariposa Grove. Hike the Grizzly Giant Loop trail through old-growth trees. Drive further and stop for views of Half Dome, El Capitan, and Bridalveil Fall.

Rise early and head out for a final hike in Sequoia National Park. Hike up the switchbacks of Little Baldy Trail to travel up and out of the forest as it slowly opens up to sweeping views of the beautiful California Sierras and valleys below. (Hiking distance: 3.4 miles, Elevation change: 800 ft, Duration: 2-3 hours) On the road again, travel north through the Sierras to the south entrance of Yosemite National Park and Mariposa Grove. Picturesque valleys, vast wilderness, powerful waterfalls, elusive wildlife, ancient sequoias, and more than 16 types of granite make up this internationally recognized national park. For the next two and a half days we'll hike the trails, get up close to ancient rock formations and take panoramic photos of this gorgeous landscape. Keep an eye out for black bears, deer, and coyotes. This afternoon we'll hike the famous Grizzly Giant Loop trail and see some of the stunning natural wonders of Yosemite, such as the park's largest Sequoia grove, with over 500 mature trees. Check out some of the most iconic trees, like Tunnel Tree, the Bachelor, and Three Graces. (Hiking distance: 2 miles, Elevation change: 300 ft, Duration: 1.5 hours) Drive further into the park and stop at Tunnel View for iconic sights of Half Dome, El Capitan, and Bridalveil Fall. Approximate travel time: 6 hrs by private vehicle

Day 14: Yosemite National Park (B, L, D) Take a park shuttle to the iconic Mist Trail. Hike alongside the Merced River sprayed by the waters of Vernal Fall.

Enjoy lunch from the top, taking in the views of the High Sierra. Take the John Muir Trail down and enjoy free time to hike further or relax. Stop by El Capitan, looking for climbers on the sheer rockface.

From the valley floor, take the park shuttle system to one of the most iconic trails in the park. Hike alongside the Merced River to climb the Mist Trail, getting sprayed by the waters of Vernal Fall. See the water rushing over the edge before crossing the river and climbing the steps to Nevada Fall. Enjoy lunch from the top, taking in the views of the High Sierra including Half Dome, Liberty Cap, Mount Broderick. On the return trip, take the John Muir Trail down to truly understand this visionary's passion for nature. (Distance: 7 miles, Elevation Change: 2000 ft, Duration: 5-6 hours) Enjoy free time to walk the Lower Yosemite Fall Trail, Bridalveil Fall Trail, or relax under the towering granite monoliths of Half Dome or El Capitan. On the way back to camp, stop and stand in awe of El Capitan, looking for climbers on the sheer rockface. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle

Day 15: Yosemite National Park (B, L, D) Take a park shuttle then hike to the trailhead for the Snow Creek Trail. You can turn around at any point if you have had enough of the challenging, steep hike. Enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure. Relax by the water, check out the Ansel Adams Studio, or rent a bike to continue to explore the park.

Today we get off the beaten path for a challenging hike full of switchbacks to bring us face to face with the granite domes and slopes that make this park so iconic. Taking the park shuttle, we begin with a mostly flat walk to Mirror Lake. Seasonally, this lake provides a spectacular reflection of Half Dome. We continue on to the beginning of Snow Creek Trail, a steep climb out of the Valley that delivers views of Half Dome, Quarter Domes, and Clouds Rest. Opt to turn around at any point, or continue the strenuous climb as the canyon opens to panoramic vistas culminating at Snow Creek Footbridge. (Hiking distance: 9.5 miles, Elevation change: 2,700 ft, Duration: 6-7 hours) Enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure. Relax by the water, check out the Ansel Adams Studio, or rent a bike to continue to explore the park. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle

Day 16: Yosemite National Park/San Francisco (B) Drive from the Sierra Nevadas to the San Francisco Bay. Tour ends on arrival. Onward travel should be booked no earlier than 7 pm.

Drive from the Sierra Nevadas to the San Francisco Bay. Tour ends on arrival. Onward travel should be booked no earlier than 7 pm. Approximate travel time: 4.5 hrs by private vehicle Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can offer still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!