

Best of the USA Tour—San Fran to San Fran - NUFB

44 days: San Francisco to San Francisco

What's Included

Entrance fees to all national parks with hiking and walking excursions. Maid of the Mist boat tour in Niagara Falls. Visit Arlington Cemetery. Beer brewery tour and tasting in Milwaukee. Orientation to Las Vegas, Washington DC and New York. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2014 - December 31st, 2014

Itinerary



Day 1 San Francisco

Arrive to our joining hotel at any time. Welcome meeting in the evening.

There's a lot to see and do in San Francisco, and we recommend spending extra time here if you'd like to explore the city; speak to your sales agent to book extra accommodation. Haight-Ashbury, Alcatraz, the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf and the city's famous cable cars await you.

Day 2-3 Yosemite NP (1B,1L,2D)

Depart San Francisco with our CEO pointing out some popular sites on the drive out of town—perhaps you'll catch a glimpse of the stately Golden Gate Bridge, a marvel of engineering and deco design.

Continue on to admire spectacular views of Yosemite National Park's magnificent peaks and granite domes. Take short hikes to majestic waterfalls, clear lakes, beautiful meadows and walk amongst giant sequoias. With a keen eye, you may be lucky enough to spot black bears, deer or coyotes. Hike the many trails Yosemite has to offer and be inspired by this beautiful and amazing landscape. Option to rent bikes in Yosemite Valley.

Approximate Distance: 225 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops)

Day 4 Yosemite NP/Bishop (1B,1L,1D)

Marvel at the spectacular views of Yosemite National Park's magnificent peaks and granite domes as you enjoy one of most scenic areas in California. Surrounded by peaks which soar to over 14,000 feet in elevation, Bishop, one of "America's Coolest Mountain Towns" sits directly in the center of an incredible area of natural beauty. Enjoy secluded hot springs where star gazing is amazing.

Note that we intend on using the Tioga Pass, a scenic a route through the Sierra Nevada mountain range that connects Yosemite

NP with Bishop. In the spring and autumn seasons, there's a chance that the pass will be closed due to poor weather conditions or even snow. In such a case, we use an alternate route south, and will spend the night in Lake Isabella instead of Bishop. The status of the road is monitored daily, and our travel plan for the area will be confirmed during the trip.

Approximate Distance: 330 km

Estimated Travel Time: 10 hrs

Day 5-6 Death Valley National Park/Las Vegas (1B,1L)

Visit one of the country's most rugged landscapes, the legendary Death Valley, the hottest and driest spot and home to the lowest point in North America.

In the evening, arrive to the city of lights, Las Vegas. Your CEO will introduce you to the famous Vegas Strip on a brief orientation walk, then you're free to explore the "City of Lights", Las Vegas, as you please. Try your hand with gambling at giant-mega casinos or visit one of the numerous shows offered on the strip. Optional VIP limo ride in Vegas.

Full day to explore Las Vegas. Walk the strip and try your luck at the tables or slot machines. Or spend the day shopping, dining or poolside.

For our nights in Las Vegas, we stay close to the action in a hotel either at the end of or just a few blocks off the Strip.

Approximate Distance: 590 km

Estimated Travel Time: 10 hrs (including stops)

Day 7-8 Grand Canyon NP (1B,2L,2D)

Considered among nature's most spectacular offerings, the Grand Canyon provides spectacular opportunities for you to explore. Wander along a trail and feel the sunshine and wind on your face as you admire awe-inspiring views. Sit and watch the changing play of light and shadows. With numerous viewpoints, the Grand Canyon will never look the same! In the afternoon enjoy a bird's eye view of the Grand Canyon with an optional helicopter flight or watch the most spectacular IMAX Adventure of all, the Grand Canyon Movie. Return to your campsite and enjoy a BBQ around the campfire to recapture the experiences from this memorable day!

Note: If you have pre booked the Grand Canyon Helicopter Ride you will enjoy your 45-50min ride over the canyon on either Day 7 or 8, this will be determined by your CEO.

Approximate Distance: 475 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops)

Day 9 Monument Valley (1B,1L)

Discover one of the most majestic places on earth: Monument Valley. Magnificent colors, miles of mesas, buttes and pinnacles make Monument Valley a truly wondrous experience. Learn about the Navajo culture that has been passed on through generations in order to keep the sacred traditions, beliefs and ceremonies alive. Take an optional jeep tour led by a Navajo guide through Monument Valley and be inspired by a night under the stars as you camp in this magnificent atmosphere. See the sun rise from a perspective very few ever experience!

Approximate Distance: 290 km

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hrs (including stops)

Day 10 Mesa Verde NP/Durango (1B,1L,1D)

Drive to Mesa Verde National Park which offers a spectacular look into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo-ans. Take a guided hike through history as you explore the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, some of the most notable and best preserved in North America.

Approximate Distance to Durango: 315 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops in Mesa Verde National Park)

Day 11 Santa Fe (1B,1L)

Continue your journey back in time and explore one of America's oldest and most beautiful cities, Santa Fe. Take a stroll downtown and visit art galleries, or enjoy some world famous roasted green chilies.

Approximate Distance: 470 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops)

Day 12 Roswell/Carlsbad (1B,1D)

On the night of July 2nd in 1947 something (or someone) crashed into the desert outside of Roswell, New Mexico. Was it a balloon, or really extra-terrestrial life? Find out what all the hype is about as we pass through this funky town.

Then visit Carlsbad Caverns, one of the oldest and most famous cave systems in the world. Explore the cave on a guided tour and be fascinated by the largest underground chambers and countless formations. In the evening witness the stunning spectacle as nearly 400,000 Mexican free-tail bats exit Carlsbad Cavern.

Approximate Distance: 470 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 13 San Antonio (1B,1L,1D)

Cross into the state of Texas, birthplace of Tex-Mex food, 10-gallon hats, and Western movies. Continue to our campsite in San Antonio for the evening. One of the US's largest cities, San Antonio is vibrant and full of culture. Famous due to its proximity to the Alamo, the city holds its own in terms of attractions and experiences available.

Approximate Distance: 744 km

Estimated Travel Time: 10 hrs (including stops)

Day 14 The Alamo/Houston (1B,1L,1D)

Visit historic San Antonio, deep in the heart of Texas. Discover the battle of Alamo in the 18th century while you walk amongst the largest concentration of missions remaining in North America. Continue your journey back in time on the San Antonio River Walk, winding along the San Antonio River. Continue on to Houston in the afternoon.

Approximate Distance to Houston: 375 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops at the Alamo)

Day 15-16 New Orleans (1B)

Crank up the jazz as you drive into the home of Mardi Gras. Your CEO will point out a few things on the drive in, then get out and experience the city at its best. Party in the French Quarter till the early hours, dance to great jazz bands and try out delicious Creole food. Enjoy a last dinner out with the group before it's time to say goodbye.

For our two nights in New Orleans, we stay close to the action in a hotel in the city centre (multi-share accommodation).

Approximate Distance to New Orleans: 535 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops)

Day 17 Memphis (1L)

Hear the beat in Memphis, Tennessee! Explore the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll, Home of Blues and the starting point of soul. Music Legends including Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and B.B.King made their marks on Memphis. Optional activities include visiting the National Civil Rights Museum (located where the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr took place in 1968) or visiting the Rock & Soul Museum. In the evening stroll one of America's most famous streets: Beale Street with its live entertainment!

Approximate Distance: 640 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 18 Memphis/Nashville (1B,1L,1D)

In the morning walk in the footsteps of the King of Rock 'n' Roll at Elvis Presley's home, Graceland (optional). See how the legend lived and discover videos, pictures, stage costumes and much more. If Graceland is not for you, enjoy the time to explore more of Memphis on your own. Travel to Nashville in time to check out the nightlife and visit a real country cowboy bar.

Approximate Distance: 380 km

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hrs (including stops)

Day 19 Appalachia (1B,1L,1D)

Experience America's favorite drive through the Appalachian Mountains. See remains of the settlements along the journey, learn about their history as we take our time exploring this fabulous drive. The mountains are a perfect place to relax and enjoy the fresh, clean air and see the true beauty of North America. Optional short hikes on the many trails throughout the park.

Approximate Distance: 575 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 20 Shenandoah NP/Washington DC (1B,1L,1D)

Continuing on, we pass through Shenandoah National Park, a truly beautiful, historic national treasure. Standing on top of the peaks of Shenandoah National Park, gazing across the silent mountains, it's hard to believe we are just a short distance away from Washington DC.

Approximate Distance: 480 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops)

Day 21 Washington DC (1B)

In the morning take a moment of silence as you gaze into the eternal flame of John F Kennedy's grave at the Arlington Cemetery and pay respect to the many other fallen soldiers around you.

Today is all about the capital of the United States. There is so much to see and do in Washington DC that you can't see it all in one day. Take your time as you spend a full day exploring this fascinating city. Tour the national monuments and memorials including the White House, Washington Monument, Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial. Visit the National Mall that includes 15 museums such as the Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of Natural History.

Day 22 New York City (1B,1L)

Today we travel to NYC. Dive into the hustle and bustle of the Big Apple. Opt to visit Times Square, stroll Central Park or check out Greenwich Village.

For our night in NYC, we stay close to the action in a hostel in Manhattan close to the subway line.

Please note that some of your fellow travellers may be finishing their tour here. Other travellers may be joining the tour today in New York.

Approximate Distance to NYC: 375 km

Estimated Travel Time to NYC: 6 hrs (including stops)

Day 23 New York/Newburgh (1D)

Spend the last hours in New York City on a brief orientation with your CEO before driving to Newburgh, New York. Enjoy a night with the group around the campfire.

Approximate Distance: 112 km

Estimated Travel Time: 3 hrs (including stops)

Day 24 Finger Lakes (1B,1L,1D)

Enjoy a day out in nature as you take in the natural beauty of the Finger Lakes region. Discover one of the highest waterfalls east of the Rocky Mountains, Taughannock Falls, dropping 215 foot! Explore this beautiful area on foot or just relax by the lake. Optional canoeing (All the optional activities have to be done in the morning and please note there is limited time).

Approximate Distance: 375 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops)

Day 25 Niagara Falls (1B,1L,1D)

An exciting adventure awaits you in Niagara Falls that will last a lifetime. Feel the rushing waters of the falls by taking the famous "Maid of the Mist Boat Tour". Optional, dive into a world of discovery at the Cave of the Winds and get soaked! Stay until darkness settles over the falls and witness when the Falls are illuminated in a rainbow of color!

Approximate Distance: 190 km

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hrs (including stops)

Day 26 Cleveland/Sandusky (1B,1L,1D)

Leave the Falls and continue towards Cleveland, opt to dive into the history of Rock 'n' Roll at the Rock 'n' Roll Music Hall of Fame in before travelling to Sandusky for the night.

Approximate Distance to Sandusky: 430 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including a stop in Cleveland)

Day 27-28 Chicago (1B)

One thing is for sure, you'll never be bored in Chicago. Enjoy your first afternoon in Chi-Town with a brief orientation with your CEO, then explore the many attractions Chicago has to offer. Opt to check out the famous Willis Tower (formerly known as Sears Tower), relax at the Millennium Park, enjoy dazzling music and stroll the boardwalk of the Navy Pier. In the evening get together with the

group for a fun night out in Chicago.

For our two nights in Chicago, we stay close to the action in a simple hotel in the city center.

Approximate Distance: 470 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops)

Day 29 Winona (1D)

Stop in Milwaukee and take a tour through America's oldest major brewing company: Millers! Explore the history and brewing process. Before you leave don't forget to taste, what is to be said, the favorite beer by American's! Later visit Madison, the capitol of the US state of Wisconsin. Pass by the capitol itself and enjoy downtown Madison with its unique shopping and entertainment district. Continue to our campground located along the bank of the Mississippi River!

Approximate Distance to Winona: 535 km

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hrs (including stops in Milwaukee and Madison)

Day 30 Sioux Falls/Kennebec (1B,1L,1D)

Leaving the "cities" behind we cross native American Sioux terrain and America's original western frontier, the Great Prairie! Take a break in Sioux Falls. Drive past Garretson, famous for Devil's Gulch, a footbridge that crosses the "Mini-Canyon" where Jesse James jumped to prevent being captured.

Approximate Distance to Kennebec: 710 km

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hrs (including stops in Sioux Falls)

Day 31 Badlands NP (1B,1L,1D)

Before we continue our short journey to Badlands National Park, stop at the Original South Dakota 1880's Town for an optional visit and envision life on the prairie. Admire the many props that were used in Kevin Costner's famous movie "Dances with Wolves". In the early afternoon explore the spectacular, bizarre and moon-like landscape at Badlands National Park. The Lakota gave this its name, "mako sica," meaning "land bad." Discover the park on short hiking trails and enjoy the feeling of true isolation, where you can look for miles and see no sign of civilization. We spend the night camping while witnessing an incredible sunset or sunrise over the Badlands!

Approximate Distance: 185 km

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hrs (including stops)

Day 32-33 Custer (2B,2L,1D)

It all started in the 1930's with free ice-water for thirsty tourists coming from the east that made "Wall" such a famous place to visit. Discover Wall Drug, an American roadside wonder before we reach the famous Black Hills in the heart of South Dakota! This historic area is filled with American history. Black Hills are known to be one of the best places to discover the legend of the old west. Next we take the scenic route to Custer State Park, named after the (in)famous General George Armstrong Custer. Custer State Park is home to the world's largest free-roaming bison herds (about 1,500). Explore this fascinating terrain on short hikes.

In the morning of the second day in the area, visit Mount Rushmore National Memorial, one of Americas most inspiring symbols of democracy and freedom. Be amazed at the impressive granite faces, each head as tall as a six-story building, of four of the most influential presidents of the United States including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. For lunch visit the City of Gold– Keystone– once a gold mining boom town in the 1870's. Keystone was also the adult home of Carrie Ingalls of "Little House on the Prairie" fame. In the evening visit spectacular Crazy Horse Memorial. "My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red man has great heroes, too." These were the words of Chief Standing Bear convincing sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski in 1939 to create a Memorial for the Lakota people.

Approximate Distance to Custer: 250 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops in the state park)

Day 34 Deadwood/Devil's Tower (1B,1D)

Visit historical Deadwood and take a self-guided walking tour into the past of the Wild West. Be a part of the famous shoot out at the Old Style Saloon #10 as you witness the shooting of Wild Bill. Then enter the fabulous Midnight Star, Kevin Costner's Casino and try your luck at one of the slot machines. On our way to Devils Tower we take the most scenic highway in the Black Hills, Spearfish Canyon. Enjoy spectacular scenery that was the location for several scenes in the movie epic, "Dances With Wolves." In the evening arrive at America's first national monument, the Devils Tower! It rises over 1200 feet into the air!

Approximate Distance to Devil's Tower: 215 km

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hrs (including stops in Deadwood)

Day 35 Cody (1B,1L,1D)

With crystal-clear lakes, alpine meadows and glacial carved valleys, the Bighorn National Forest is one of the most scenic drives in Wyoming towards Cody, "the rodeo capital of the world"! The town is named after "Buffalo Bill Cody" and has long been a symbol of the old American West. Optional visit to Buffalo Bill Historical Center to discover the real story of the old west. In the evening optional experience of an authentic rodeo (seasonal).

Approximate Distance: 500 km

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hrs (including stops)

Day 36-37 Yellowstone NP (2B,2L,2D)

Discover the wonders of Yellowstone, the world's first National Park! Yellowstone is beyond special. Geysers, waterfalls, wildlife and scenic beauty are around every corner for you to explore. In fact, Yellowstone National Park is a super volcano with the world's largest active geyser field, boasting more than 10,000 geysers. The Park is also home to more wild animals than almost anywhere else in the U.S., including roaming bison, gray wolves, elk, black bears and of course the famous grizzly bear!

Travel to the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone and explore the Northern Loop which features beautiful scenery, exciting wildlife and spectacular hydrothermal features. Admire Mammoth Hot Springs, Norris Geyser Basin and the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone!

On the second day, more highlights await you as the South Loop goes through some of the most famous landmarks of Yellowstone, including Old Faithful and Lake Village.

Approximate Distance: 320 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 38 Grand Teton NP/Jackson (1B,1L)

Drive to Grand Teton National Park and view more than twelve peaks at elevation greater than 12,000 feet! Stop at beautiful Jenny Lake and take an optional boat ride across the lake to discover Hidden Falls and Inspiration Point. Grand Teton National Park highlights are numerous and each offers a better understanding of this natural phenomenon.

In the late afternoon we reach Jackson, where we marvel at the town square's elk antler arches. The area offers unique mix of boutique and country and western shopping opportunities. Wildlife watching is easy here; elk, deer, and many other small mammals can be found throughout the valley. In the evening step back in time and enjoy a night out with a true Wild Western atmosphere at the One Million Dollar Bar, known world wide for its western dancing and live entertainment!

Approximate Distance to Jackson: 230 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops in Grand Teton NP)

Day 39 Salt Lake City (1B,1L,1D)

Optional guided wildlife and whitewater rafting trip down the snake river in Jackson. Leave Yellowstone National Park behind as we continue to Salt Lake City. Orientation tour of Salt Lake City including a visit to Temple Square for views of the world's largest Mormon Temple.

Approximate Distance: 440 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 40 Tonopah (1B)

One of the best ways to experience Nevada is to travel on the "Loneliest Road in America", a fascinating scenic and historic area through a land seemingly untouched by man. In the evening experience Tonopah's night sky, considered among the best in the country for stargazing.

After the long drive to Tonopah trade in the camping gear in favor of a night in a hotel.

Approximate Distance: 656 km

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hrs (including stops)

Day 41-42 Yosemite NP (1B,2L,2D)

Marvel at the spectacular views of Yosemite National Park's magnificent peaks and granite domes as you enjoy one of most scenic drives in California: Tioga Pass! Take short hikes to majestic waterfalls, clear lakes, beautiful meadows and walk amongst giant sequoias. With a keen eye, you may be lucky enough to spot black bears, deer or coyotes.

On the second day, enjoy a free day to explore Yosemite National Park. Hike the many trails Yosemite has to offer and be inspired by this beautiful and amazing landscape. Opt to rent a bicycle in Yosemite Valley.

Approximate Distance: 385 km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hrs (including stops)

Day 43 San Francisco (1B)

Welcome back to San Francisco. Check out the sites you didn't visit the first time around and enjoy the laid back vibe of this West Coast City. Go back in time and take an optional cable car ride over the steep hills or rent bikes and explore the city on wheels. In the evening enjoy an optional sunset sail.

For our final night of the tour in San Francisco, we stay close to the action in a hotel in the city centre.

Approximate Distance: 225 km

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hrs (including stops)

Day 44 San Francisco

Depart at any time.

What's Included

Entrance fees to all national parks with hiking and walking excursions. Maid of the Mist boat tour in Niagara Falls. Visit Arlington Cemetery. Beer brewery tour and tasting in Milwaukee. Orientation to Las Vegas, Washington DC and New York. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Look for wildlife in Yellowstone and Yosemite, learn about Navajo culture in the Southwest and the history of rock & roll in Memphis, follow the trail of independence from Philadelphia to Washington DC, get a taste of cowboy culture.

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. An essential part of your trip is participation - from putting up your tent (while camping) or packing it away in the morning, to helping with meal preparation and cleaning up - it is all part of your adventure and when everyone puts in a little effort the trip will run smoothly. Your CEO will do all the meal planning, but we do ask the clients to help with the preparation and washing up. Team spirit is part of the fun! All camping equipment (with the exception of your sleeping bag and pillow) is supplied. We supply dome tents and assembly/disassembly takes only 5 minutes. All tents have built-in insect nets. Self-inflating mattresses are also provided, which are

approximately 4cm thick, warm and comfortable.

2. Sleeping bags are a necessary for this tour, and can be purchased upon arrival if required.

3. In order to cover the vast distance in North America to be able to visit several different parks and cities along our trip, we will have a couple of long driving days.

4. All walks and hikes proposed by our CEO will be easy to moderate level. You may choose to participate or not, but exploring our national parks on foot is part of our way of travelling. It's a healthy way to discover North America's beauty and landscape.

5. Tioga Pass is a route through the Sierra Nevada mountain range of California on the eastern edge of Yosemite National Park, and we travel through the pass en route. In the spring and autumn seasons, there's a chance that the pass will be closed due to poor weather conditions or even snow. In such a case, we use an alternate route. The status of the road is monitored daily, and our travel plan for the area will be confirmed during the trip.

6. Please note that some trips could be a combination of multiple G Adventure tours. You should expect some group members to join or leave the tour between tour segments.

7. The American west is generally known for warm weather, but temperatures do vary significantly in the mountain and desert areas especially. The day time temperature could exceed 30 C, while the night time temperatures do regularly decrease to single digits, or even possible below freezing. Please be prepared for such extreme conditions.

8. Regarding our wi-fi equipped vehicles: we have limited bandwidth, and in the interests of allowing all travellers to access the wi-fi, travellers should limit their access to reasonable levels. Please note that wi-fi is not always available due to areas with limited or no cell phone service (e.g. in parts of national parks).

8. Please note that the legal drinking age in the United States is 21 and in Canada, 19 (with Alberta and Quebec at 18). Many bars and clubs will ask for ID at the door, therefore listening to live music in certain bars or spending a night out in Las Vegas or New Orleans is not possible when you are under the legal age, even if you don't plan on consuming alcohol. Drinking laws in both countries are strictly enforced and our CEOs are unable to help those under age obtain alcohol of any kind.

While this should not stop those under legal drinking age from booking a tour, it is important to note that if a traveller is under-age there are certain optional nighttime activities that they may not legally be able to participate in. When trying to book the right trip, we recommend that travellers under legal drinking age take this into consideration when booking a tour that visits several big cities.

9. A NOTE ON HOMELESSNESS:

San Francisco hosts a considerable population of homeless. Homelessness is a crisis in America, and nowhere is it more evident than here; with as many as 10,000 people without permanent homes, San Francisco has become the homeless capital of America.

As you explore San Francisco with your G Adventures group, you will likely encounter the city's homeless. While we understand the urge to help those in need, we recommend that you not donate directly to people you meet on the street. The best response is to smile, say that you do not have any money and continue on your way.

San Francisco is a beautiful and safe city, and our hotel is ideally situated for further exploring on your own. That said, when exploring independently, we suggest you avoid the area to the southwest of the hotel.

We completely understand that stifling the urge to help out can make you uncomfortable. There are dozens of shelters, food banks and aid organizations dedicated to helping the city's needy, and your CEO will be more than happy to help you make a donation. It really is the best way to make a change.

Group Leader Description

This G Adventures group trip is accompanied by one of our group leaders, otherwise known as a Chief Experience Officer (CEO). The CEO will be the group manager, leader and driver - this person is experienced in the routes travelled. He or she will organize and lead the meal preparations and has training to cooking a variety of local and international dishes for large groups.

As the group coordinator and manager, the aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries

visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. They will also offer suggestions for things to do and to see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While our CEOs are trained and have resources to assist them along the way, the United States is the fourth largest country on the planet, and it is impossible for them to know everything about this massive country. We recommend local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds

Please note that specific tour guide licenses are required to guide in certain cities and regions, and as such, our CEOs will oftentimes provide brief orientation walks to point out useful places like supermarkets, main squares and ATMs but for more specific or in depth destination information, an official guided tour is recommended.

Group Size Notes

Max 13, avg 10.

Meals Included

33 breakfasts, 29 lunches, 27 dinners.

Meals

Most of the meals on this tour are included in the tour price. When a meal is not included, this is because there are often many options available - we would like to give you the opportunity to explore a bit and taste the local cuisine yourself. In these cases, your CEO will be able to suggest some good local restaurants or options for you to choose from.

All included meals will be prepared from fresh local produce. The majority of the shopping for food will be done before the trip departs, and fresh goods, such as meats, fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, will be bought en route during the trip from supermarkets, local shops and markets. Breakfasts will generally consist of breads and cereals, if time allows a warm breakfast may be prepared. Many lunches will be provided en-route and will be light meals such as sandwiches and/or salads. All evening meals will be freshly-prepared hot meals, and will consist of a variety of continental and local dishes.

Our CEO will organize the meal preparation and lead the way here, but will prepare a duty schedule for ensuring a fair, rotating participation from you and your group members in the meal preparation and dish washing duties.

Vegetarian meals and other dietary requirements need to be specified prior to arrival.

Meal Budget

Allow USD350-375 for meals not included.

Transport

Air-conditioned private touring van, walking

About our Transportation

We use 15-passenger vans for up to 13 people plus the CEO/Driver for all our of our trips in North America. For groups of 8 and more travellers, we also use a trailer to carry luggage and camping equipment.

These vans are durable vehicles that allow us to drive on most types of roads in North America.

Each van has a front passenger seat and 4 benches that will accommodate 3 people each. No standing is permitted in these vehicles, but there is air conditioning to cool things down on warm days and mandatory seat belts to us secure and safe.

This is not a physically demanding journey. However, travelling can be difficult, with long drives and limited space in the van. Please take note of the travel times and distances in the above itinerary. Despite some of the long days, most clients feel that the diversity of the North American landscape, culture and wildlife are all well worth the experience!

While we try to travel into and out of cities during non-rush hour times, heavy traffic is a reality of some of the places we visit. As a result, some drives may be a bit longer than listed in the day-to-day itineraries. Bring your patience and a smile, and we'll get through it!

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels (9 nts), hostel (1 nt), participation camping (33 nts).

My Own Room Exceptions

Day 22

About Accommodation

This trip includes a few nights in hotels, used mainly in cities, and most of the nights on tour we camp in tents in public and private camp grounds.

The hotels that we use are well located, good quality, 2-3* venues, based double occupancy with a private, en route bathroom.

All camping equipment (with the exception of your sleeping bag and pillow) is supplied, including camp mattresses, which are warm and comfortable. We supply dome tents and assembly/disassembly takes only 5 minutes. They are good quality, durable, industry-standard 2-person pop-up tents, each with 2 separate and convenient zip-up doors and vestibules, so that each person has his/her own entrance.

We use 2 types of campgrounds in North America:

1. Private campgrounds: These are privately run sites, usually with all services such as a fire pit, picnic table, drinking water, toilet & shower buildings. Some have small outdoor swimming pools and laundry facilities. These campgrounds are located near national park entrances or towns.
2. Public campgrounds: These are park-run sites, usually with basic facilities such as a fire pit, picnic table, and drinking water. In some cases, these types of campgrounds don't have showers, only pit toilets and a lake! In other locations, toilet and shower facilities may be located outside of campground, or at times in another location, a drive away. Some of them have also shower fees (\$2-6/shower).

Joining Hotel

Hotel Metropolis
25 Mason St
San Francisco
California
USA
(415) 775-4600

Please note for the August 9th departures the joining hotel will be:

Hotel G
386 Geary Street
San Francisco
California
USA
415-738-0589

Please note for the August 23rd departure the joining hotel will be:

The Good Hotel
112 7th St
San Francisco
California

USA

Joining Instructions

The international airport in San Francisco is located 14 miles (22 km) from downtown San Francisco. When arriving at the International Airport in San Francisco, proceed to the Arrivals Hall. From here you have three transport options; public Taxi, door-to-door shuttle or the public Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART).

Taxi

On the Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level continue to the designed taxi zones located at the roadway center islands right outside the Arrivals Hall. Uniformed taxi coordinators will help you with any questions you may have but it should be fairly easy to find a taxi. The approximate fare to downtown San Francisco is \$40 (depending on traffic) plus gratuity.

Door-to-Door Shuttle also known as "Shared-ride Vans"

This is probably the most convenient way to get to your hotel and definitely cheaper than a taxi ride from the Airport. From the Arrivals Hall make your way up one floor (Level 3) to the Departures/Ticketing Level. Proceed to the Center Island Transportation Zone located outside. Again, there will be uniformed coordinators to help you just in case you have any questions. You will see quite a few shuttle companies but wait for the Vans that say either "Go Lorries Shuttle" or "Super Shuttle". The fare to your hotel is between \$15 and \$17 plus gratuity. This shuttle service is on a walk-up basis so it might take a few minutes until you see the right shuttle that will take you to the heart of San Francisco!

BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) public transportation

The cheapest and definitely the most adventurous way to get to your hotel is by BART. The fare to downtown San Francisco is \$8.10 (approximately 25 min). The BART station is located on the Departures/Ticketing Level of the International Terminal (Boarding Area G side). From any Terminal you can reach BART by taking the AirTrain to Garage G/Bart (no fare). Once at the station you need to get a ticket at the vending machine that accepts cash or credit card. Then you need to enter your ticket into the fare gate. The ticket will be returned to you since you will use the same ticket again when you exit BART at Civic Center/UN Plaza SF. From here you have approximately a ten minute walk. Enjoy the first glimpse of beautiful San Francisco!

Please note that day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, though a brief departure meeting will be held in the hotel on the evening of day 1. When you arrive at our joining hotel you will find the time and place of the meeting on a welcome note hung in the hotel lobby. If you are unable to find the note, please just ask the front desk staff.

At the meeting you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. If you arrive late and miss the meeting, your CEO will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call the G Adventures Local Representative. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Representative (San Francisco)
During office hours (Weekdays, 6:00am-9:00pm PST)
From outside the USA: 1-415-642-7378
From within the USA: 415-642-7378

After hours emergency number

From outside the USA: 1-530-784-4238
From within the USA: 530-784-4238

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local representative, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible.

For days in the outdoors, we recommend the use of lightweight, breathable, moisture-wicking fabrics made of wool or synthetic fibers. Cotton is not recommended for days to spend hiking as it does not allow for heat or moisture to enter or escape, and it will not dry easily once wet.

We recommend the use of a well-labeled duffel bag, soft bag or backpack (whichever you find easiest to carry). Suitcases or heavy luggage are not recommended for the health of the CEO! A good size day-pack (20-35L) is also essential as you will have the chance to walk and hike in different national parks during these trips. This daypack will be used to carry your personal gear for the day, lunch and water bottle.

The American west is generally known for warm weather, but temperatures do vary significantly in the mountain and desert areas especially. The day time temperature could exceed 30 C, while the night time temperatures do regularly decrease to single digits, or even possible below freezing. It is therefore important to pack clothes for warm days and cool evenings - a light jacket is necessary.

Seasonal temperature ranges:

March - May ; September to December: -7 C to +30 C

June – August: 0 C to + 35 C

Additionally, a set of smart casual clothes is also advisable.

Checklist

Travel

- Credit and/or debit card (see spending money)
- G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and trip details
- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Camera and memory cards
- Charger for phone/camera/music device
- Reading/writing material

Equipment

- Insect repellent (for North West and East Coast only)
- Head lamp with batteries
- Hand sanitizers/ antibacterial wipes
- Rain Cover or plastic bags for daypacks
- Small towel (pack towels are good) and swim wear
- Sun hat
- Sunblock
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Water bottle (at least 2L capacity)
- Pocketknife
- Watch or alarm clock
- Sleeping bag : a down or synthetic sleeping bag (0° to +5°C) for the summer and warmer for spring and fall season (-15°C). You can purchase sleeping bags on the first day of the trip. An appropriate sleeping bag will cost from \$40-\$60USD. At the end of your journey, if you would like to donate your sleeping bag you can leave it with your CEO and we will donate it to a local charity.
- Sleeping bag liner (synthetic or silk - optional)
- Pillow (pack pillow recommended)
- First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band-Aids, anti-histamines, motion sickness remedy, after-bite salve and extra

prescription drugs you may be taking).

Clothing and Footwear

- 3 or 4 lightweight shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece/jacket
- Windproof/waterproof jacket (rain gear)
- 2 pair of shorts
- 1 pairs of long trousers
- 2 pair hiking pants/track pants
- Comfort clothing for the night
- 3 to 5 pair of walking/hiking socks (synthetic or wool)
- Under garments
- Warm thermals/long underwear (fall and spring season only)
- Warm wool hat and gloves (fall and spring season only)
- Good hiking shoes or boots
- Sport sandals (suitable for water if you are planning on rafting)
- Extra comfortable slip-on sandal or shoes for the campsites

Optional Items:

- Hiking poles, binoculars, Playing cards, games, frisbee, notebook, pens/pencils

Laundry

Laundry can be done at least once a week while on tour. Some private campgrounds and most cities have laundromats where you can buy soap and wash your laundry in coin-operated machines. Your CEO will advise you along the trip where you will be able to do your laundry.

Visas

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

The United States currency is the US Dollar (USD).

Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere in the US and can be used to purchase small and large items. When purchasing products or services with a foreign credit card in the USA, you may be charged additional fees by your credit card company for foreign purchases.

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances but you must remember to bring your PIN number (be aware that many ATM machines only accept 4-digit PINs). Both Cirrus and Plus system cards are the most widely accepted debit cards. Both Visa and Master Cards are the most widely accepted credit cards. While ATMs are commonly available, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work check with your bank before you travel. A visit to an ATM can be arranged on Day 1 and other days of the trip.

Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US Dollars as cash (preferably smaller bills, 5's, 10's and 20's), traveller's cheques and credit cards is best. Currency exchange is best obtained prior to travel or at the airport, currency exchange is very difficult to find in the USA and most banks do not accommodate.

Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds.

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Tipping

It is customary in North America to tip service providers such as waiters, bartenders and taxi drivers, at approximately 15-18%, depending on the service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip any local guides used. Recommendations for tipping local guides would range from \$2-8 USD per activity depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures Chief Experience Officer did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline \$5-10 USD per person, per day can be used as a guide. If your CEO exceeded your expectations, feel free to tip more.

Optional Activities

PERSONALIZE YOUR TRIP

Our trip designers work very hard to assemble the life-altering experiences that fill this brochure. That said, our travellers are a diverse group driven by all sorts of different tastes, motivations and interests. What's a trip designer to do? The solution? Extras! Specially designed for travellers with unique interests, Extras are optional add-ons to your G adventures trip that make your adventure more you-centric. Extras must be booked prior to departure.

Extras available on this trip:

GRAND CANYON HELICOPTER RIDE

Helicopter Ride (Long Flight: 45-50min) USD\$274

The Grand Canyon helicopter ride is a must! Enjoy a bird's-eye view for 45 to 50 minutes as you fly over the canyon, taking in the stark contrast of the the blue-green Colorado River against the thousand shades of red rock found in the canyon. From above you can fully appreciate the greatness of the gorge and see why it is one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

Optional activity prices are subject to change and can fluctuate in relation to the high/low season and the number of people on a specific excursion. Not all excursions listed here may be available, due to season or weather conditions. As generally not a lot of time is spent in start/end cities, you may want to arrange to arrive early, or stay longer after the trip in order to allow sufficient time to participate in optional activities there.

All prices are per person, are in US dollar amounts.

Yosemite

Bicycle Rental US\$11 per hour

Las Vegas

Limo Tour (1.5 hrs) US\$40

Grand Canyon:

Helicopter Flight 25 min US\$244 ; 45min US\$274

IMAX Movie US\$14

Monument Valley:

Jeep Tour (2.5 hr tour) & Dinner US\$70

Jeep Tour (2.5 hr tour) US\$40

New Orleans

Swamp Tour (2 hrs) US\$24

Mississippi Steamboat Cruise (2 hrs) US\$26, \$37 including lunch.

Memphis

Rock & Soul Museum US\$11

National Civil Rights Museum US\$10

Graceland US\$24-37

Nashville

Country Music Hall of Fame US\$22

New York City:

Empire State Building US\$25 (main deck), \$42 main deck and observation deck)

Finger Lakes/Albany:

Canoe Rental Ithaca US\$22.50 (2 hrs), US\$32.50 (4 hrs)

Niagara Falls

Cave of the Winds US\$11

Cleveland

Rock & Roll Music Hall of Fame US\$22

Chicago

Willis (Sears) Tower US\$18

Las Vegas

Limo Tour (1.5 hrs) US\$40

San Francisco:

Cable Car Ride US\$6 one way, US\$14 one day

Bike Rental (full day) US\$32 or US\$36 (for higher end bike)

Sunset Sail (1.5 hrs) US\$40

Jenny Lake

Boat Ride US\$10 (return), \$7 (one way)

Badlands

Horseback Riding US\$28 (1 hr), \$35 (1.5 hrs), \$40 (2 hrs), \$65 (1/2 day)

1880's Town US\$12

Cody

Buffalo Bill Historical Center US\$18

Night Rodeo US\$18

Jackson Hole

Rafting on Snake River (3 hrs) US\$75

Horseback Riding US\$35 (1 hr), \$50 (2 hrs), \$65 (3 hrs)

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have

safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

- www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit <http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations>

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.