America’s National Parks: The Southwest

May 17th-30th, 2016

All transportation between parks, all park entrance fees, all breakfasts, dinners, and backcountry lunches for the duration of the trip, tour fees, camp sites, backcountry passes and two nights in Denver hotels. $850.00

Trip Overview

The Southwest is blessed with natural wonders, hosting more than one-fifth of the total number of National Parks in the United States. This road trip will take you to four magnificent natural and cultural sites: Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and Arches National Park. Out of the four parks on our list, two have been recognized as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO: Grand Canyon National Park for the marvel of its geological formation and Mesa Verde National Park for its delicate preservation of peculiar cliff dwellings, homes of the ancient American Indians made only out of stone, wood, and earth situated at an altitude greater than 8,500 feet.

Along the journey, you will be immersed into Native American culture, and experience some of the most breathtaking geological formations and architecture in the world. With a mix of driving and hiking, you will get a backcountry experience by exploring much of the parks on foot, staying in tents, and preparing your own food. You will come away from this trip with a greater understanding of the native cultures and appreciation for the geological wonders of the region, as well as basic backcountry living skills.

General Schedule of Trip

May 17th: Arrive separately in Denver, CO. Welcome dinner in Denver.

May 18th-29th: Road trip through the Southwest to visit four of America’s most beautiful national parks. At Mesa Verde we will tour the ancient cliff dwellings. We will explore the Grand Canyon before moving on to Zion where our hiking will include a trip through the Narrows, one of the more unusual hiking trails on the Colorado Plateau. Our final stop, Arches National Park, will include a series of hikes to explore the natural sandstone arches. During the trip, you will also participate in volunteer work at the Ute Mountain Tribal Park and take a guided tour to learn about the history, culture, and art of the Native Americans.

May 30th: Arrive back in Denver and have a celebratory dinner to end the trip. You are free to return home or continue traveling on your own.

Facilitators

This program will be facilitated by Andrew Burd, Maggie DeBell, and Yo Truong. Andrew, a junior History major, Maggie, a sophomore Health Science major and Yo a sophomore Computer Science Major have a combined seven years of experience facilitating with GRAB. All three have Wilderness First Responder Certification.

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**Registration and Payment:** Register online at www.gettysburg.edu/grab. A $150 non-refundable deposit is due at time of registration to secure a place on the trip of your choice. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, e-checks, or cash. The final payment will be required 60 days prior the trip departure date. To register, please fill out the online form or call the Office of Experiential Education at 717.337.6313.

**Not Included in the Price:** Hospitalization, individual evacuation costs, insurance, meals in destination cities prior to and at the conclusion of the trip, souvenirs, alcohol, excesses baggage charges, or other personal expenses incurred outside the scope of the trip. We DO NOT include airfare in the pricing of our trips. We want to give participants the opportunity to have flexibility in their travel arrangements. Some people will have frequent flyer miles, many people will be traveling from various destinations, while others may already be at the site location or decide to extend their trip once our expedition has concluded.

**The Trip:** Hiking distance will vary from 5-10 miles per day, but the average time spent hiking ranges from 4-7 hours, which includes stops for lunch & breaks, appreciating the sites, general conversation, and determining our route. This trip also includes time spent driving from park to park. Driving times will range from 2-5 hours.

**Group Size:** The trip consists of three facilitators from the Office of Experiential Education and up to eight participants from the Gettysburg College community; students, employees and families, and alumni of the college are all welcome.

**Transportation:** You are responsible for your own flights to and from Denver and for your transportation from the airport to the hotel, and back to the airport at the end of the program. All other transportation will be provided. If you plan to travel further following the trip, you are responsible for those logistics as well.

**Accommodations:** All accommodations throughout the trip will be in tents, primarily in campgrounds. In Denver, on the first and last night, we will be staying in hotels.

**Meals:** All breakfasts and dinners are provided by the program, and these meals will be prepared on backcountry stoves by participants. In Denver, we will be eating in restaurants. Lunches will be provided on hiking days, but on driving days each individual will be responsible for their own food. We will stop at grocery stores along the way so everyone can purchase what they need. Participants will be responsible for any additional food they wish to purchase.

**Weather:** Temperatures vary widely depending on location. Be prepared for averages in the mid to high 70’s across the parks, with the possibility of higher temperatures at times. Night temperatures can range anywhere from 30-50 degrees.

**Physical Preparation:** The trip has longer and shorter hiking days. While no experience is required to participate in this trip, you should be prepared to spend much of your time hiking. The hike from the rim of the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River is nearly 10 miles with an elevation change of almost 4,500 feet. You should base your preparation on your personal needs. If you can, get out and walk, run, bike, or move any way you like to accustom yourself to the level of movement necessary for this trip. Any activity will help prepare you for a great experience.

**Health and Medical & Release of Liability:** We require each participant to fill out medical/liability forms for Gettysburg College and for any contracted services who request similar documentation. We can provide information on short term insurance that covers baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation which is required for our international programs. Please contact us if you have any questions.

**Cancellation of Trips:** We reserve the right to cancel trips due to lack of participants, State Department warnings, or natural occurrences that may be potentially hazardous. If you cancel the trip more than 60 days before the departure date, you will receive a full refund minus the $150 deposit. If cancellation occurs 45 -60 days prior to the departure date a 50% refund is available. If cancellation occurs 21 - 44 days prior to the trip a 25% refund will be available. There will be no refunds for cancellations made within 21 days of the expedition.