



Vegas to LA: Grand National Parks

Overview & Itinerary

Start	Las Vegas, United States
Finish	Los Angeles, United States
Destination	United States
Style	Comfort
Theme	Explorer
Code	SSKH
Trip rating	4.73
Validity	01 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019



Is this trip right for you?

- The regions visited on this trip can experience extremes in weather and temperature. Bryce Canyon is deceptively unpredictable and can drop in temperature to the point of snow flurries, while Zion National Park down the road is generally hot and sunny. Please be prepared for all weather conditions, especially if travelling outside of the July/August summer months. Bring layers of warm clothing and sun protection and ensure you drink plenty of water.
- As you'll be travelling in a van with a full group of people and their luggage, conditions can feel quite cramped. This is all part of the adventure, however, and you may even meet some long-term friends.

Physical rating



We recommend that you undertake regular aerobic exercise in the weeks before you travel, particularly if you are not in the habit of regular exercise. Walking, jogging, swimming or riding a bike are all good ways to increase your aerobic fitness, which will allow you to enjoy the trip to its fullest.

Many of the National Parks that we visit have hiking opportunities where walks of up to 4 hours can be an option for you. There are often easier options. Throughout the trip there are more adventurous optional activities that require some consideration regarding your physical abilities to complete the activity.

Joining point

Bally's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino
3645 S Las Vegas Blvd
Las Vegas
NV
89109
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Phone: +1 7029674111

Joining point instructions

Group shuttles are an economical way to get from the airport to most major hotel/resorts. While en route, group shuttles make multiple stops at locations along the way, so relax and enjoy the spectacular view. Terminal 1 group shuttles are available on the west side of baggage claim, outside door exits 7 - 13. Airport personnel are available to help queue the lines and provide assistance as needed. At Terminal 3, shuttles are conveniently located outside on Level Zero on the west end of the building to serve domestic travelers and on the east side of the building to accommodate international travelers. Quick exit lanes will allow traffic to leave the airport quickly and airport personnel are available to assist as needed. Despite the ample shuttle services, a cab, LYFT, or Uber is your best bet for getting around quickly. Rates will vary based on the time of day, but will typically takes 15-20 minutes and cost around \$20.

**Please meet at the Bally's bell desk for your welcome meeting.

Alternate Joining points

Alternate Joining Point 1

For trips departing on the following dates, use this joining point.
23 Sep 2019 (SSKH190923)
Alexis Park Hotel
375 East Harmon
Las Vegas
NV
89109
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Phone: +1 702 796 3300

Instructions

From the airport you may catch a taxi for approximately US\$20 (plus tip). There are also shared-ride shuttle services available for approximately US\$9-12 (plus tip) per person. The trip takes approximately 5 minutes in a taxi (longer if in a shared van making many stops) and transport services operate 24 hours a day.

PRE/POST TOUR ACCOMMODATION:

If you have booked additional accommodation in conjunction with your trip, please note that it is standard policy in the USA for debit and credit cards to be authorized at check-in by hotels for the amount of your stay, plus an amount to cover incidentals. The authorization will hold the funds until check out, at which time the amount actually incurred during the stay will be charged. Authorized amounts can take up to 30 days after departure to be released by your bank or financial institution. If you are unsure at check in as to what your card is being charged for, please ask the staff to explain their policy. Please also clarify with the hotel when you check in or out that all deposits will be refunded as promptly as possible.

Alternate Joining Point 2

For trips departing on the following dates, use this joining point.

27 May 2019 (SSKH190527)
Red Roof Inn Plus Las Vegas
4350 Paradise Rd
Las Vegas
NV
NV 89169
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please contact our operations base on 1-800-786-8735 (toll free in the USA and Canada) or +1 707 523 1800 (office hours).

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. But we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

POLICE AND AMBULANCE

In case of an emergency, local authorities can be contacted by calling 911 – this is the toll free phone number for the police, fire department and the ambulance in the USA and Canada. In case of doubt, call the operator on 0.

BOOKING ENQUIRIES / ISSUES

For general enquiries or questions about your booking, please contact your agent or adventure specialist, or visit us at:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/au/contact-us>

CRISES AND EMERGENCIES

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency please contact our local ground representative on the number below (remember to drop the +xx country code if you are calling from within the country):

+1 707 483 9460

Itinerary

 **Expand All**

Day 1: Las Vegas

Welcome to fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada! From a western outpost in the desert, Las Vegas became a spectacular gambling/entertainment metropolis. It's a city of fanciful architecture, larger-than-life characters, and enigmatic realities. But beyond the glitz and glitter, the city is home to diverse urban neighborhoods, international cuisine and a vibrant local art scene. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting in the hotel lobby at 6 pm. Please meet at the Bell desk. If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please ensure you have all these details to provide to your leader. As there's a great deal to do in Las Vegas, we recommend you arrive a few days early to make the most of this exciting city. Try your luck on the casino floors, hit the shops, soak up the glitz and gaudiness of the strip or catch one of the many shows on offer.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

Notes: If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time for the welcome meeting, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability).

Day 2: Zion National Park

Today, leave behind the neon and nightclubs and travel across the border into Utah and the spectacular landscapes of Zion National Park (approximately three hours). Warm up with a gentle walk to the lower end of the Emerald Pools, taking in the lush vegetation and dual waterfalls of this desert oasis. Continue through an dry and more strenuous trail to the upper end of the pools, passing another waterfall on the way to Zion's 'beach'. Enjoy some free time to hit one of the many trails and explore among the park's soaring cliffs and cascading falls. If you're feeling ambitious, perhaps enjoy the park's most famous challenge: Angels Landing. After a strenuous hike along the narrow ridge of the cliffs, you'll be rewarded with a panorama of the red landscape. Please be aware that this isn't for the faint-hearted and requires a moderate level of fitness.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 3: Zion National Park

Enjoy a full day of free time in Zion National Park. This is a great opportunity to tackle any trails you may not have yesterday. The Narrows is a good choice, if you're not up for the more challenging Angel's Landing. The Narrows is probably the most popular hike in the park, and one of the best slot canyon hikes on Earth. Trek through a gorge with cliff faces that rise up to 300 metres (1000 feet) on either side, cooling off in deep rivers along the way. The Narrows hike can be tailored to suit various levels of skill and experience.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Zion National Park - Entrance Fee

Optional Activities

- Zion National Park - Hiking - Free
- Zion - Narrows Hiking Gear Rental - USD25
- Zion National Park - River tubing (seasonal) - USD24

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 4: Bryce Canyon

In the morning, drive to Bryce Canyon. Millions of years of wind and water erosion have formed the park's distinctive hoodoos – uniquely shaped rock spires rising out of the red desert. You will have ample time to explore the park's extensive network of hiking trails, from the easy Rim Trail, to the moderate Queen's Garden Trail or the strenuous Peek-a-boo Loop. Wherever you walk, you'll encounter unique landscapes and a kaleidoscope of desert colours.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Bryce Canyon National Park - Entrance Fee

Optional Activities

- Bryce Canyon National Park - Hiking - Free

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 5: Monument Valley

In the morning make the six-hour drive to the spectacular Monument Valley. There may be time to visit the cliffs, canyons and domes of Capitol Reef National Park on the way. Monument Valley is part of Navajo Nation, home to more than 200,000 enrolled Navajo people. Explore the giant sandstone formations scattered across the desert, witnessing the ever-changing colour of the landscape. In the evening, travel by jeep through the Monument Valley with a Navajo guide. Join the locals for an authentic Navajo dinner around a campfire and settle in for an evening of traditional songs and stories.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Monument Valley Tribal Park Entry Fee
- Monument Valley - Jeep Tour and Navajo Dinner
- Capitol Reef National Park

Meals Included

- Dinner

Day 6: Grand Canyon National Park

In the morning, make the 3–4 hour drive to the Grand Canyon, one of the largest canyon systems in the world. Photos really don't do this massive network of gorges, rivers and cliffs bathed in desert rainbow colours justice. This a real highlight of the trip, so you'll be spending two nights here in order to take it all in. Perhaps start with a stroll along the easy going South Rim Trail, which gives spectacular views over the park. While you can't hike to the Colorado River and back in one day, you can take a roughly four-hour trail to Skeleton Point, which offers views of the river. Ask your leader for advice on which trails are right for you and your fitness level.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Grand Canyon National Park - Entrance Fee

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 7: Grand Canyon National Park

Today is as clear as an Arizona sky in summer. Explore at your own pace, but remember to always have a supply of water and high-energy snacks handy. Touch base with your leader about the optional activities available today – including an incredible helicopter flights over the park. If you'd rather get the birds eye view without leaving the ground, you can choose to watch a documentary on the canyon

at the local IMAX theatre. Of course, there are myriad trails and treks to keep the active occupied. Bright Angel Trail has wonderful views all along the trail and Ooh-Aah Point is a favourite shorter hike on the South Kaibab Trail offering spectacular wide views of the canyon. In the evening, sit back and enjoy the sunset behind the red peaks.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Grand Canyon - Helicopter flight (45 mins) - USD295
- Grand Canyon - Hiking - Free
- Grand Canyon - IMAX movie - USD15

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 8: Joshua Tree National Park

In the morning, take the long drive to Joshua Tree National Park (approximately 7-8 hours). Sitting between the Mojave and Colorado Deserts, the park is home to striking rock formations, many species of cacti and varied desert wildlife such as coyotes, lizards and bighorn sheep. Spend the night in a nearby hotel.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Joshua Tree National Park - Entrance Fee

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 9: Los Angeles

After breakfast, continue exploring Joshua Tree in the morning then drive to LA (approximately three hours). After all that desert, wide-open spaces and beautiful scenery, the only thing you might be missing is a good coffee. Never fear; the City of Angels has excellent coffee and then some. Visit the Original Farmers Market for lunch before spending an afternoon at Santa Monica Pier for a dose of sea, sand and eccentric boardwalk characters. Then you're free to discover LA at your own pace. Stroll Rodeo Drive, amp up the culture with a trip to the Getty Centre or enjoy the sights from Venice Beach. You will have no problem finding a superb spot for dinner this evening – the cultural mishmash of LA provides excellent nosh on every corner.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 10: Los Angeles

Your Las Vegas to Los Angeles adventure comes to an end this morning. There are no more activities planned and you're able to depart the accommodation at any time after check-out. If you're planning to stay in LA for a little while longer, why not take an Urban Adventure tour like Sips of Old Hollywood. Stroll along the "Walk of Fame" and soak up the atmosphere at iconic bars, lounges, speakeasies, and mobster hangouts. Find out more at urbanadventures.com/destination/los-angeles-tours.

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Finishing point

Fairfield Inn & Suites LAX
525 N Sepulveda Blvd, El Segundo
Los Angeles
CA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Phone: +1 4242905000

Finishing point instructions

The Fairfield Inn & Suites is located less 10 minutes drive from LAX Airport. The hotel features a pool and free wifi and you can take advantage of their complimentary airport shuttle. For your convenience there are also a number of great restaurants within walking distance.

Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you print and review a final copy prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities,

look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

MEALS

Please note that day-by-day meals are indicative only. You will receive the same number of meals, but they may not happen exactly on the days indicated. Your leader may change the days that meals are provided to best suit the needs of the group and the timing of the activities on your trip.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. It allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/feedback/>

Essential Trip Information

Important notes

1. A single supplement is available on this trip.

Passport and visas

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. Entry requirements can change at any time, so it's important that you check for the latest information. Please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you're visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Your consultant will also be happy to point you in the right direction with acquiring visas. Visas can take several weeks to process, so familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time.

Entrance requirements to the USA have changed in recent years so please read the following instructions carefully, even if you have travelled to the USA before.

PLEASE NOTE: Also please note, all travellers from Visa Waiver Program countries must obtain an electronic travel authorization prior to their flight from the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) website: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

Apply for ESTA no later than 72 HOURS (we recommend 1 week prior to travel) before departing for the United States. Real-time approvals will no longer be available and arriving at the airport without a previously approved ESTA will likely result in being denied boarding.

Many countries now operate under a visa waiver program (meaning a visa isn't required) however you still need to obtain an authorisation which confirms that you have been approved to travel. This authorisation must be obtained in advance of travel. See <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-w...>

Many citizens from Visa Waiver Program countries can travel to the USA without a visa for a 90 day stay, if they meet certain requirements. Travellers from all Visa Waiver Program countries must present a machine-readable, biometric passport (which meets US requirements) at the port of entry to enter without a visa, otherwise a US visa is required. You can get further information from the US Department of State website:

- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit.html>

All ESTA registration applications or renewals require a US\$14.00 fee paid by credit or debit card. You should apply for your visa waiver authorisation at least 1 week prior to travel to avoid any last minute delays. You will require your passport details and your address in the US (you can use the starting point hotel/hostel address).

Please note that if there is any discrepancy between the name on your ESTA, your passport, your tickets and even your frequent flyer membership, you may be detained at Immigration and subject to a secondary inspection which could take a few hours. If you have recently changed your name, please check that your details have been updated everywhere.

If you are from a country eligible for the visa waiver program but are a dual citizen of Iran, Iraq, Syria or Sudan, or if you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Syria or Sudan since 1 March 2011, you will not longer be eligible for the visa waiver program and will instead need to apply for a non-immigrant visa. Please see the Department of State website for more information:

<http://travel.state.gov//content/travel/en.html>

Medical and health information

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that if, in the opinion of our group leader or local guide, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

PERSONAL MEDICATIONS:

Medical prescriptions written outside of the US and Canada aren't accepted at pharmacies. Therefore, we recommend you bring along your personal medications in the necessary quantities for your trip.

DEHYDRATION & SUN PROTECTION:

The most likely medical incidents to occur on our trips are dehydration, over exposure to the sun, and twisted ankles from walking on uneven ground. While hiking please ensure you drink enough water to remain hydrated as some hikes don't have refill stations for your water bottles. The sun (especially in desert areas in the West) can be harsh, particularly in the warmer months. Ensure you apply adequate sun protection cream and wear a hat. Travelling with sunburn can be uncomfortable.

USA HEAT WAVE 2016

So far in 2016 the USA has been experiencing a severe heat wave, and predictions are that this will continue and that 2016 will be a hotter than usual summer. As a result, from time to time it may be

necessary to change the itinerary with little notice, or cancel hikes, if we deem the conditions to be unsafe. Please make sure you take a water bottle and hat with you, and pay attention to how you are feeling, and alert your tour leader if you feel unwell at any time, particularly with symptoms such as muscle cramps, headaches, nausea or dizziness.

ZIKA VIRUS

Recently it has been confirmed that 4 people in Florida have been infected by the Zika virus by local mosquitoes. These are the first known infections of the virus being transmitted by mosquitoes locally. Up to this point all other cases have been contracted overseas.

This virus is mostly concerning to pregnant women as recently in Brazil local authorities have linked the virus to an increase in babies born with microcephaly (smaller than normal skull). In addition to this risk, the World Health Organisation have reported that Zika symptoms may include mild fever, skin rash and conjunctivitis. These symptoms normally last for 2-7 days.

At this stage, WHO is not recommending any travel or trade restrictions related to the Zika virus, however we recommend all women who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant to closely monitor the information provided by the World Health Organisation, and also the USA government's Center for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/>).

More information on the Zika virus can be found at the following links:

World Health Organisation: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>

Food and dietary requirements

While travelling with us you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during your trip. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though.

On our lodging tours we eat in local restaurants where passengers pay individually for each of their meals and drinks. Average hotel breakfasts cost from US\$6-\$12, lunches from US\$8-\$15 and dinners from US\$13-\$30; this does not include alcoholic beverages. Wine costs approximately US\$5 per glass and beer US\$4 per bottle.

Most group leaders will offer their tour members the choice to operate a 'lunch only' food kitty that has proven to be a popular alternative to three daily restaurant meals. Leaders will more fully explain this option and the whole group will have to agree to implement this system. Please make sure we are aware of any special meal requirements before travelling.

Accommodation

Hotel (7 nights), Motel (2 nights)

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

Throughout the trip we request that our lodgings prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

Transport

Private vehicle

FLEET

Our large fleet of vans are fully equipped with dual air-conditioning system, V8 engines and any camping or cooking equipment needed for your trip. Most have cloth-upholstered seats and carpeted interior with radio/tape or CD players. Your baggage is transported in a trailer which is towed behind the van.

The vans are regularly serviced in our own maintenance facility and continuously checked and serviced by a well established network of maintenance and service facilities throughout the continent. However, unforeseen maintenance problems can still occur while on the road and we appreciate the patience of our travellers as we make necessary repairs as quickly as possible.

WI-FI

Beginning 01 January 2013, all private vehicle trips through the United States, including Alaska, will feature mobile Wi-Fi hotspots. Please note that trips in Canada will NOT have Wi-Fi hotspots in your van. Whilst travelling in the van, use Wi-Fi to check-in back home and share your background and cultural interests with your fellow travellers. Some usage restrictions may apply depending on demand and use. Hotspot devices provide wireless connections for up to five devices (up to two for optimal service and speed). Many camp grounds and hotels supply Wi-Fi for additional use outside the van.

DRIVING TIMES

All driving times mentioned in our itinerary are intended as a guide only and represent an estimated driving time - not including lunch stops, fuel stops, photo stops, traffic congestion, adverse weather conditions or any last minute alterations to the itinerary for any unforeseen circumstances. Please note that there are some long driving days on this tour - we'll have some starts as early as 7am and late arrivals at our final destination, sometimes after dark). As always, your group leader will make stops for viewpoints, short walks and lunch/rest breaks to help break up the journey.

We recommend you are fully prepared for these long travel days by reviewing our notes and indicated drive times. Some travellers prefer to bring pillows on board for added comfort, others prefer reading material or games and puzzles. The reality is that to get from one fabulous location to another, the distances are great and we like to think at least some of the adventure is in the journey - not just the destination. You'll be on board with up to 12 other passengers plus your group leader so patience and cooperation goes a long way in making this journey a comfortable one.

SEAT BELT POLICY

Safety is our priority and therefore our travellers are asked to sign a document on Day 1 of the itinerary indicating your understanding of our seat belt policy.

Money matters

It can be difficult to exchange money while on the road so we suggest that you bring some cash in US dollars, or exchange/withdraw money at the airport when you arrive, or at least before you start the trip.

Your individual budget will depend on your personal plans. Think about how much you want to spend on souvenirs, shopping, entertainment, food, drinks, excursions and attractions that aren't included in your trip (eg. helicopter flights etc). Please bear in mind that North America has endless things to do and see. Not all possible optional activities are listed in our Trip Notes.

The cheapest and most convenient way to acquire money is via an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) which are plentiful throughout all cities and towns, and even at roadside stops. This allows you to draw funds from your personal account at a superior exchange rate. Bank fees for these withdrawals can be either a flat rate or a percentage of the amount withdrawn. Check with your bank for information on their international fees.

Don't forget your PIN and make sure you know the telephone number for cancelling your card if it's stolen. Keep this in a safe place. When using your debit card, check your receipts and keep them to compare against your statement when you get home.

Occasionally banks will also allow cash advances on your credit card, but it's not recommended to rely on this method only. We recommend that you carry some cash for situations when ATMs can't be accessed.

SPENDING MONEY:

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included, drinks, shopping, optional activities and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've read your trip details thoroughly so you know what's included in the trip price and what isn't. This should make budgeting a little easier. You'll find this info in the Inclusions section of your Essential Trip Information (that's this document).

TIPPING

If you're happy with the service you receive, providing a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations. Please note we recommend that any tips are given directly to the intended recipient by a member of your group as our group leaders are prohibited from collecting cash for tips.

The following amounts are based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

Restaurants: We suggest 18% to 22% of your bill.

Bars: Recommended US\$1 for each drink ordered to ensure you are served again.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your leader. We suggest US\$5-20 per day for local guides. Ask your leader for suggestions as to what is appropriate for a given activity.

Your Group Leader: You should also consider tipping your leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. Your leader works long and hard for you. He or she may well become your friend during the trip but they do need to pay their bills. If the leader's performance meets or exceeds your expectation they will gladly accept a tip from you. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however you should plan to tip your leader US\$7-10 per person per day.

Another charge not normally listed in North American costs is the state and federal taxes, keep this in mind when your bill comes out slightly higher than the original price listed.

Tipping in North America can be confusing. If you'd like some more detail about when and how much to tip, see <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/tipping-guide-united-states/>

DEPARTURE TAX

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

Please budget for additional meals and expenses while on your trip. Our suggestion is based on past traveller feedback but you may choose to spend more or less.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

Packing

LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS:

All luggage is carried in trailers or inside the vehicle so please don't bring more than one medium sized bag, backpack or suitcase (20kg maximum) per person. Your suitcase/rucksack may get some rough handling, so make sure it's a tough one. A small daypack and camera may also be carried inside the vehicle.

As well as your underwear, toothbrush and other items you always need to pack for travel, below are some items that you specifically need for this trip.

ESSENTIAL:

- Reusable water bottle. We recommend at least a 1.5 litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. Tap water in the US and Canada is safe to drink and there are many places to fill up along the way, so please save plastic by bringing your own water bottle.
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- Clothing you can layer. You may encounter a wide variety of temperatures en route due to altitude and unforeseen weather conditions - so be prepared! Make sure to pack a warm fleece and a waterproof jacket. We suggest you check the expected temperatures en route and bring clothing that you can layer.
- Closed-in shoes. If you are planning on doing any hiking during your trip we highly recommend that you take a pair of comfortable, closed-in walking shoes. Closed-in shoes will help to protect your feet from cuts and scratches when walking through bush/grass-lands, and will also act as a barrier protection in rare cases against bites or stings from dangerous animals in this environment.

RECOMMENDED:

- Power adaptor
- Insect repellent
- Spare camera battery. You should have access to electricity to charge your battery most nights, but it is always a good idea to carry a spare.
- Personal medical kit. Your guide will carry a large kit but we recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, anti-diarrhoeal, antibacterial gel, wet wipes, bandaids/plasters etc.

OPTIONAL:

- Travel pillow if you like to sleep during long drives
- Reusable coffee cup such as a travel mug or KeepCup if you are a coffee drinker. Not only is it much better for the environment, but many places in the US and Canada also give a discount for bringing your own cup.
- Ear plugs to guard against a snoring room-mate
- A good book, a journal or an Ipad for the long drives.
- Swimwear
- Head torch

Phone and internet access

WiFi

Our vans in the USA are equipped with free WiFi however a fair use policy applies. It is limited to 5 users at one time, and is suitable for updating your Facebook status or sending an email home - not for streaming video or radio. Please be considerate of your use so that there is enough to go around. Most hotels have WiFi access although on occasion you may need to pay extra for it.

CHARGING BATTERIES

North American electrical outlets operate at a lower voltage than much of the rest of the world. This means that your devices may take longer to charge than you are used to, or may say that they are not charging, even though they are. You may also notice that some hotels have powerboards or multiple appliances plugged into one socket. Because of the lower voltage, this is not the safety issue that it may be in other parts of the world. You can also recharge batteries on the van, although obviously this will need to be shared between everyone. You will need to bring a 12 volt/cigarette lighter adapter to plug your USB charger into.

Climate and seasonal information

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS:

The following national holidays are observed in the US, which can affect our itinerary as traffic can be extreme, and shops, restaurants and attractions can be closed:

- New Year's Day
- Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Washington's Birthday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Group Leader

Your leader will provide basic information about the sights and cities you'll be visiting but please note that our leaders are not 'tour guides' in the traditional sense. They are adventure travel specialists and are there to organise your trip, arrange activities and help with questions or problems you may have while on your tour. Your leader will provide you with all the important information you need to embark on your own explorations.

They are also responsible for driving the van and navigating across the country. The allowable driving times for drivers is strictly controlled in North America. This ensures our drivers are well rested and are not over-tired from too many hours on the roads.

While your group will have a minivan for all included activities on the trip, please note that the services of the van and the driver may not be available for your use during free time, or after you have arrived for the day. If you need a special trip into town you may need to arrange transport or a taxi.

We endeavour to provide the services of an experienced leader however, situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

It's strictly forbidden for non-qualified rangers to present any information about some National Parks in North America, therefore we adopt a system (as requested by the park rangers) where our leader will encourage travellers to visit the information centres in the National Parks for details about the site.

We have designed our trips to make the most of your time in the States, but please understand that there are certain times during each day that your leader will need to be off duty from work. This includes having meal and rest periods and personal time. Your leader will provide you with all the important information you need to embark on your own explorations.

Safety

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 and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trip.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Intrepid's operational safety policy on our website. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it's being implemented in the field:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/contact-us/safety>

PETTY THEFT AND PERSONAL SAFETY:

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

DRINKING SAFETY:

Please note that in the US the legal drinking age is 21 and in some parts of Canada it is 19. When out drinking in bars please be responsible and take the same precautions you would at home. Don't accept drinks from strangers, and don't let your drink out of your sight. It is always a good idea to go out with a group and stick together.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking, and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS:

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and don't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our trips, you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you have your own accommodation (where available). Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a trip, you won't be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/insurance.php>

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/rt/responsibletraveller>

The Intrepid Foundation

Help us change thousands of lives by creating meaningful work and supporting skills training in communities around the world.

The Intrepid Foundation is the not-for-profit for Intrepid Group. We work with local organisations around the world to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and communities through sustainable travel experiences. With our travellers' help, we've contributed more than AU \$6 million to over 100 community organisations since 2002.

Did you know that tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy, making up 1 out of every 10 jobs? That's why we support local projects that create meaningful jobs and give people the skills they need to work in the destinations we take you to. And it's why we exist – to make it easy for travellers to give back to the communities and places they've been in an effective and meaningful way.

All donations to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Group dollar for dollar (up to AU\$10,000 per donor and AU\$500,000 in total each financial year, excluding emergency appeals). And because Intrepid Group covers all administration costs, every cent goes directly to the projects. Donating is simple and secure. Please ask your leader for information about the projects we support through The Intrepid Foundation or visit our website:

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>