

Utah's Mighty Five

May 8 – 15, 2024 • 8 Days • \$3375

Join us for an eye-popping, jaw-dropping, camera-stopping odyssey through Utah's Mighty Five National Parks! A series of walks are offered in each park through the most stunning scenery and most monumental geological wonders to be seen, certainly in the Southwest, even throughout the USA, and mostly likely across the globe!

Tour Type: Classic Curated

OVERVIEW

Join us for an eye-popping, jaw-dropping, camera-stopping odyssey through Utah's Mighty Five National Parks!

In each park, a series of walks is offered through some of the most stunning scenery and some of the most monumental geological wonders to be seen, certainly in the Southwest, even throughout the USA, and mostly likely across the globe!

One of the surprises of a journey through Utah is the remarkable scenery discovered even outside the boundaries of the famous national parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Arches National Park** - a 4-part walk in Arches National Park is characterized by graceful, gargantuan arches and windows carved into magnificent reddish sandstone monoliths. Walking right up to many of the formations adds an almost sacred sense of scale to the experience.
- **Canyonlands National Park** - with 3 additional short trails in the aptly-named 'Island in the Sky' section of the national park, plus a bonus hike on the edge of the park at one of Utah's excellent state parks. A top-of-the-world feeling overtakes us as we walk along mesa rims, looking down 2000 feet to the canyon floor spread before us to infinity.
- **Capitol Reef National Park** - a memorable hike through a remote canyon offering breakout views over the park with a memorable finish into the abandoned, early 20th century settlement of Fruita that makes this park unique among Utah's Mighty Five. Fruit orchards offering a variety of produce are still tended by National Park Service staff.
- **Bryce Canyon National Park** - some of the most colorful, fantastical rock formations on a journey chock-full of incredible canyons! Marvel at captivating hoodoo formations of the Queen's Gardens, the Cathedral, and Silent City.
- **Zion National Park** - another series of excellent nature trails accessed on a self-guided basis made possible by the park's excellent shuttle system.

Including:

- All land travel in 12-seat mini-buses, allowing better access to the Parks than a full-size coach
- Group airport transfer at end of tour
- Tourist class or better hotel accommodations
- 9 meals: 7 breakfasts plus 2 dinners
- 11 walk routes as listed, plus an additional optional walk route in Salt Lake City on Day 1
- Walking fees for 4 walks for those collecting AVA walk credit (if AVA sanctions approved)
- WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- All tipping for coach drivers, any local guides, and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$700. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

Visits to/Admission fees:

- Arches National Park
- Dead Horse Point State Park
- Canyonlands National Park
- Goblin Valley State Park
- Capitol Reef National Park
- Guided tour of Highway 12 ~ All American Road
- Guided tour in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Anasazi State Park Museum
- Wild West Retreat Dinner
- Bryce Canyon National Park
- Zion National Park

- [Book Now](#)
- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)

Itinerary

Click on each day for more details. (BLD) refers to meals included – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

[Day 1 ~ May 8: Arrive Salt Lake City, Utah](#)

Optional Salt Lake City Capital Walk – 5/10 km, rated 2B

Travelers arrive into Salt Lake City today for the beginning of our tour of remarkable Utah.

No activities are planned for the day but walkers are welcome to explore Salt Lake City, Utah's state capital, on a walk sponsored by a local walking club.

A second alternative involves a shorter, casual walk led by your WAI guides featuring Temple Square, the Utah State Capitol, and the Family History Library. This group will ride share into town from our airport hotel and return either by ride share or public transport. Transportation fees not included and will be approximately \$20 per person.

We rendezvous at the hotel this evening for a Welcome Orientation get together.

NOTE: Optional activities will likely require travelers to arrive in Salt Lake City a day early on May 7. A pre-night hotel room is available when you register.

[Day 2~May 9: Salt Lake City - Moab, Utah \(B\)](#)

Arches National Park Walk - 9 km, rated 1B

Walk #1: 3 km, rated 1C

Walk #2: 4 km, rated 1B (or take the Challenge Walk-5.3 km, rated 4C)

Walk #3: 1.6 km, rated 2C

A lovely drive down country roads takes us into the Colorado Plateau area that we'll be traveling through for the rest of the adventure. The small town of Moab serves as a base for two unforgettable national park experiences.

Today's 3-part walk in Arches National Park is characterized by graceful, gargantuan arches and windows carved into magnificent reddish sandstone monoliths. The bonus of walking right up to many of the formations adds an almost sacred sense of scale to the experience.

[Day 3~May 10: Activities from Moab \(B\)](#)

Canyonlands National Park Walk - 11 km, rated 2C

Walk #4: 4 km, rated 2B

Walk #5: 1.25 km, rated 1B

Walk #6: 3 km, rated 1B

Walk #7: 3 km, rated 3C

A 4-kilometer walk at Dead Horse Point State Park is a great warm up for the main event in Canyonlands—three additional short trails in the aptly-named 'Island in the Sky' section of the national park.

A top-of-the-world feeling overtakes us as we walk along mesa rims, looking down 2000 feet to the canyon floor spread before us to infinity. Our eyes are drawn deeper still, into the dark grooves of a third tier of sandstone below, through which the Colorado and Green Rivers have carved their way. Vistas offered on these walks are among the most dramatic we've ever witnessed!

[Day 4~May 11: Moab - Escalante, Utah \(B\)](#)

Walk #8: Goblin Valley Walk - 3 km, rated 1B (unsanctioned)

Walk #9: Capitol Reef Canyon Fruit Hike - 3 km, rated 3C (unsanctioned)

Goblin Valley really shouldn't be situated on planet Earth. The goofy, mud-colored, larger-than-life shapes seem to belong more in a corny, 1960s sci-fi film. The fact that they're real, however, allows us to share child-like delight as we wander through the bizarre formations.

Capitol Reef National Park also has its share of geological wonders. Our hike here winds through hidden canyons sporting vividly-colored rock formations with stunning panoramas at spur trail view points.

We finish with commanding views over the early 20th century settlement of Fruita that makes this park unique among Utah's Mighty Five. The trail descends into fruit orchards offering a variety of produce are still tended by National Park Service staff.

The final leg of our journey takes us down storied Highway 12, designated an All-American Road for its combined offerings of scenery and history.

[Day 5~May 12: Activities from Escalante \(BD\)](#)

Shannon, a born and raised local, hosts us on a driving tour this morning along Highway 12 through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument to Boulder.

Our stop at Anasazi State Park Museum sheds light on the mysterious predecessors of the Navajo, the Anasazi, who inhabited this part of the Southwest for over a thousand years!

On the return drive, we enjoy the view while Shannon shares memorable tidbits on the area's history and culture, and maybe even a dinosaur track sighting!

This evening, we meet Shannon's wife, Jenifer, our hostess for a down-home Utah, back-country dinner at the Wild West Retreat.

[Day 6~May 13: Escalante - Springdale, Utah \(B\)](#)

Bryce Canyon National Park Walk - 9 km, rated 2B

Walk #10: 4 km, rated 2B (or take the Challenge Walk-5.8 km, rated 2C)

Walk #11: 5 km, rated 2B

Bryce Canyon boasts some of the most colorful, fantastical rock formations on a journey chock-full of incredible canyons!

We walk at our highest elevation here, around 9,000 FASL, and use two different trails to see the canyon.

Part 1 has a "standard" option along the rim or a "challenge" option that drops down amongst the captivating hoodoo formations of the Queen's Garden trail.

We walk Part 2 together, relishing non-stop classic views of formations like the Cathedral

and Silent City from the Rim Trail.

More scenic driving takes us through tunnels east of Zion National Park to Springdale, situated on the southern border of Zion, and our home for the last two nights.

[Day 7~May 14: Activities from Springdale \(BD\)](#)

Walk #12: Zion National Park Walk - 10 km, rated 1B

Zion's excellent shuttle system and network of trails and viewpoints make this a delightful, low-stress way to unwind after 6 days packed with "amazing"!

WAI guides orient you to the park and the shuttle service, providing our approach and trail recommendations to Zion; then you are on your own to enjoy the day!

We rendezvous this evening for fellowship and reminiscing at a farewell dinner in a favorite Springdale local eatery.

[Day 8~May 15: Depart from Las Vegas, Nevada \(B\)](#)

Breakfast is followed by a drive across the desert to the Las Vegas McCarran International Airport (LAS). Here, we say farewell to our walking pals, and to an otherworldly walking adventure in amazing Utah!

Before You Book

Click on each heading for more details.

[How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a non-refundable \$300 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Soon after registration, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

[What is a Classic Curated Tour?](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are crafted with extensive on-site planning by WAI tour planners.

When designing Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We

then build activities and walks that take us *inside* these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see, but also touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, interactions with locals amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

Walk Difficulty

Traveling on the Colorado Plateau involves walking at higher than normal altitudes. Most walks are at elevations of 4000 to 5000 feet above sea level (FASL), with the exception of Bryce Canyon National Park, at just under 9000 feet above sea level. Be prepared for our walks in Bryce Canyon National Park to feel more challenging than a walk of similar difficulty at lower elevation.

Though trails in natural settings like the wide open spaces of Utah are more likely to be called “hikes” than “walks”, we intentionally look for routes that are manageable for most walkers in good physical condition and for trails with minimal tricky footing.

In addition, walk distances listed for most days are a combination of two or more shorter trails, offering time in between hikes to rest, ride the coach to our next trail, or have a picnic lunch.

Walk Ratings

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Several walks on this trip are oriented more towards education, and therefore take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we’re stopping less to talk.

In most cases, we are not “strolling.” We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of “training” beforehand in order to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please call our office at 1.360.260.9393.

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

INCLINE

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.

3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

TERRAIN

A. Almost entirely on pavement.

B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.

C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

[Elevation on Tour](#)

Through most of this adventure, we are traveling on the Colorado Plateau. The elevation of our hotels—where we overnight—has a greater impact on us physically than where we travel or walk during the day. That is, the elevation of where you sleep overnight is usually more important than the elevation of activities during the day.

Our hotels are located around 4000 to 5000 feet above sea level (FASL), with one just under 6000 feet above sea level.

Activities are generally in that range as well, with the exception of the walk at Bryce Canyon National Park, where we are at about 9000 feet above sea level. Because Bryce Canyon is near the end of the trip, it is likely that your body will have acclimated to mid-range altitudes by that time.

It is important to pursue any concerns you have about altitude with your doctor. As always, travelers are free to opt out of any activities.

[How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official tour start is our airport hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. The finish is in Las Vegas, Nevada. Travelers will fly into the Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) and out of the McCarran International Airport (LAS). We offer a group transfer to the McCarran International Airport at the end of the tour.

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment! More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in an Adventure Advice PDF by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

- Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or llp@wtpdx.com

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or

during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provides air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

Laura Pfahler: 503-434-6401 or llp@wtpdx.com

Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

Be aware that some travel insurance policies contain time-sensitive provisions (i.e. some benefits, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, are available only if the policy is purchased within a certain number of days of the purchase of the travel package). In addition, remember that airfare is not covered by any travel insurance policy you may have purchased for the tour.

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the SquareMouth.com website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

WAI bears no responsibility for travel insurance benefits advertised by various credit card companies. If you are relying on this type of benefit for insurance, we advise you to verify coverage types and limits and that your purchase does in fact qualify you for this insurance.

NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing "cancel for any reason" insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

[What if WAI Cancels the Tour](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 15 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received.

This refund policy contains one exclusion. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits

as a condition of booking services. Though it is rare, unforeseen circumstances can force us to cancel a tour. In cases where supplier's non-refundable policies are imposed, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

[Wellness Procedures for This Tour](#)

Our approach to wellness on tour has traditionally been to encourage travelers to:

- Focus on health before the tour so you start healthy.
- Pace yourself while on tour; travel is inherently stimulating and can produce adrenalin boosts that mask energy drain. Guard your energy reserves and consider the length of the trip and whether to opt out of some activities and/or walks.
- Be self-aware. If you feel yourself tiring or feel a bug coming on, take precautions to block it (e.g. extra rest, extra doses of vitamin C, etc).
- If you feel a bug coming on or if you take ill, distance yourself from others when possible.
- If you feel ill, isolate yourself towards the back of the bus and away from others and please wear a mask.

Click [WAI Wellness on Tour Policy](#) to view the WAI policy on Wellness on Tour.

[What Happens Next?](#)

Soon after registration, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure (February 8, 2024) and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the *Utah's Mighty Five* itinerary. We maintain that walking is still and always the best way to experience our world!



Adventure Pace

Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5

Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

Tour Pace: On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

Walk Challenge: This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Book Now Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

22 traveler maximum



Accommodations

Strategically located Tourist Class accommodations or better



Meals

Breakfasts included with a selection of lunches and dinners. Letters BLD indicate which meals are included.



Airfare

Not included. Start point is our airport hotel in Salt Lake City served by Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC), Utah. Finish point is McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada.



Transportation

Included. This tour uses a new transportation model with two 12-seat mini-buses to provide access to all areas of the parks.



Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

Your Guides



Roger and Jana Dorway have always appreciated the experiential, paradigm-expanding value of travel, and have been privileged to explore destinations on 5 continents.

Roger's business background connecting buyers and sellers, and Jana's career as a teacher provide this couple with a gift for connecting with people.

Retiring a few years ago has only increased their appetite for discovering more of the world, largely satiated by sharing natural wonders and cultural and historical insights as part of the WAI guide team.