

## **Suggested Itinerary: Phoenix, Arizona to Grand Canyon National Park and New Mexico**

Start a scenic and relaxing tour of the Southwest in Phoenix, a desert paradise, before immersing yourself in awesome views of the Grand Canyon, perusing Native American art, and enjoying world-class skiing and hiking.

### **Phoenix, Arizona**

*Suggested: 3 – 4 days*

Begin your exploration of Phoenix with a hot air balloon tour and gaze at the splendour of the Arizona desert. With its abundant sunshine and natural beauty, Phoenix is a golfer's paradise with more than 200 courses in the area – golf enthusiasts will want to plan a day or two for this activity. The five trails of the Desert Botanical Garden are a can't-miss for nature lovers who want the opportunity to view plants and flowers unique to the desert Southwest. To learn about Native American art and culture, head to the Heard Museum, which houses more than 4,000 works of art by native peoples. For spectacular mountain views, drive the Summit Road to Dobbins Lookout at South Mountain Park. Fit adventurers may challenge themselves with the two difficult summit trails at lovely Camelback Mountain in the Echo Canyon Recreation Area. Shoppers will delight in the bargains found at one of the area's outlet malls, or the high-end shopping at Biltmore Fashion Park.

## Grand Canyon National Park

*Suggested: 3 days*

Few places on Earth can top the stunning natural beauty of Grand Canyon National Park. The awe-inspiring canyon is a mile (1.6 km) deep and up to 18 miles (29 km) wide. Drive about 230 miles (372 km) from Phoenix to begin at the more easily accessed South Rim, which is open year-round. Here, tour the park's landscapes by car, bus, mule, helicopter, raft or on foot. Serious hikers and explorers will want to make the five-hour drive to the Canyon's North Rim, but be aware that lodging and food service is only available at this location May 15-October 15. Intrepid visitors will want to take a day trip to 'Grand Canyon West' to visit the glass-floored Skywalk on the Hualapai tribal land.

## Albuquerque, New Mexico

*Suggested: 2 - 3 days*

Wander the plaza of Albuquerque's Old Town, which is lined with historic buildings and the iconic and beautiful San Felipe de Neri Church. The church, built in 1793, is the city's oldest building, and is still open for Catholic mass each day. Surround yourself with the panoramic views of rugged rocks and deep canyons with a ride on the 2.7-mile (4.3 km) Sandia Peak Tramway. Delve into the Atomic Age with a visit to the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, featuring exhibits on nuclear medicine, radiation, nuclear waste and more. See Pueblo pottery and art and watch traditional Native American dances at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Savour some of the Southwest's traditional dishes at local restaurants.

## Santa Fe, New Mexico

*Suggested: 2 days*

Make the hour-long drive north to Santa Fe for an art-lover's excursion. Start at the famed Canyon Road galleries, a collection of more than 100 art galleries, shops and restaurants. Continue to the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum to see the colourful work of this important American artist. Take a break with a meal at one of Santa Fe's many restaurants celebrating the most well-known local product - New Mexico chili peppers. Save time to explore the Museum of International Folk Art, home to more than 125,000 objects from 100 countries - the largest collection of its kind in the world. Explore the ancient lives of the Puebloan people at Bandelier National Monument where petroglyphs and cave dwellings can still be seen in the rock face.

## Taos, New Mexico

*Suggested: 3 days*

In winter, hit the Taos Ski Valley, known for its light-powder snow and long runs. Warm up with a trip to one of the numerous natural outdoor hot springs near Taos. Manby Hot Springs next to an old stagecoach stop on the east bank of the Rio Grande River is a good choice. Visit the living historical site of Taos Pueblo, a group of multi-storied adobe buildings that have been continuously inhabited for more than 1,000 years. Approximately 150 Native Americans still live here. Or, explore the distinctly cosmopolitan side of Taos - the city is dotted with local boutiques, posh spas and upscale resorts.

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