

# Spirit of the West



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Experience the plucky frontier spirit of America's west coast on our 12 day adventure through inspiring landscapes, untamed sandstone backyards and cities with distinct personalities. Wander the star-studded Hollywood Walk of Fame, peer at the bottom of the world within Grand Canyon National Park, experience the magic of Frisco Bay from the Golden Gate Bridge, explore glacial gouged Yosemite National Park and be dazzled by illuminated charms of the Mojave mirage, Las Vegas.

## ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to the USA. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### DAY 1: UK to Los Angeles

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Los Angeles where you will be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel.

### DAY 2: Los Angeles

Situated upon California's idyllic coastline, the 'City of Angels' represents a microcosm of America; from vast suburban sprawls to towering skyscrapers, bohemian beaches to snow-capped peaks, Los Angeles is a definitive landscape of extremes. Your full day tour begins in Hollywood, a neighbourhood imbued with cinematic legend from its glamorous 'golden age'. Wander along the star embedded Walk of Fame to a viewpoint of the iconic Hollywood sign upon the Santa Monica Mountains, then continue to Beverly Hills, a sophisticated haven of manicured mansions, star estates and Rodeo Drive's opulent boutiques. Later in the afternoon, stop at the ocean enclave of Santa Monica city to wander along its century-old pier crowned by an illuminated Ferris wheel.

### DAY 3: Los Angeles to Scottsdale

Today, travel through expansive desert biomes, passing San Geronio's 3000 turbines and the city of Palm Springs - once a swinging getaway for the likes of Elvis Presley and the Rat Pack. Cross state lines into Arizona, arriving at the affluent city of Scottsdale early in the evening, home to a melting pot of cuisines, particularly those from across the nearby Mexican border.

### DAY 4: Scottsdale to Flagstaff

This morning, undertake an optional balloon ride (at an additional fee) and witness the magnificent spectacle of the Sonoran Desert illuminated by daybreak. Later that morning, travel to the mystical town of Sedona to experience alleged energy vortexes, which attract a wealth of new-age visitors; continue along Oak Creek Canyon to marvel at spectacular red sandstone formations that protrude through the verdant Coconino National Forest. Arrive in Flagstaff, brimming with small-town character and quaint diners that line the famous Route 66 for an evening at leisure.

### DAY 5: Flagstaff and The Grand Canyon

Begin today with a drive to a tour highlight and one of The Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Grand Canyon National Park. Having absorbed its sheer immensity, peer down the 6,000ft drop to witness the snaking Colorado River, carving its way through two billion year old basement rock. Wander along the south rim to admire jagged plateaus, rugged spires and crumbling ridges or take a walk along the Bright Angel Trail to spot inquisitive Albert squirrels, precarious bighorn sheep and the illusive Californian Condor. Later this afternoon, head back to Flagstaff for an evening at leisure.

### DAY 6: Flagstaff to Las Vegas

En route to the 'Silver State' of Nevada, stop at Seligman to embrace old town ambience birthed by the 'Mother Road'. Cross the arched O'Callaghan-Tillman Memorial Bridge, which overlooks the mighty Colorado River and

passes the nearby Hoover Dam's gigantic curvature nestled within the Black Canyon. Arrive late afternoon to your hotel for an evening to unwind or experience the neon vibrancy of the Vegas 'strip'.

### DAY 7: Las Vegas

Today is at leisure to explore the west's dazzling rhinestone, unescorted at your own pace. Begin at the 1,100ft summit of Stratosphere Tower for a unique observation of Las Vegas; pass the Bellagio's soaring fountain plumes before trying your hand at poker in Caesars Palace or travelling the world in one day as you visit the city's replica landmarks. Whether you stroll beneath Fremont Street's captivating canopy lightshow or take in a spectacular performance at MGM Grand, this lavish city of multiple personalities spellbinds all who visit its bustling boulevard.

### DAY 8: Las Vegas to Visalia

This morning, make your way across the dry expanse of the Mojave Desert, back to the 'Golden State' of California. En route, witness the peculiar spectacle of the 'boneyard', home to hundreds of obsolete commercial airliners preserved by torrid desert conditions. Your day concludes in Visalia, a quaint farming community brimming with old-town charm to a backdrop of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

### DAY 9: Visalia to Salida

Spend today in one of the world's most dramatic geological marvels, the UNESCO recognised Yosemite National Park. With varicoloured wild meadows, thunderous glacial rivers cascading from dizzying granite peaks and crumbling pinnacles, pines, cedars and oaks forming jagged silhouettes against the open sky, this display of the west's natural majesty is unparalleled. Well-maintained trails are available for those wanting a short hike, passing mammoth monoliths, grazing mule deer, specular pools and endangered bald eagles before arriving at the breathtaking tiers of Yosemite Falls, the parks highest waterfall. Later this afternoon, journey to the town of Salida for an evening at leisure.

### DAY 10: Salida to San Francisco

In the morning, depart Sonora for your final stop on America's west coast, San Francisco. Amid a rolling veil of mist, this slender peninsular occupies 47 elevated square miles populated by the clatter of old-fashioned cable cars, diverse neighbourhoods and an unmistakable collection of landmarks to discover on your afternoon tour. Continue to the Presidio, a serene park inviting visitors to panoramic vistas across the bay, out towards Alcatraz Island and San Francisco's calling card - the iconic Golden Gate Bridge.

### DAY 11: San Francisco

Today, experience the sights of the city at leisure unescorted. Perhaps visit the vibrant boardwalk of Pier 39, lined with delicious seafood eateries and a herd of resident seals who mysteriously appeared after the 1989 earthquake. For unique views of the city, stroll across the Golden Gate Bridge to the 19th Battery Spencer fort or perhaps take a cruise of the bay and get up close to the infamous Alcatraz Prison. Stroll alongside technicolour houses set against a Frisco skyline known as the 'Painted Ladies'; alternatively, take advantage of California's idyllic climate by visiting the vineyards of Napa Valley to sample renowned wines including Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

### DAY 12: San Francisco to UK or Extension

Following a morning at leisure, transfer to San Francisco International Airport for your flight back to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



**Accommodation**

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and America. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Los Angeles, you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Destination America**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/**Destination America** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

**Destination America**

Email: [operations@destamer.com](mailto:operations@destamer.com)

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

**Visas**

You will need to obtain an ESTA visa. This must be applied for at least 7 days before you are due to land in the USA. All UK passport holders must have a biometric epassport and your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date you are expected to arrive back in the UK. Important note: if you do not have a bio-metric epassport, you will be refused entry into the USA. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be who will be able to arrange the ESTA visa on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250590 and quote 'Mercury Holidays'. The cost of the visa is approximately £46.50.

**Insurance**

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

**Health and Vaccinations**

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

**Physical Accessibility**

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To



If you have booked a triple share, please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

**Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

**Meals**

Meals are not included and will need to be budgeted for accordingly.

**Emergency contact information**

Please find below the emergency contact details for Destination America 24 hour Emergency number: 001 310 617 6635

travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Spirit of the West is Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour.

Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

**Group Size**

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 25, and the maximum will be 45. If in the unlikely event there are less than 25 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

**Tour Guides - National Guide**

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. Should the tour not meet minimum numbers, then it will be operated with local guides only.

**Private Tours**

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

**Tipping**

It is at your customary/discretion to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately \$7-8 USD per person per day. This is a total of \$77-88 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the

beginning/end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

### Currency Exchange

The currency in America is the United States Dollar (USD). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £620- £820 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do

not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels but please note there is often a handling fee surcharge of around 3% for credit card payments.

### Itinerary changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

### Passport Information

Your Passport Information is required for this tour. This information is required at least 90 days prior to your departure. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with loss of deposit.

## WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A plug adaptor - 2 flat pins and the voltage in America is 120 V
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Binoculars

- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- Small day pack for excursions
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater and jacket for the cooler months

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your flight is to Los Angeles International Airport with British Airways (BA) departing from London Heathrow Terminal 5.

**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.**

### Baggage Allowance

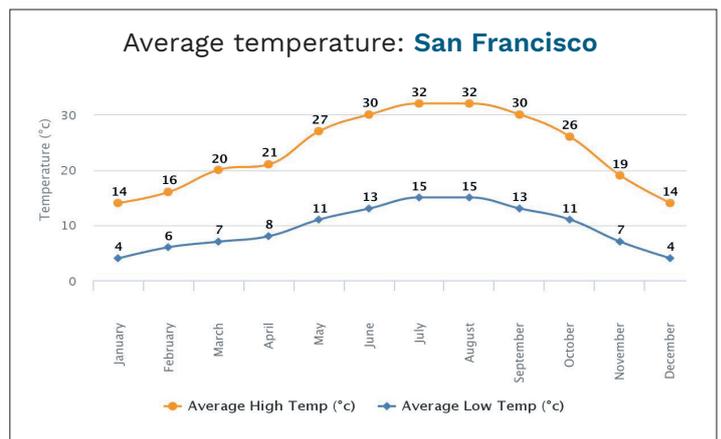
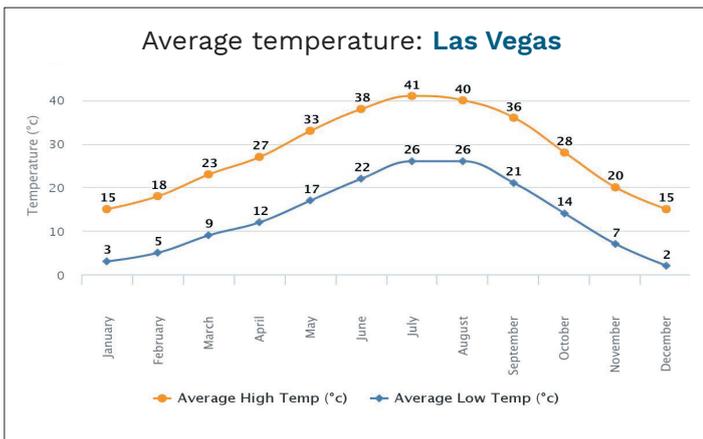
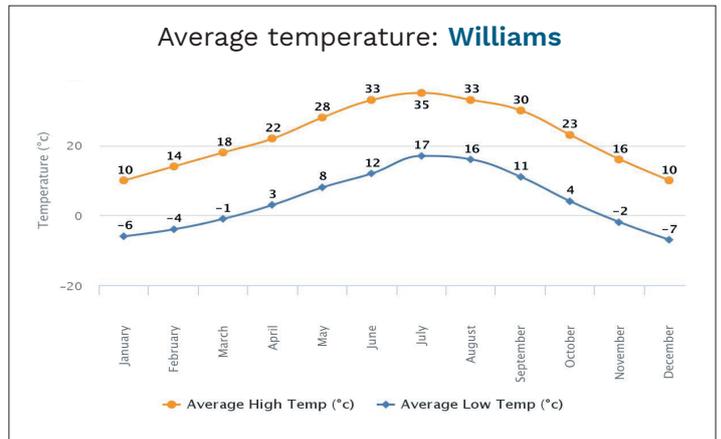
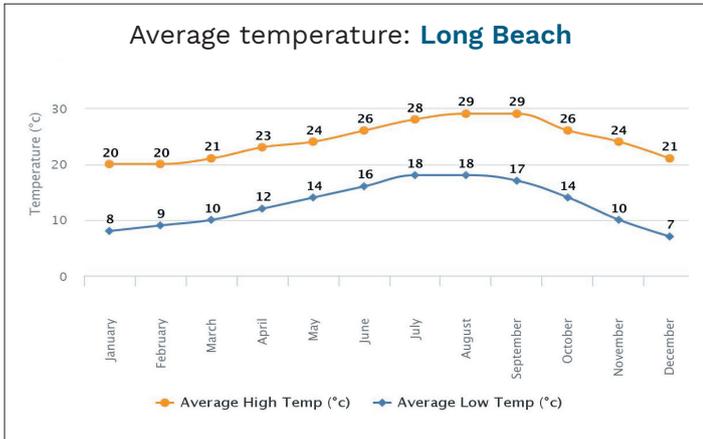
Each passenger is entitled to 23KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding (Max 23kg - 56cm/45cm/25cm) in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on your final documentation. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-in should be at least 3 hours before departure.

### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



# San Francisco City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



## TRIP OVERVIEW

The iconic coastal city of San Francisco is home to culinary experimentation, new-fangled technology and a progressive population. Your 2-night stay will allow you to discover the city further.

## ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to San Francisco.

Explore the city at leisure to discover a plethora of sights including a tour of Alcatraz prison (advanced booking required, to be booked independently), the Asian Art Museum and the maritime eateries at Fisherman's Wharf.

### Hotel Information (2 nights Bed & Breakfast)

4★ Parc 55. This centrally located hotel is near the cable car system, Fisherman's Wharf, Union Square and Chinatown. The hotel has an outdoor swimming pool, and onsite restaurant/bar.  
 Address: 55 Cyril Magnin St, San Francisco, CA 94102, USA.  
 Telephone Number: + 1 415-392-8000

### Personal Expenses

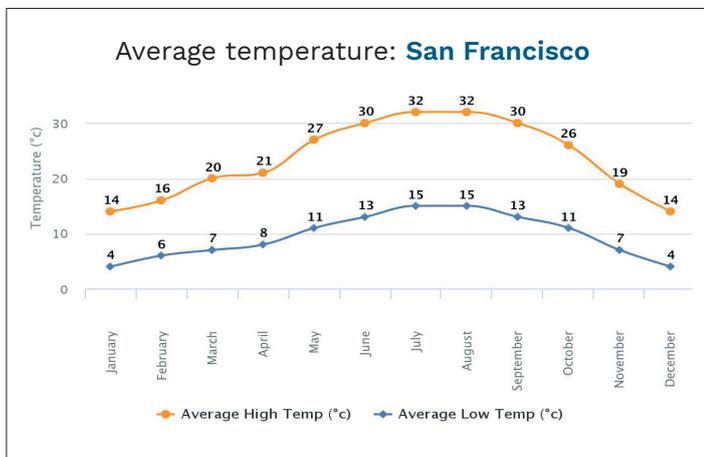
You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry and any additional snacks or drinks you may wish to have.

### Tour Guides

Your stay in San Francisco is not escorted by a tour guide. Your time here will be free to do as you wish. Transfers are included.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Parc 55

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**