

Spirit of the West



TRIP OVERVIEW

Experience the plucky frontier spirit of America's west coast on our 15 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 visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Los Angeles

Depart the UK 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 San Diego

Arrive in San Diego late in the morning with time to explore the Old Town and have lunch. The Old Town is California's oldest settlement dating back to 1769 though there is evidence of humans in the area from 9,000 years earlier! Famous for Mexican food this is great place to get lunch, In the afternoon visit Coronado Island with time to relax on the beach and then head to the lively Gaslamp Quarter.

DAY 4: San Diego

Head to the 1,600 acre Balboa Park, home to 16 museums and a theatre! After at tour of the park there are a range of optional excursions available including the San Diego Harbour Cruise or the USS Midway (bookable locally for an extra cost). Alternatively, you can spend the afternoon at leisure on the beach.

DAY 5: San Diego 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 6: Scottsdale to Flagstaff B

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 7: 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. Optional excursion (payable locally) - Grand Canyon by helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft.

DAY 8: Flagstaff to Las Vegas

Set off this morning and arrive late afternoon to your hotel for an evening to unwind or experience the neon vibrancy of the Vegas strip.

DAY 9: 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.

DAY 10: 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 11: Visalia to Modesto

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. Later this afternoon, journey to Modesto for an evening at leisure.

DAY 12: Modesto to San Francisco

In the morning, depart Modesto and travel to 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. View China town's enchanting live markets, paper lantern marquee and pocket size side streets, continuing 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 13: San Francisco B

Today, experience the sights of the city at leisure. 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. Stroll alongside technicolour houses set against a Frisco skyline know 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. Optional excursion (payable locally) - San Francisco Bay Cruise.

DAY 14: San Francisco to Atascadero B

Depart San Francisco and head to Monterey. Enjoy some free time at Cannery Row and the surrounding area before departing to Carmel. Known for the museums and library of the historic Carmel Mission, you will have some time to explore the fairytale cottages and galleries of its village-like

centre. You will then head off to San Simeon using Highway 101 instead of the main Highway 1, where you once again have a little bit of time to explore. **Please note: Should Highway 1 be open you will continue on the itinerary as follows:** Depart San Francisco for a scenic drive along the famous Big Sur Coastal Drive with stops at popular Monterey, Cannery Row and the Elephant Seal Rookery.

DAY 15: Atascadero to the UK or Extension

Continue along the California coast stopping at beautiful Santa Barbara before your return flight to the UK, or continue on to your Long Beach 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.

In the USA, the triple room will be a double room with two queen size beds in the room. Most hotels don't have additional space in the room to add any rollaway bed or sofa bed.

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.

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

Address: 5551 Katella Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630
Email: daoperations@destamer.com / stephen.marshall@destamer.com
/ silvia.campo@destamer.com



Emergency contact information

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

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. Importants 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, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, 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

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

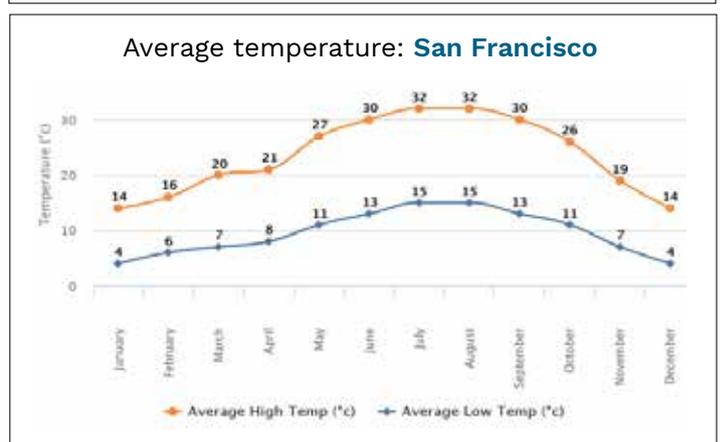
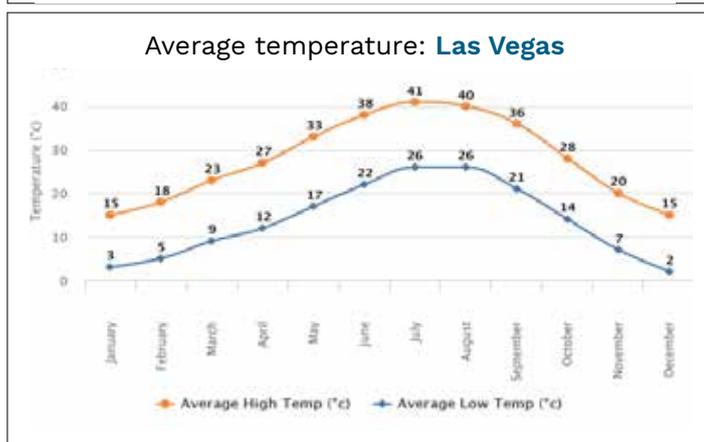
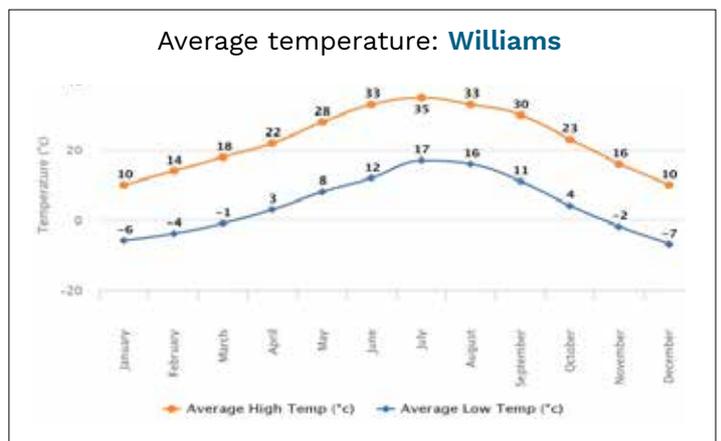
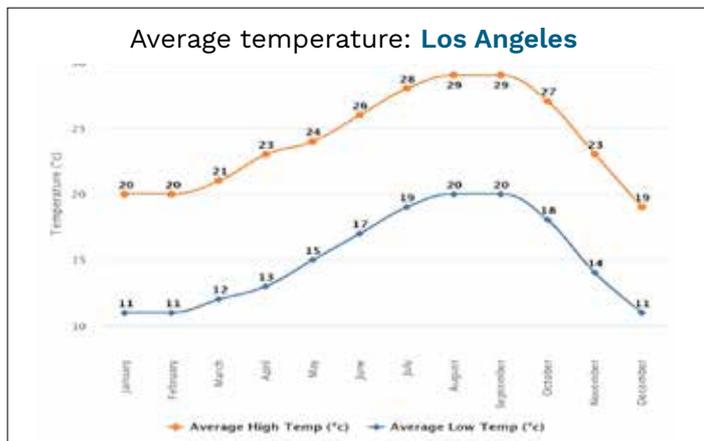
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your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

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.



Long Beach 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

Just half an hour from Los Angeles, Long Beach is an oceanfront gem. The city offers beautiful beaches and marinas along with a busy dining and shopping scene that perfectly blends urban sophistication with beach-town fun. Your 2-night stay will allow you to discover everything this city has to offer.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

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

Hotel Information

2 nights Bed & Breakfast

4★ Hotel Maya - a DoubleTree by Hilton.

This waterfront property is set within 14 acres of tropical gardens, and is a five-minute walk from water taxi terminals and the Queensway Bridge linking it to downtown Long Beach. Aquarium of the Pacific is five minutes away, and Long Beach Convention Center and the Port of Long Beach are within three miles. Enjoy it's open-air patio restaurant, and the pool deck with fire pits and cabanas.

Address: 700 Queensway Dr, Long Beach, CA 90802, United States.

Telephone Number: 001 562-435-7676

Personal Expenses

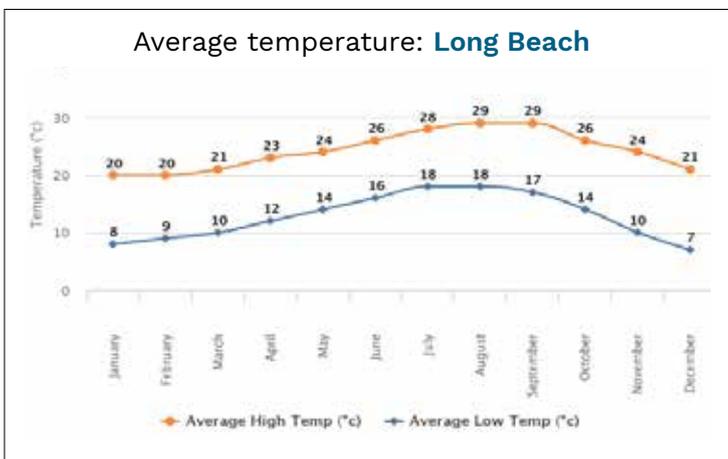
You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry and any additional snacks or drinks you may wish to have.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Long Beach 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.



4★ Hotel Maya - a DoubleTree by Hilton

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**