

## Utah: Bryce & Zion Canyons

### Tour-Only Itinerary

You won't find a walking tour of Utah's Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks with more flexibility and local expertise than this classic Country Walkers adventure. Our local leaders are steeped in experience in this diverse landscape—with plenty of tricks up their sleeves. Want to avoid the crowds? Your leaders take you off the beaten path to the remarkable petrified dunes at Snow Canyon. Catch the sunrise over Bryce Canyon—witnessing the glow of hoodoos in the serene morning light. Stay cool in Refrigerator Canyon, splash through the Narrows, and tackle the complex switchbacks of Walter's Wiggles. In the evenings, enjoy a dip in the pool or a relaxing soak in the hot tub at your comfortable hotel—complete with delicious cuisine and the camaraderie of your fellow travelers.



## Highlights

- From the edge of the rim, descend into the heart of Bryce Canyon on foot, observing natural amphitheaters and unique rock formations along the way.
- Explore the frontier beauty of Springdale, your home for three nights, and admire local art inspired by Zion's soaring backdrop of multicolored sandstone.
- With expert leaders, discover how the Ancestral Puebloans thrived in Zion's extreme climate—and perhaps spot ancient rock art during your hike.
- Follow the scenic Virgin River along Zion's Pa'rus Trail, crossing bridges and enjoying panoramic views of towering sandstone cliffs.
- Savor refined Western cuisine and Utah craft microbrews, all enjoyed against the stunning backdrops of Bryce Canyon and Zion.

## On all Fully-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Air Packages include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate, with an average of 2 to 8 miles of walking per day, with occasional options available. While this is not a mountain-climbing tour, there are daily ascents and descents. This tour is not recommended for those who suffer from severe vertigo or a fear of heights, although such terrain may easily be omitted. The ascents and descents are generally gradual rather than sharp and steep, and the walking pace is typically slow, averaging approximately 2 miles per hour. The highest elevation during the trip is about 9,000 feet. The trails are a combination of dirt and paved paths; some sections are wooded, while others are open and exposed. Proper sunscreen and head protection are necessary. Classic canyon walking and scenery are highlights of the experiences in

both Bryce and Zion National Parks.

## DAY 1

### Your Country Walkers Vacation Begins

*Snow Canyon; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate. Travel to Bryce Canyon National Park. Fairyland Point to Sunrise Point via the Fairyland Rim Trail; 3 miles, easy to moderate*

Your leaders will meet you at the Inn on the Cliff in St. George, Utah, at 8:00 a.m. in the lobby. Please be dressed for walking—appropriate attire, sturdy footwear, and a daypack (to carry essentials like rain gear and a water bottle) are required.

Upon meeting your leaders in St. George, you will travel north to the day's destination—Bryce Canyon National Park—with several stops en route to break up the approximately 2.5-hour drive. The journey follows the course of the Virgin River, which rises almost 8,000 feet from its terminus at Lake Mead to its origin at Navajo Lake on the Colorado Plateau. This vast geologic region includes Bryce and Zion Canyons as well as the Grand Canyon.

Your first walk of the trip is in Snow Canyon, located in the 62,000-acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. Here, you'll enjoy your first glimpse of the area's colorful sandstone cliffs, once ancient sand dunes sculpted by wind and rain.

Continuing your drive to Bryce Canyon, you disembark at Fairyland Point and walk along the Fairyland Rim Trail to Sunrise Point, where you'll be rewarded with panoramic views overlooking Bryce Amphitheater—the park's most concentrated area of hoodoos—as well as sweeping vistas of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the Aquarius Plateau, and distant Navajo Mountain. The vibrant red, orange, and white rock formations glow beneath the towering Ponderosa pines, offering a magical introduction to the landscape.

You may choose to shorten the walk or opt to arrive by van at your accommodation—a historic 1920s park lodge and National Historic Landmark. Set within the park itself, the lodge offers unlimited access to the Bryce Canyon rim and, after dark, a crystalline night sky. This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for dinner at the lodge's rustic-yet-elegant main lodge.

**Included Meals:** Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 2

### Optional Sunrise Walk. Bryce Point to Sunset Point

*Rim of Bryce; 1 mile, easy. Bryce Point to Sunset Point; 3-4 miles, moderate, 700-1,000-ft. elevation gain. Afternoon walk: Bristlecone Loop via Rainbow and Yovimpa Points; 1 mile, easy*

Early risers may wish to join the leaders for a serene sunrise walk along the rim of Bryce Canyon, catching the morning rays as they illuminate the Aquarius Plateau and bathe the hoodoos in warm hues.

After a hearty breakfast in the dining room, you begin today's main walk along the rim of the canyon, enjoying spectacular views of Bryce Amphitheater and the Paria River Valley beyond. Passing multicolored limestone rock formations—both surreal and whimsical—you descend gently into the heart of the canyon, making your way through a stand of ancient bristlecone pines, some of the oldest living trees in the park, dating back more than 2,000 years. Gradually, you ascend out of the canyon on the Navajo Loop through the "Wall Street" formation, where massive orange limestone fins tower overhead. These formations, once part of an ancient lakebed, now provide cooling shade. Along the trail, pause to admire Thor's Hammer, one of Bryce Canyon's most iconic and impressive hoodoos.

The afternoon walk is reached via a 20-minute drive to Bryce's southern point at an elevation of 9,100 feet. This easy walk begins on the canyon rim and rewards you with sweeping views in all directions: to the north, the 14 amphitheaters of Bryce; to the northeast, the red and orange cliffs of the Aquarius Plateau; to the east, the vast Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument—one of the world's richest sources of dinosaur fossils; and to the south, the distant North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

This evening, linger over a dinner of refined Western fare—perhaps a grilled steak or Alaskan salmon paired with a Utah microbrew—in the historic lodge's welcoming dining room.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3

### Travel to Zion National Park

*Mossy Cave Trail; 1 mile, easy. Zion National Park Pa'rus Trail; 2 miles, easy*

After breakfast, travel to Zion National Park, stopping along the way to walk the Mossy Cave Trail, where you'll enjoy beautiful views of Water Canyon and its mossy overhang.

The entrance to Zion Canyon is breathtaking. Emerging from the historic Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel—laboriously carved through 1.1 miles of sandstone—you descend into Zion's main canyon, shaped over millennia by the Virgin River. Zion is a true natural wonder, celebrated not only for its unique geology and stunning scenery, but also for its remarkable variety of flora and fauna, from peregrine falcons to desert bighorn sheep to the Zion snail, a species found nowhere else on Earth. The canyon also bears evidence of human history dating back 2,000 years to the Ancestral Puebloans and later the Paiutes, who arrived about 800 years ago.

Enjoy a walk along the Pa'rus Trail (Pa'rus is the Paiute word for “bubbling, tumbling water”), a multi-use path that follows the Virgin River along the canyon bottom, crossing several bridges and offering panoramic views of the towering sandstone cliffs on either side.

Your home for the next three nights is an inn resort set along the Virgin River in the charming town of Springdale. After time to unpack and freshen up in your spacious room, venture out for dinner at a favorite local restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4

### Scout Lookout. Independent Exploration of Springdale

*5 miles; moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain. Optional afternoon walk: Emerald Pools Trail; 2-3 miles, easy*

After breakfast, set off from Zion Lodge on the Grotto Trail for a moderate walk to Scout Lookout, with an elevation gain of approximately 1,000 feet. A winding trail leads from the valley floor through a series of switchbacks into Refrigerator Canyon, where, as its name suggests, you are sheltered and cooled from the desert sun. Continue through Walter's Wiggles, a series of closely cut switchbacks, before reaching the spectacular Scout Lookout. From here, the park unfolds below, with sweeping views of the Virgin River

and canyon walls.

Enjoy a picnic lunch back on the canyon floor at the Grotto Picnic Area. After lunch, you may choose to return to Springdale and enjoy a full afternoon at your leisure, or continue hiking along the Emerald Pools Trail, returning to the lodge around 3:00 p.m. This afternoon walk leads to a series of shimmering pools and beneath a refreshing waterfall—depending on the season, it may be a steady stream or a delicate trickle.

The remainder of the afternoon is yours to relax. Unwind at your inn's inviting swimming pool and hot tub, or explore the exhibits at the Zion National Park Visitor Center. This evening, return to Springdale for dinner on your own, with your leaders offering a variety of suggestions ranging from casual outdoor cafés to fine-dining restaurants.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5

### Watchman Trail. Riverside Walk. The Narrows (Conditions Permitting)

*Watchman Trail; 3 miles, 400-ft. elevation gain, moderate. Riverside Walk; 2 miles, easy OR The Narrows; 3-5 miles, moderate, water-level dependent*

Today's walks offer views of both lower and upper Zion Canyon on two separate routes. The Watchman Trail begins at the Visitor Center and ascends 400 feet to a scenic viewpoint overlooking lower Zion Canyon. After a picnic lunch, board the Zion Canyon Shuttle and ride to the end of Zion Scenic Drive to reach upper Zion Canyon. Here, you'll explore the narrowest part of the canyon along the Riverside Walk.

If water levels permit, an alternate plan (instead of the Watchman Trail) is to enjoy an all-day walk in The Narrows, beginning along the Riverside Walk and then entering the riverbed to wind through the narrowest sections of the canyon.\*

This evening, venture into lively Springdale for a celebratory farewell dinner at a favorite local restaurant known for its fresh, innovative cuisine.

\*Please note: Water levels vary in The Narrows. River boot and sock rentals are included in your tour price, and in cooler weather, dry pants are also provided.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6

### Sunrise Walk in Zion. Travel to St. George. Your Country Walkers Vacation Ends

*Sunrise walk; 1-2 miles, easy to moderate*

Before breakfast, join an optional sunrise walk in Zion. Watch as the rising sun illuminates the sandstone cliffs with a red glow—the light first striking the clifftops before slowly cascading down the canyon walls.

This afternoon, enjoy lunch at a lovely restaurant in Ancestor Square in St. George, Utah, featuring locally grown organic fare with Southwest flavors. After lunch, complimentary transportation is provided to the Inn on the Cliff and the St. George Shuttle at approximately 3:00 p.m., or to the St. George Regional Airport, arriving at approximately 3:30 p.m.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch



## What's Included

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
15 on-tour meals: 5 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 4 dinners	✓
Local leaders with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓