

CALIFORNIA: THE WINE COUNTRY

Guest Handbook

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

Walking among golden-green grapevines as morning sunlight chases away the mist, you'll encounter what makes Napa Valley and Sonoma so special. Here, the gentle sophistication of Northern California blends perfectly with the natural beauty of the American West. Like a fine glass of cabernet sauvignon, it's yours to savor at your leisure. Arming yourself with a picnic basket of local specialties (we'll even provide you one), you'll experience the full glory of Wine Country: towering groves of redwoods, historic remnants of frontier towns, renowned vineyards, modern tasting rooms, and the brick and clapboard charm of gallery-packed towns. Walk the Overlook Trail, with its scenic views of Sonoma County and the distant sapphire of San Pablo Bay. Wander the gardens of Buena Vista Winery—the oldest in the region. Stay in cozy, boutique hotels and choose from among some of the world's top restaurants for dinner. Along the way, don't forget the wine: each full day of walking includes a wine tasting at one of the finest wineries in the region.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival at St. Helena

Your tour starts in the Napa Valley and the historical town of St. Helena. The heart of this wine-making county, St. Helena has a small-town feel, with a sophisticated side befitting its place in American wine-making history. Your hotel is within walking distance of the town's many enticing shops and galleries, wine-tasting rooms, coffee shops, and bakeries. Just over a mile from your hotel is Greystone, the castle-like former Christian Brothers Monastery that now houses one of the Culinary Institute of America's campuses. In addition to restaurants and a café, it has a fully stocked culinary marketplace shop with a flavor bar for food and olive oil tastings. After getting acquainted with the town, you may choose to relax in your hotel's pool and spa before enjoying one of the many nearby fine restaurants.

Overnight in St. Helena

DAY 2

Bothe State Park to Schramsberg Vineyards; 3.7 or 5.3 miles, easy to moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain and 300-ft. elevation loss

Today's walk takes you on trails through state parks and on to the famous Schramsberg Vineyards. Your first priority, of course, is to pick up your packed lunch from a local purveyor. A transfer takes you to beautiful Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park and the Bothe State Park, a large natural area encompassing stands of coastal redwood trees along its valley floors, as well as Douglas fir and madrone. The trail starts at the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park, which is the site of a protected grist mill, dating from the mid-19th century and used for grinding wheat and corn into flour into the early 1900s (milling demonstrations on Saturdays and Sundays). The path then winds into Bothe State Park. Making your way through oak and redwood chaparral, you find a perfect picnic spot along the banks of a creek. The trail finally leads you to the back gate of Schramsberg Vineyards, in time for a tour of their cellars and tasting of their excellent sparkling wines. Transportation is provided from the vineyard back to your hotel in St. Helena.

Overnight in St. Helena

DAY 3

Sonoma overlook to Sebastiani Winery; 4.6 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss

This morning, you leave the Napa Valley and travel by private transfer about 45 minutes to the heart of the Sonoma Valley—the historical Sonoma Plaza in the center of the town, where you can purchase delicacies for your picnic lunch. The site of the northernmost of California's 21 missions, and the last to be constructed in 1823, in the 19th century this town (or *pueblo*) was a fascinating interface of native tribes, Mexican rule, Russian settlement, and American immigrants. A National Historic Landmark, the vast eight-acre plaza was designed as the focal point of the original Mexican "Pueblo de Sonoma." Your walk begins and ends here, as you start out on the Overlook Trail—which, as its name describes, overlooks the entire Sonoma Valley all the way to San Pablo





Bay, the northernmost tidal estuary of San Francisco Bay. You can find a perfect spot to enjoy your packed lunch on the Overlook before you descend into the valley and walk to the historical Sebastiani Winery for a Cab Corner Session—held in the most private, unique, and historic rooms at Sebastiani, a Founder’s Tour & Tasting—this unique tasting experience explores wine

history, winemaking techniques, and the culture of Sebastiani wine before closing with a flight of five signature wines.

Overnight in Sonoma

DAY 4

Bartholomew Park to Buena Vista Winery; 5 or 7 miles, easy to moderate, 100-ft.–500 ft. elevation gain and loss

You walk from your hotel this morning to lovely Bartholomew Park, with its manicured grounds and vineyards, and past a reconstructed 19th-century villa. Originally founded by Hungarian immigrants—exiled heirs to the Habsburg throne—in 1861, the vineyard is a microcosm of the region’s boom, bust, and boom wine history: from its start, through the phylloxera blight of the late 1860s, to its 20th-century resurgence and success.

Your morning walk ends at Buena Vista Winery—the oldest winery in Sonoma and Napa, founded in 1857 by an eccentric Hungarian count who sought the perfect terroir in the New World. Recently refurbished to its original beauty, the winery’s beautiful old stone walls provide a lovely setting to enjoy a wine-country picnic hamper. Afterward join a small group, hour-long Barrel Tour & Tasting. Your tour will begin with a stroll through the beautiful grounds, followed by a journey through the newly renovated Champagne Cellar. You will be taken from 1857 to the present while enjoying a flight of Buena Vista current release wines. Next, you will step into the caves of Buena Vista to sample wine thieved directly from a barrel before making your way back on foot to the Plaza, through the elegant East Side of Sonoma with its heritage homes. You have time this afternoon and evening to enjoy the shops and tasting rooms on the Plaza or to relax at your inn.

Overnight in Sonoma

DAY 5

Jack London State Park to Benziger Family Winery; 6 miles, easy to moderate, 900-ft. elevation gain and 850-ft. elevation loss

You depart Sonoma this morning by private transfer to the nearby village of Glen Ellen (just eight miles) where your walk takes you into historical Jack London State Park. Among the vast trail network and early-20th-century buildings, your route winds past oaks to the Ancient Redwood tree, an estimated 1,800–2,000-year-old redwood. En route are views of the “Valley of the Moon,” the writer’s name for the Sonoma Valley. After finding the perfect picnic spot, you can then visit Jack London’s cottage, where he wrote several of his famous novels, and also the location of the “House of Happy Walls”—a museum dedicated to Jack by his wife, Charmian. A short walk down London Ranch Road brings you to the Benziger Family Winery for a vineyard “Tribute Estate Tour” in a small tram—here you taste wines in the vineyard where the grapes are grown. The tour proceeds through the property, where you learn about biodynamic, organic, and sustainable farming methods, and to the barrel storage cave for further exploration. You then conclude the visit at the tasting room to sample the winery’s full range of wines. A short descent of about 1½ miles leads to your hotel, or you can also call for a ride. A welcome glass of wine awaits you, or perhaps a stroll through the tranquil lawn and gardens to the swimming pool or riverside hammocks.

Overnight in Glen Ellen

DAY 6

Departure from Glen Ellen

You are free to depart anytime this morning after a copious breakfast at your inn.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or



transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

DINNER RESERVATIONS

While Napa and Sonoma are known for their exceptional restaurants, reserving a table at the best among them requires planning. Some accept reservation months ahead of time and fill up quite quickly. We'd recommend planning accordingly.

PURCHASING WINE

If you enjoy the wines you taste during the tour, you may purchase a Wine Check, which is a sturdy, reusable bag with wheels designed to hold up to 12 bottles, and that can be checked as luggage. Wine Checks cost \$80 (plus sales tax) per unit and can be delivered to your hotel. If you would like to arrange this prior to your departure, please call Country Walkers. If you would like to arrange this while on tour, please contact our local partner, Wine Country Trekking.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back at countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel.

Here is an example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Jack London State Historic Park: A beloved destination for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and wildlife protection, Jack London State Historic Park offers fascinating insights into the life and literary accomplishments of the renowned American writer. Though almost shuttered in 2012, the park today thrives thanks to donations from visitors and the ongoing support of the Jack London Park Partners, an organization formed to manage the beloved retreat in partnership with the State of California. Country Walkers is proud to help keep the park open for all to enjoy. On Day 5 of your tour, you are able to experience it on a walk that takes you by Jack Lake and the historic buildings and exhibits highlighting London's life on your way to the Benziger

Family Winery. To find out more about the history and activities of the Jack London State Historic Park, visit jacklondonpark.com.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

6 days, 5 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from March 1 through November 30, 2019. All prices are per person, based on double occupancy.

TOUR PRICE

2019 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
March 1–31	\$2,248	\$940	\$125
April 1–November 30	\$2,498	\$1,185	\$125

STARTING POINT

St. Helena, California (Night 1 Hotel)

ENDING POINT

Glen Ellen, California (Night 5 Hotel)

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 4 to 7 miles per day and limited options. The walks have elevation gains and losses from 500 to 900 feet. You often walk along paved walking paths, dirt roads, and quiet country lanes, or transition to gravel and earthen trails through vineyards and valleys and alongside creeks, and also access single-track hiking trails with some roots and stones in state parks. Classic Wine Country scenery includes rolling vineyard-covered hillsides, state parks with varied California forest of redwood, firs, eucalyptus, and chaparral. Towns visited have elegant 19th- and 20th-century architectural treasures, including Landmark Sonoma Plaza, heritage homes, and grandiose stone winery buildings. Winery visits to well-known vintners and tastings are included on each full day.

Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily and one lunch (day 4); beverages not included
- » Four winery tours and tastings (days 2, 3, 4, and 5)
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation phone call with a Country Walkers representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour travel-related support provided by One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will receive:

Within 24 hours of reservation confirmation:

A Confirmation Email with a link to our online guest portal, My Account, which allows you to view important information and manage parts of your account online. Similar to other web-based portals you may already use for online banking or shopping, My Account will let you:

- a. View your active reservations.
- b. Make a payment.
- c. Access the latest version of your reservation invoice.
- d. Access your guest profile where you'll be able to update essential information and preferences (passport information, important dietary considerations, allergies, etc.).
- e. Ensure that your contact information is the most up to date (name, address, phone number, email).
- f. Provide us with your tour arrival and departure details so that we may arrange any included arrival and departure transfers and/or orientation meetings.

One day following reservation confirmation:

An Online Participation Agreement Form to sign and submit (emailed).

Within one week of reservation confirmation:

- a. Your reservation invoice (emailed).
- b. Welcome Documents including your specific dated Hotel Itinerary and this Guest Handbook (emailed).

Approximately one month prior to departure:

Your Travel Documents including the following items (mailed):

- a. Maps and printed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes (day-to-day walking directions; emergency contact information; detailed daily itinerary; information regarding included meals, transfers, and daily logistics; restaurant recommendations for non-included meals; town maps; and information regarding optional activities and transportation).
- b. Printed Travel Documents (your specific dated Hotel Itinerary, Daily Itinerary Overview, and—if included—Arrival & Departure Transfers Overview).
- c. Luggage tags.

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

St. Helena, California (Night 1 Hotel)

You may check into the hotel at any time on the first day of the tour. However, if you arrive prior to the hotel's check-in time of 4:00 p.m., and your room is not yet ready, you may store your luggage at reception and set out to explore the lovely neighborhood.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

San Francisco International Airport (SFO), San Francisco
flysfo.com

Oakland International Airport (OAK), Oakland, California
flyoakland.com

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

The most convenient way to travel from the airport to the starting-point hotel is by shuttle, UBER, or Lyft. Many door-to-door shuttle services are available, such as Marin Door To Door (marindoortodoor.com). Reservations can be made online, and the one-way fare for a shared ride is approximately \$115 (each additional person from the same location is \$12 extra) while the one-way fare for an exclusive ride is approximately \$145 for two people from the San Francisco airport or Oakland airport to the first hotel. Taxis are also available on the arrivals/baggage-claim level of all terminals. Approximate fare from the airport to the starting-point hotel is \$250 for the 1½-hour journey (travel time varies greatly depending upon traffic conditions).

It is also possible to rent or drive your own car should you prefer to do so. If choosing this option, please note this preference through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.) On-tour driving directions will be provided in your Route Notes.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We recommend arriving in San Francisco at least one day before the tour starts to explore the fascinating city. There are many fine hotels to choose from, including a selection of our favorites below. Please contact the hotel directly for reservations.

Union Square

(Shopping district)

Handlery Union Square Hotel

sf.handlery.com

A budget-friendly family-run hotel.

The Westin St. Francis on Union Square

westinstfrancis.com

A celebrated destination for travelers since 1904, this iconic property is beautiful and grand—white marble columns, ornate balconies, and intricate woodwork transport guests back to the elegance of yesteryear. Moderate to expensive.

Sir Francis Drake Hotel

sirfrancisdrake.com

Equal parts regal, retro, and relaxed contemporary style, this boutique hotel balances Renaissance-influenced architectural splendor with welcoming warmth. A Kimpton property. Moderate.

Petite Auberge

petiteaubergesf.com

This small “French” bed and breakfast just two blocks from Union Square offers cozy rooms, wine and cheese in the evenings, and full breakfast. Inexpensive to moderate.

The Embarcadero Waterfront

(Beautiful views; pleasant walking to Fisherman’s Wharf, AT&T Park, and the famous Ferry Building Open Air Market.)

Hotel Vitale

hotelvitale.com

A modern, green hotel boasting a great location and rooms. Moderate to expensive.

Harbor Court Hotel

harborcourthotel.com

A Kimpton Hotel. Super friendly staff. Good views from some rooms. Moderate.

Hyatt Regency

sanfranciscoregency.hyatt.com

(Make sure you choose the Embarcadero Hyatt, rather than the Grand downtown). Situated across from the historic Ferry Building, this waterfront hotel offers fantastic views from upper floor rooms. Fun glass elevator. Moderate.

Nob Hill

(Just above Union Square, this upper-class neighborhood is renowned for its city landmarks, including the gorgeous Grace Cathedral, as well as the famous hotels that border Huntington Park.)

Fairmont San Francisco Hotel

fairmont.com/san-francisco

This historic property sits atop Nob Hill, affording breathtaking views of the city and bay while offering easy access to the Financial District, Union Square, and Fisherman's Wharf. The Fairmont San Francisco is also located at the only spot in the city where each of the cable car lines meet. Beautiful and luxurious, the newer tower rooms offer fantastic views. Expensive.

The Scarlet Huntington

thescarlethotels.com

This landmark boutique hotel with its timeless red façade and plush, chandelier-lit lobby is a Nob Hill favorite. Expensive.

Fisherman's Wharf

(Very touristy area with Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory and Pier 39.)

Argonaut Hotel

argonauthotel.com

A deluxe boutique hotel ideally located between Fisherman's Wharf and Ghirardelli Square. The century-old renovated brick building blends authentic timber and brick with a theme reminiscent of the neighborhood's seafaring past.

Rooms with views are fantastic. Moderate to expensive; rates vary quite a bit depending on the season and weekend.

Pacific Heights

(Ritzy neighborhood perched on the hillside with panoramic views of Golden Gate Bridge. Great local shopping streets include Fillmore, Chestnut, and Union Streets.)

Hotel Drisco

www.hoteldrisco.com

A very classy hotel in a very classy neighborhood. While quieter than other areas with good walking to local neighborhoods, it is far away from Embarcadero and Union Square. Moderate to Expensive.

ENDING POINT AND TIME

Glen Ellen, California (Night 5 Hotel)

There are no walks or activities scheduled for the last day of the tour and you are free to depart at your leisure.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

San Francisco International Airport (SFO), San Francisco, California
fllysfo.com

Oakland International Airport (OAK), Oakland, California
flyoakland.com

LEAVING THE TOUR

The journey from the last hotel to the San Francisco or Oakland airport takes approximately 1½ hours, depending greatly on traffic conditions. Please check flight schedules carefully, and contact your airline directly for specific check-in requirements. For shuttle information, please see the Getting to the Starting Point section above.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*, which gives peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless Self-Guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip early.

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at countrywalkers.com or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If possible, we recommend you provide a range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact

you. Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel Availability: Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

Room Category: We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of

completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation. Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement to accept your responsibilities.

CHANGES IN PLANS

After booking, you may change your reservation's destination, departure date, departure city, or Tour Extensions for a \$100-per-person administrative fee. We will waive this fee for changes made within the first two weeks of booking. Any cancellation charges or applicable fees imposed by hotels or operators will be passed along to the guest. We encourage you to consult our cancel policy for the particular trip you have booked. All changes are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please note that tours with seasonal pricing may involve a higher price point. Please note: This change policy does not apply to Special Departures. Please notify us in writing.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Cancellations must be made in writing and fees are applied as noted. Cancellation refunds will be calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation. All payments for travel services not provided to the guest will be refunded in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and in accordance with Country Walkers' cancellation policy. Exceptions to this cancellation policy cannot be made for any reason, including personal emergencies, illness, or weather. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

Self-Guided Adventures

- » Cancellations received on or before 91 days prior to the start of the trip: \$150 per person
- » Cancellations received 90 to 61 days prior to the start of the trip: 25 percent loss of trip price
- » Cancellations received 60 or fewer days prior to the start of the trip: 100 percent loss of trip price

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Travel arrangements not included in the price of your trip (such as air tickets or post-tour excursions) can be purchased through your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com).

The United States at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

For information about entry requirements, see travel.state.gov.



CURRENCY

For up-to-date exchange rates for the U.S. dollar with other currencies, see oanda.com.

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of monetary options to start your trip: cash, ATM card(s), and credit card(s).

TIME ZONE

Find the official time at your U.S. destination at time.gov.

PHONE & INTERNET

United States country code: +1

Cell phone coverage throughout the United States is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas.

For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of the United States is English.

Travel Tip

For international visitors bringing a hair dryer or other electrical device:

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 120V and 60Hz is used in the United States. The majority of plugs are Type B, with two square and one round prong. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

Country Walkers visits a range of U.S. destinations, spanning the continent from Maine to Washington State. Tour dates coincide with the ideal weather and conditions for an active vacation.

Fall in New England means stunning foliage, warm days, and crisp nights. Spring and fall in the desert climates of California's Death Valley, Colorado, and Utah start off with chilly mornings that turn into dry and sunny days. Summer in Washington State, Montana, and California can offer sunny days and cooler nights—with local variation and

seasonal precipitation in all regions.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

In addition to the well-known standard repertoire of American food, considerable regional variation reflects the cultural heritage and seasonal harvest of individual areas.



In the southwestern states and California, dishes are Mexican- and cowboy-influenced. In Washington State, the bounty includes fresh salmon and other Pacific seafood. In Montana, game, freshly caught fish, and steaks predominate. And in New England, seasonal produce and local specialties such as cheese and maple syrup are ubiquitous, and of course, delectable Maine lobster and seafood are a highlight.

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES



Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Shopping malls, department stores, and supermarkets are open all day, every day of the week, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (or later; check locally).

Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, and some branches are open from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served from noon to 3:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 4:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (but with substantial local variation).

Tipping

In restaurants and bars, leave 15 to 20 percent of the total. Taxi drivers receive 10 to 15 percent of the fare. For luggage assistance, from \$2 to \$5 depending on the service offered.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National U.S. official tourist board

discoveramerica.com

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of U.S. public holidays. See opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/#url=2016 for an official list; and for a description of U.S. holidays, visit usa.gov/citizens/holidays.shtml.

Travel Tip

For both U.S. and international travelers, a fascinating resource on American history and culture is the U.S. Library of Congress: loc.gov.

Originating as Thomas Jefferson's personal collection, the library maintains a website that is not only a library catalog, but a clearinghouse for wide-ranging information on U.S. history, folklife, geography, the performing arts, and more.

TRAVEL IN THE UNITED STATES

A wealth of travel information is available at discoveramerica.com. For a list of all U.S. official state tourist boards, visit usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel-Tourism/State-Tourism.shtml.



Airports

The United States has an enormous international and domestic air network with dozens of companies and hundreds of airports. For travel to various regions and airports, individual state tourist boards offer travel and airport information: usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel-Tourism/State-Tourism.shtml.

Trains

Amtrak: amtrak.com, the national railway company site with schedules, fares, and pass options.

Travel Tip

Country Walkers' U.S. itineraries include many of the country's best-known national parks; for more information, visit nps.gov.

Other local transportation

Long-distance bus travel can also be a convenient way to reach a destination. National companies include Greyhound (greyhound.com), Trailways (trailways.com), and Megabus (megabus.com); check locally for smaller regional long-distance bus companies.

Major car rental agencies are available at airports, city centers, and train and bus stations. Taxis are available at all

major airports, cities, train and bus stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance).

For more information contact Country Walkers.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind, most hotels are small and family-run and may not provide luggage assistance from the reception area to the room so there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. Please note that due to health and safety reasons, our local representatives are not permitted to carry (individual) bags that exceed 30 lbs (15 kg). We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. If you are bringing a favorite pair of older boots, please check that soles and seams are in good shape before you depart! By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 4-7 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants

- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual
- » Light jacket or sweater for evening strolls

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

EQUIPMENT

- » Cell phone: for both practical and safety reasons, **we strongly advise that you carry a cell phone while traveling and at all times while you are out walking.** (Please note you may encounter intermittent coverage while on the trail or in remote areas.)
- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one to two liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)

- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for optional swimming in hotel pools or spas
- » Flip flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides
- » Folding umbrella
- » Waterproof poncho (in addition to aforementioned rain gear, especially if expecting wet weather): while the aforementioned rain gear may suffice, a poncho offers the advantage of being lightweight, compact, big enough to cover both you and your backpack, long enough to allow for sitting on wet surfaces or act as a shelter, cool enough to wear during summer rains, and is cheap!
- » Bandana
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on bus, car or boat rides
- » Alarm clock

ONLINE STORE

To help you prepare for your trip, we've carefully selected a range of comfortable, easy-packing travel apparel and accessories from leading brands such as Eagle Creek, Craghoppers, Patagonia, Tilley, and others. Whether you're traveling to Vietnam, walking in Canada, or exploring the hills of Ireland, our Travel Shop is here to ensure you're ready to enjoy your adventure to the fullest.

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