
**America's Majestic
National Parks**

LAND TOUR

Plus an optional extension in

The Dakota Badlands

2014

Grand Circle Travel Handbook

America’s Majestic National Parks

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1. YOUR HEALTH



Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this vacation that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 10 locations in 18 days, including 5 single-night stays

Physical Requirements

- Travelers using wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 1 mile unassisted and participate in 3-4 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Altitude

- 10 full days at altitudes between 5,000-9,000 feet

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 65-92°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- Nighttime temperatures can fall to 40-50°F

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, unpaved paths, steep hills, stairs, and stone

Transportation

- Travel by 55-seat motorcoach, boat, and train
- 8 days feature 6-10 hours of travel by motorcoach

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — this land tour, for instance, features an active itinerary with long days of sightseeing, walks that follow steep and uneven pathways, and long motorcoach transfers. In addition, this is a landscape that at its best is uneven, rocky, sandy or precarious; both included and optional tours can require extended walking to guarantee a truly rewarding experience. This tour also involves higher altitudes than you may be used to. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your trip. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter.

Of particular note on this trip is the need for long motorcoach transfers; on the main trip alone we'll cover almost 2,000 miles total. Please feel free to bring whatever you need to be comfortable on the bus (pillow, blanket, etc.) and come prepared for long drives.



Health Check

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your itinerary, such as the high altitudes of some of our destinations, that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip.

High Altitude

You will be at high altitudes for much of this itinerary—between 7,000 and 8,300 feet above sea level at Yellowstone National Park, the Grand Canyon, and Bryce Canyon. Even at your “lower-altitude” destinations, the elevation is relatively high—4,260 feet at Salt Lake City and 5,280 feet in Denver. During your transfers there will be a number of times where you will reach over 10,000 feet. At high elevations there is not only less oxygen but also lower atmospheric pressure, which can have all sorts of odd effects on the body. These effects vary from one person to the next and physical fitness isn’t a factor. Over time the body can adjust on its own, but in the meantime, common altitude sickness symptoms include headaches, nausea, dizziness, and shortness of breath. Eating well, drinking lots of water, getting plenty of sleep, and avoiding alcohol will help reduce the chances of developing altitude sickness. Once you feel sick, however, the only real cure is the passage of time so your body can adjust at its own pace. On arrival at high elevations, we suggest you take things easy at first, and give yourself a chance to acclimate before engaging in physical activities. Consult your physician about medications that may alleviate altitude problems.

Prescription Medications

If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

2. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS



Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for your flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. Note that many hotels on this tour have laundry facilities, so you have the flexibility to pack less. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S. luggage limits in your Final Documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extension has the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check a suitcase.</p> <p>Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by airlines is a matter of corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my airline before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage.

Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines. For more information about air travel, see the “Air Travel” section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for one bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip: Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you’re traveling with a companion we recommend “cross-packing,” i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion’s luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on:

Follow the **TSA’s 3-1-1 rule:** Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure.

For flights that originate in the U.S:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights other than with a TSA approved lock. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required.

3. MONEY MATTERS



How to Carry Your Money

You'll be well prepared if you carry a mix of U.S. dollars, an ATM card, and two different credit cards. Traveler's checks are not recommended because they can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is sometimes high.

ATMs and Debit Cards

ATM and debit cards give you a reliable payment method and ready access to currency. We recommend, if possible, that you make withdrawals at ATM machines when you need cash, as it will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience. (Carrying lots of cash can be risky – you should carry only as much as you need for the day while leaving extra in your hotel room safe.) In the U.S. PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are usually available throughout large cities and small towns.

***Note on ATM use:** Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM outside of your bank's network. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Credit Cards

Most major American credit cards are accepted, but you should inquire if your type of credit card is honored before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards while traveling so they will expect to see activity in your account outside of your usual geographic area. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

***Please note:** Optional tour payments can be made only by credit card and may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that does not expire until at least three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).*



A Note on Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

Your purchase decisions are very personal. You must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked. If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

Shopping in Rapid City

Best-selling gift and souvenir items offered in the area are Black Hills gold jewelry, Sioux pottery, crafts and artwork of the Lakota Sioux, local gems and minerals, and western antiques. Also available is a range of cowboy boots and western clothing. Many stores and boutiques feature the usual gamut of clothes, accessories, household wares, and decorative arts that shops in any larger American city offer.

The historic district of downtown Rapid City offers a variety of shops, with the most popular near Main St. and St. Joseph.



To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. For those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Your tour price includes gratuities on the main trip and extensions for all local guides and motorcoach drivers that may assist you during the scheduled activities on your vacation. Listed below are our recommendations for the tips that are not included in your tour price. Do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

- **GCT Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal "Thank You" to the Grand Circle Program Director at the end of your trip, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend \$4-\$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash.
- **Included Group Meals:** Your Program Director will tip waiters for the included meals when the group dines together.
- **Time at Leisure:** During the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. Tip throughout your tour as you would at home. Some restaurants will add a service charge to your tab, and, in this case, it is still a nice gesture to add a little more if you have received good service.

5. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light: A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes: In today's age of informality, comfortable and informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, summery tops, long-sleeve shirts, cotton sweaters, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. Men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need nice dresses—bring these only if you are planning a special night out on your own. The presiding clothing style of this trip is casual.

Be prepared: Plan to dress in layers. Then you can add a layer or peel one off according to temperature fluctuations. Thick knits, light woolens, and a fleece pullover or warm jacket can be useful for cooler evenings. Keep a sweater handy for the air-conditioned motorcoach rides. Your Program Director will advise you ahead of time on appropriate clothing for your departure.

Good walking shoes are essential: The mountain communities, museums, and park trails truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the pathways can put great demands on your feet. For your comfort, you'll need supportive walking shoes that offer good traction.

Light rain gear: Rains of any variety (heavy or short-lived) are possible at any of your destinations. A folding umbrella and/or waterproof jacket, preferably with a hood, could come in handy.



Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.



Clothing Options

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.



Travel Gear Suggestions

To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an airplane, a transfer motorcoach, or a small ship. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

What not to pack: Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave checkbooks, unnecessary credit cards, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose at home.

Consider ...

Hotels usually supply soap, body wash, shampoo, and shower caps. If you prefer a certain brand you may want to bring your own.

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Insect repellent with DEET at 30%-35% strength
- Travel money bag or money belt, to be worn under a shirt/jacket if possible
- Swimsuit if your hotel has a pool
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- Photocopies of air ticket, credit cards (and originals of course)
- Written prescriptions for your medicines
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Items for your comfort on the bus (pillow, blanket, etc.). This tour involves several long drives.

Medicines

Generally speaking, all over the counter medications and first aid supplies listed below are available locally.

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/aspirin/Naproxen
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Other Gear

- Compact binoculars
- Toiletry bag with hook and pockets
- Basic sewing kit
- Reading materials
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Travel journal/note pad
- Home address book
- Collapsible walking staff



6. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the My Account feature of www.gct.com for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (<http://www.wunderground.com/> is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Weather in the Southwest: Summer days can be quite warm, with highs in the 80s or even 90s, while nighttime temperatures fall to the 40s and 50s due to the high altitude. Afternoon thunderstorms are common over the higher peaks of the Rockies, and from mid-July to mid-September the Southwest region is subject to the North American Monsoon – which can produce dramatic bursts of rain, high winds and increased rainfall in general. Overall, however, the summer climate is sunny and pleasant. If you are traveling in late September, the temperatures may be quite warm, or somewhat on the cool side, or—even more likely—a bit of both. As you pack for your trip, please keep in mind the possible dramatic changes between day and evening temperatures, and between altitudes. In fall and spring you may find snow at higher altitudes while valleys are pleasantly mild.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?												
Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Rapid City, South Dakota												
High	34	38	45	58	68	78	86	86	75	65	47	37
Low	10	15	22	32	43	52	58	57	46	36	23	14
Salt Lake City, Utah												
High	37	43	52	62	72	83	92	90	80	66	50	39
Low	20	24	31	38	46	54	62	61	51	40	30	22

Please note: The data cited above reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

7. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY



In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual before you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of a device-specific plugs.



Smartphones

Your smartphone service may vary from what you're used to in terms of strength and connectivity, as providers have different levels of saturation throughout the U.S. Data usage, however, can pile up costs if you rely on it heavily. Those handy apps can run up download/connection fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry ...), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders ... one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can also be a drawback for some apps (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

In rural or remote areas, your cell phone service may vary from what you are used to. In general, however, your cell phone should work as it normally does. Costs may vary depending upon your contract.



Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure to bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard to find or you may not have time to shop for them during the trip. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are not permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

8. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your experienced Program Director can give you an inside perspective on your destinations and may be supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour. If you choose to join our Dakota Badlands optional trip extension, you will also have the services of a Grand Circle Program Director during the extension to help make your stay memorable.



Laundry Service

Your Program Director or hotel concierge can assist you with making arrangements for this service. Most hotels offer self-service washers and dryers.

Rapid City in Brief—Optional Extension



City Layout and Details

Rapid City, a gateway to the Black Hills of South Dakota, is also a regional shopping and commercial center. Founded in 1876 by a group of unsuccessful miners who wanted to establish a commercial center at the base of the Black Hills to supply gold miners, the town was originally little more than a collection of shacks. It has grown since its early mining town days, and today benefits greatly from the presence of nearby Ellsworth Air Base, home to many of the nation's B-1B long-range bombers. Located at the intersection of I-90 and state highways 44 and 79, the city is a commercial hub for the Black Hills region. This is an easy city to get around in. Fairly small (population 59,600 as of the 2000 census), the city is laid out in a grid pattern with I-90 to the north and Routes 44 and 79 to the south.

Today most homes and businesses in Rapid City are built around and on the large hill that dominates the center of town. Skyline Drive runs around the hill at the city's center and offers good views of the entire city. The city's historic district is downtown and is worth a look. Here, nearly 40 buildings built between 1881 and 1930 provide a glimpse into the past. The Dahl Fine Arts Center at 7th and Quincy is a downtown attraction famous for its cyclorama of American history. On state highway 79 east of the city center, the Museum of geology on the campus of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology offers talking dioramas that narrate the history of the Badlands and the prehistoric creatures that once lived here. The West Boulevard Historic District is southwest of downtown and is an area of wide tree-lined streets and early 20th-century homes. The Sioux Indian Museum and Minnelusa Pioneer Museum are nearby and offer historical exhibits. Journey Museum, close to your hotel, is a walk through different periods of time in this region -- from the geology and paleontology of millions of years ago to the Native Americans, Homesteaders and air force base of the more recent past.



Evening Entertainment

The city is a fairly quiet place. There are several excellent eating and drinking establishments downtown, as well as a blend of cozy taverns, sports bars, and billiard lounges. The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center offers concerts (Elvis Presley gave one of his last performances here), movies, occasional theater productions, lectures, and other cultural events. You can inquire about local events and attractions at the office of the town's Visitor's Bureau, located in the Civic Center, 444 Mount Rushmore Road N (toll-free telephone 1-800-487-3223).



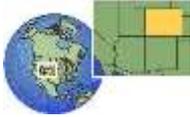
Local Transportation

The Rapid Transit System is the only public transportation option in the Black Hills. It is limited to servicing just Rapid City with four routes that do a good job of covering the city. Buses run five days a week from 6:30 am to 5:40 pm, and your inexpensive fare includes free transfers.



Newspapers & Magazines

The *Rapid City Journal* is the city's daily paper. It has an extensive entertainment section that lists weekend events, movies, shows, museums, and restaurants.



9. STATE STATISTICS

Arizona

Area: 113,635 square miles

Capital: Phoenix

Entered Union (rank): February 14, 1912 (48)

Motto: *Ditat Deus* (God enriches)

Nickname: Grand Canyon State

State Symbols: *flower:* Flower of saguaro cactus (1931)

bird: cactus wren (1931)

colors: blue and old gold (1915)

song: "Arizona March Song" (1919)

tree: palo verde (1954)

gemstone: turquoise (1974)

Time zone: Arizona does not switch to daylight savings time; from November to May it is on Mountain Time; from April to October, it is on Pacific Time.

Colorado

Area: 103,717 square miles

Capital: Denver

Entered Union (rank): August 1, 1876 (38)

Motto: *Nil sine Numine* (Nothing without Providence)

Nickname: Centennial State

State Symbols: *flower:* Rocky Mountain columbine (1899)

bird: lark bunting (1931)

colors: blue and white (1911)

song: "Where the Columbines Grow" (1915)

tree: Colorado blue spruce (1939)

gemstone: aquamarine (1971)

Time zone: Colorado is on Mountain Time.

Montana

Area: 147,042 square miles

Capital: Helena

Entered Union (rank): November 8, 1889 (41)

Motto: *Oro y Plata* (Gold and Silver)

Nickname: Big Sky Country

State Symbols: *flower:* Bitterroot (1895)

bird: Western meadowlark (1931)

colors: None

song: "Montana" (1945)

tree: Ponderosa pine (1949)

gemstones: Sapphire and agate (1969)

Time zone: Montana is on Mountain Time.

South Dakota

Area: 75,885 square miles

Capital: Pierre

Entered Union (rank): November 2, 1889 (40)

Motto: Under God the People Rule

Nicknames: Mount Rushmore State, Coyote State

State Symbols: *flower:* American pasqueflower (1903)
bird: ring-necked pheasant (1943)
colors: blue and gold (in state flag)
song: "Hail! South Dakota" (1943)
tree: black hills spruce (1947)
gemstone: fairburn agate (1966)

Time zone: The eastern half of South Dakota is on Central Time; the western half is on Mountain Time.

Utah

Area: 82,144 square miles

Capital: Salt Lake City

Entered Union (rank): January 4, 1896 (45)

Motto: Industry

Nickname: Beehive State

State Symbols: *flower:* sego lily (1911)
bird: California gull (1955)
song: "Utah, This is the Place" (1953)
tree: blue spruce (1933)
gemstone: topaz

Time zone: Utah is on Mountain Time.

Wyoming

Area: 97,100 square miles

Capital: Cheyenne

Entered Union (rank): July 10, 1890 (44)

Motto: Equal Rights (1955)

Nickname: Equality State

State Symbols: *flower:* Indian paintbrush (1917)
bird: meadowlark (1927)
song: "Wyoming" (1955)
tree: cottonwood (1947)
gemstone: jade (1967)

Time zone: Wyoming is on Mountain Time.

10. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (alibris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive (the list could easily be 10 pages longer), and is offered only as a starting point for your further enjoyment and research.

A River No More by Philip L. Fradkin (History)

Historical and political account of the Colorado River.

The New Encyclopedia of the American West edited by Howard Roberts Lamar (History)

Compiled by a professor at Yale University, this volume contains over 2,400 entries by more than 300 contributors on all aspects of the American West, from prehistory to the present.

Men to Match My Mountains: The Story of the Opening of the Far West by Irving Stone (History)

An entertaining history of those who first settled California, Nevada, Utah, and California.

Wind in the Rock by Ann Zwinger (Natural History)

A naturalist explores the canyon country in the four corners area where Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado meet. (Zwinger has a number of equally excellent books on the region.)

The Magnificent Mountain Women: Adventures in the Colorado Rockies by Janet Robertson

(Travel Writing). The stories of three dozen women who from the 1850s to the 1980s ventured into the mountains to pursue their own aims largely independent of male assistance.

A Thief of Time by Tony Hillerman (Mystery)

Tony Hillerman's Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee characters investigate the desecration of Native American archaeological sites. Hillerman's 18 books featuring the Navajo Tribal Police sets Native American characters squarely in contemporary American society and carefully delineates the interplay of history, tribal and cultural beliefs, and modern culture in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest.

House of Rain by Craig Childs (Archaeology, Natural History)

Combining scholarship, history, oral tales and traditions, and walking hundreds of miles in the landscape, Craig Childs attempts to solve the disappearance of the Anasazi of 800 to 1000 years ago. He explores how this ancient civilization converged on places like Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde, where its culture flourished, and offers some insight into why its people disappeared into the wind. There are no definite answers, but Childs' has an engaging way of asking the questions.

Desert Solitaire by Edward Abbey (Natural History)

An account of Edward Abbey's seasons as a ranger at Arches National Park outside Moab, Utah. Abbey reflects on the nature of the Colorado Plateau desert, on the condition of our remaining wilderness, and on the future of a civilization that cannot reconcile itself to living in the natural world. Along the way he meets scorpions and snakes, obstinate tourists and obdurate bureaucrats, and, most powerful of all, with his own mortality.

Down the Great Unknown: John Wesley Powell's 1869 Journey of Discovery and Tragedy Through the Grand Canyon by Edward Dolnick

Powell, an ambitious, one-armed Civil War veteran, and a pick-up crew—none with white water experience—are the first people known to descend the Colorado River. This story of courage, naiveté, hardship, uses not Powell's rosy-written version, but entries from the actual men's journals for a tale that catches the great uncertainty of running a wild and unknown river for the first time.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director Leader will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective –if your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

United States

Ken Burns: The National Parks: America's Best Idea

A six-episode series produced by Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan. Filmed at some of nature's most spectacular locales - from Acadia to Yosemite, Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon, the Everglades of Florida to the Gates of the Arctic in Alaska. It is also the story of people who were willing to devote themselves to saving some precious portion of the land they loved.

Shane (George Stevens, 1953) Starring Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur

This movie is generally considered one of the great Westerns. Shane (Alan Ladd) rides into the middle of a range war between farmers and cattlemen, and quickly sides with the "sod-busters." While helping a kindly farmer (Van Heflin), Shane falls platonically in love with the man's wife (Jean Arthur). The showdowns are exciting and the story straightforward but emotionally involving. The photography highlights the landscape near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and won an Oscar.

Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939) Starring John Wayne, Claire Trevor

The landmark 1939 Western that began the John Ford/John Wayne film relationship. Stagecoach was the first mature Western that is both mythic and poetic. The plot involves a cross-section of passengers unraveling under the strain of Indian attack and it contains all of Ford's storytelling trademarks. The landscape of Monument Valley is featured throughout. Actors include: Thomas Mitchell, Claire Trevor, Donald Meek, Andy Devine, and John Carradine.

Once upon a time in the West (Sergio Leone, 1968) Starring Henry Fonda, Charles Bronson

Sergio Leone's monumental epic is as big as its Monument Valley locations, as grand as its distinguished cast, as tough and bawdy the Old West itself. Henry Fonda plays the blackest character of his career, and he's utterly convincing as Frank, a ruthless, murderous psychopath who suffers no conscience pangs after annihilating an entire family. Jason Robards, Charles Bronson and Claudia Cardinale round out the cast.

A River Runs Through It (Robert Redford, 1992) Starring Craig Sheffer, Brad Pitt

Robert Redford cinematic take on Norman Maclean's 1976 autobiographical novella of the same name is set in early 20th century rural Montana. It's a coming-of-age story about brothers who are sons of a Scottish Presbyterian minister. Raised with love, sternness, and a deep understanding of the beauty of their land the brothers inherit, in Maclean's words, a belief that "there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." Filmed in Montana and Wyoming, the cinematography won a 1993 Oscar.

Dances With Wolves (Kevin Costner, 1990) Starring Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell

Sent to a remote outpost in the Dakota territory wilderness during the American Civil War, Lieutenant John Dunbar (Costner) encounters, and is eventually accepted into, the local Sioux tribe. Named by the tribe "Dances with Wolves" he becomes increasingly a part of the tribe, and falls in love. As the army advances, he is forced into a decision that will affect both him, and the natives he now calls his people.



Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

Health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS ATMs**

State, national parks, canyons, and other attractions information:

www.az.gov **Arizona**

www.colorado.gov **Colorado**

www.state.sd.us **South Dakota**

www.utah.gov **Utah**

www.state.wy.us **Wyoming**

www.nps.gov/badl/ **Badlands National Park**

www.nps.gov/brca/ **Bryce Canyon**

www.custerstatepark.info/ **Custer State Park**

www.thecanyon.com **Grand Canyon**

www.grand.teton.national-park.com **Grand Teton National Park**

www.lakepowellmag.com **Lake Powell**

www.nps.gov/meve/ **Mesa Verde National Park**

www.monumentvalley.areaparks.com **Monument Valley**

www.nps.gov/moru/ **Mount Rushmore**

www.rapidcitycvb.com **Rapid City**

www.yellowstone-natl-park.com **Yellowstone National Park**

LAND-ONLY TRAVELER FLIGHT INFORMATION



If you have chosen the Land Only tour, you are responsible for arranging your own flights and airport transfers. This form is for informational purposes only so that your Program Director can anticipate your arrival. If you are arranging your own air and would like to purchase airport transfers, please contact our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835.

Please take a moment to fill out this form and return it to the address listed below at your earliest convenience. **We must receive it at least 45 days prior to your departure date.** *Please disregard this form if Grand Circle is arranging your flights or if you have already provided your flight information.*

Arrival Information								
Please provide information about the last leg of your arrival flight								
Airline confirmation number	Airline name	Flight number	Departure date	Departure city	Departure time	Arrival city*	Arrival date*	Arrival time
					_____			_____
					(am/pm)			(am/pm)

Departure Information								
Please provide information about the first leg of your return flight								
Airline confirmation number	Airline name	Flight number	Departure date*	Departure city*	Departure time	Arrival city	Arrival date	Arrival time
					_____			_____
					(am/pm)			(am/pm)

Grand Circle reservation number: _____ Departure date: _____

Traveler(s) name(s): _____

Signature: _____ Today's date: _____

Please return this form to us via:

- E-mail: AirInformation@gct.com
- Post: Grand Circle Travel, Attn: Operations, 347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210