

★ Essential Details

Booking your trip

Before you book

We recommend that you carefully read the tour description, booking conditions, tour dossier and 'Essential Details' on this page. Once you have decided on a tour, please contact Grand American Adventures either by telephone, email or via the website to check availability. We can normally hold an 'option' for three days to give you time to finalise your plans, submit a completed booking form and pay a deposit.

Low deposits

If you book your tour more than eight weeks ahead, you can secure your trip with a deposit and pay the balance eight weeks before you travel.

Our standard deposit is **£150** or 10% of the trip cost (whichever is greater).

Exceptions to this are: Churchill Polar Bear Experience, Whales and Polar Bear Experience, Alaska Adventure Cruises (any route), and Cruise to the Heart of the Amazon (please see terms and conditions on page 104 for further information).

Card payments and bank transfers

We won't pass any fees on to you if you choose to pay by credit or debit card. We accept bank transfers and if you have a UK bank account your bank should not charge any fees for online banking; we can also accept bank transfers in EUR, US\$, AU\$, NZ\$ and GB£ but please be aware your bank may charge you a fee for this service.

Late bookings

Provided that there are still seats available you may book a tour at any time before the date of departure, however, you must pay in full if your trip is less than eight weeks away. Most trips can be confirmed immediately if booked more than 35 days before departure, and after this point are available on a request basis (after you book we will confirm your place within a maximum of three working days). Some specialist tours are always on a request basis.

Flights

We can organise your international flights from most UK airports and in most cases only require a low deposit to do so. See page 98 for further information. Most tours start at an early evening welcome

meeting however for tours that start early in the morning we recommend that you arrive the day before your trip starts. Most tours end around 17:00 hrs, therefore we recommend that you fly out the day after your tour has finished. If you do have to fly home on the day your tour finishes, please make sure your flight does not depart before 21:00 hrs.

Pre and post tour hotels

Most trips include an arrival day and you can arrive at any time before your early evening welcome briefing. Tours spend limited time at the start and finish city, and we can pre-book additional hotel nights before and after your trip. See page 99 for more information. Where possible, please make your hotel requests at the time of booking your tour. For many joining and finishing hotels, accommodation can be immediately guaranteed when booked more than 35 days before departure, after which rooms may be available on a request basis. For some hotels, accommodation is always on a request basis. Please ask our sales team for more information.

100% guaranteed departures

Our departures are 100% guaranteed on almost all of our tours, so once you've booked and paid your deposit, you're going!

A small minority of tours will be guaranteed as soon as they reach minimum numbers, usually four or five passengers, due to their more specialist nature.

**100%
Guaranteed
Departures**

Wherever you see this symbol on the tour page, every single departure is guaranteed as soon as the first person books.

Loyalty discount

If you've travelled with Grand American Adventures before, you're eligible to join Grand American Rewards and save on your next tour. You'll save 5% on your second and third trip with us and 10% on your fourth or subsequent trips. These discounts are valid for you and anyone travelling with you and can be combined with any last minute discount or multi trip discounts, up to a maximum saving of 20%. For full details, terms and conditions, and to join see www.grandamericanadventures.com/rewards. Please note, the loyalty scheme is at our discretion and we reserve the right to amend details or terminate the scheme at any time.

Multi trip discount

You can receive a 5% discount when you book two or more tours at the same time, so make the most of your time in the Americas.

Preparing for your trip

Tickets and vouchers

Electronic tour and accommodation vouchers will be emailed to you upon final payment and approximately six weeks before departure. You can print off the PDF vouchers or download them to your smartphone.

Tour dossier

Upon booking you will be sent a tour dossier which includes packing information joining instructions, a day by day itinerary and a list of optional activities. Your tour dossier can also be downloaded from our website. Tour dossiers have been prepared to provide you with the all essential details that you'll need to know before your forthcoming trip, however, these are not intended to be a complete guide and your tour leader will provide you with more detailed information en route. Please download the latest tour dossier before your departure for the most up-to-date information.

Passport and visas

It's your responsibility to ensure you have a valid passport and any necessary visas for your tour. For Central and South America, you'll need a passport with at least six months validity following the end of your trip. The visa requirements for your trip may vary depending on where you're going and your nationality. It's important that you check which visas you'll need and apply for each of the necessary visas whilst in your home country, and you should consult the relevant embassy if you need more information. Please bear in mind that some tours may spend time in more than one country.

Please note that travellers to Cuba and Brazil will need to apply for a tourist visa in advance. Please note that based on current US policy, we cannot book US nationals on our Cuba tours at time of

printing. We keep the above visa information as up to date as possible, but it's important that you check this for yourself.

Rules for entry into the USA

Holders of UK, Australia, New Zealand and most EU country passports are eligible to travel to the USA under the Visa Waiver Program.

All eligible travellers who wish to travel under the Visa Waiver Program must apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation) before travelling to the USA.

At the time of compilation there is a US\$14 fee for the electronic ESTA. The ESTA will be valid for a period of two years, or until a person's passport expires. You should apply for an ESTA at least 72 hours before you travel, and we recommend you carry your ESTA approval with you.

All travellers wishing to enter the US under the Visa Waiver Program will need to hold a passport with an integrated chip (an ePassport). New rules exclude from the VWP most people who have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, or Yemen since 1 March 2011, and those who have dual nationality of these countries. This means that existing ESTAs could be revoked, and you will instead need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate.

Residents from countries who cannot travel under the VWP must consult their relevant embassy. For more information about who is eligible to travel under the VWP, and the eligibility requirements visit <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

Anyone that has not applied for and received travel authorisation via ESTA prior to travel may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing or be denied admission at the US port of entry. However, neither possession of a visa nor meeting the basic requirements for travelling visa-free on the VWP, guarantees admission to the USA. As with most countries, the final determination of admissibility is made by immigration officials at the port of entry. We keep the above visa information up to date as much as possible, but it is important that you check this for yourself.

Transiting the USA

If you're planning to transit in the USA or to stopover on the way to your destination, you'll still need to apply for an ESTA. You must apply for your ESTA at least 72 hours before travelling to the USA. Please see 'Rules for entry into the USA' for more information.

Rules for entry into Canada

Most visitors to Canada require an entry visa prior to travel, known as an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). Citizens from countries other than the USA who do not require a visa to enter Canada are required to obtain an eTA before entering the country. Eligible travellers will need to go online to apply for their eTA.

To apply for your eTA you will need your passport, credit or debit card, an email address and your address in Canada (you can use the starting point hotel address). At the time of publication there is a CA\$7 fee to process your eTA. Your eTA will be valid for a period of five years, or until your passport expires. Residents from countries who cannot travel under the eTA must consult their relevant embassy. Please visit www.canada.ca/eTA to apply. Residents from countries who cannot travel under the eTA must consult their relevant embassy.

If you have not applied for and received authorisation via an eTA prior to travel you may be denied boarding, experience a delayed processing or be denied admission at the Canadian point of entry. However, neither possession of a visa nor meeting the basic requirements for travelling visa-free on the eTA, guarantees admission to Canada. As with most countries, the final determination of admissibility is made by immigration officials at the port of entry.

Please note: This ONLY applies to travellers arriving by air. So if you are entering Canada by land or sea you do not need an eTA.

Transiting in Canada

If you're planning to transit in Canada or intend to stopover on the way to your destination, you'll still need to apply for an eTA. Please see 'Rules for entry into Canada' for more information.

Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance is compulsory for anyone joining a tour. Please see page 101 for detailed information.

Medical

You should consult your doctor before you travel with regard to vaccinations for the specific areas that you'll visit. Illness or dental problems can spoil your holiday, so it's wise to have a thorough check-up before you leave home.

Luggage

All luggage is stored in a specially designed trailer or in the back of the vehicle, so please don't bring more than one suitcase, soft holdall or rucksack (maximum 23kg) plus your sleeping bag (where applicable). Your suitcase/rucksack may get some rough handling, so make sure it's tough. Small hand luggage may be carried inside the vehicle. We cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged luggage. Before you travel, please check the baggage allowance with the airline you're flying with as this may be less than our allowance of 23kg. Some hotels may be able to store your extra luggage at an additional cost. Please ask for details.

Fitness and preparation

Our active tours are suitable for people of all levels of fitness. Active tours embrace the spirit of the explorer and usually include a range of adventurous activities. Walks, hikes and activities cater to everyone from beginner to expert, ranging in difficulty from easy to strenuous. There will often be a wide variety of options available depending on your interests, budget and ability.



On tour

Start and finishing points

Tours begin and end at designated hotels in our gateway cities. You will find information on which hotels are the end and start points for each tour, plus instructions on how to get to them on the tour dossier. You'll usually depart early on day two of your itinerary and arrive at the finishing point hotel at around 17:00 hrs. We recommend you book an extra night at the end of your tour where possible to give you time to explore your departure city. Please see page 99 for more information.

Tour leaders

All of our tours are accompanied by a professional tour leader, who is there to help you get the most out of your adventure. We will also use specialist local guides in certain locations, to provide in-depth information or expertise. We provide the right kind of person to handle the multitude of needs that arise throughout any tour. We are very selective in our choice of tour leaders, employing people from many professional backgrounds, who lead active lifestyles themselves.

It's our belief that the most important ingredient for the success of any tour is the tour leader and we are extremely proud of the high professional standards set by ours. Our level of customer satisfaction underscores it. Our training programme begins with recruiting the right people and developing their natural talents via substantial training in all areas, with special attention paid to group dynamics and leadership. In addition, our tour leaders receive various forms of instruction from our training and operations teams including first aid, driving techniques, vehicle maintenance, menu planning and emergency procedures. Once leaders complete their initial training, they receive hands-on education in the field from managers and senior tour leaders who can relay years of experience and knowledge.

Please note that US and Canadian law regulates the total number of hours your tour leader is available to work. Our trips are designed to make the most of your time in North America, but please understand that there will be certain times each day that your leader will need to be off duty from work. Due to these restrictions, particularly after the longer driving days, your leader may not be able to join you for some of the daily activities or may need to tend to other work duties. Your leader will provide you with the best information required to enjoy each trip day safely and to its fullest. They will provide maps, suggested activities and restaurants, and may decide to join you and the group on their own time off.

Local operators

Our Central, South America and selected specialist tours in North America are run by well-established local tour operators who are, trusted partners or one of our sister companies. These companies have been carefully selected for their professionalism and knowledge of the region or specialism for that type of tour. They all maintain our philosophy of running high quality, small group tours that offer a personal local perspective and unbeatable value for money.

Vehicle

In North America you'll travel in a comfortable private vehicle which is driven by your tour leader. All of our vehicles have air conditioning and excellent stereo systems. All luggage, equipment and other necessities are stored in a specially designed trailer or storage area to maximise space and comfort in the vehicle. Every group is virtually self-sufficient and able to explore the backroads where the crowds can't go. Every passenger will have one seat and safety belt on board our vehicles. When travelling within USA (excluding Alaska)

our vehicles are equipped with free Wi-Fi, subject to a set data quota, sufficient for normal usage. Up to five people can be connected to the Wi-Fi at one time. We operate a fair usage policy to ensure everyone has access, which means you are not permitted to stream films/music or upload/download large documents which may deplete the group's data allowance. Please disconnect from the Wi-Fi network when you're not using it to avoid using up data unnecessarily. Please note, you may not be able to pick up the Wi-Fi in some remote areas. Wi-Fi is also widely available in built-up areas including some accommodation and campgrounds throughout the USA, Canada, Central and South America.

It may be necessary from time to time to utilise an alternative vehicle from the one described in the brochure, or in some cases to utilise complementary public transportation (including trains/airplanes/ferries/buses), as local operating conditions permit. Tours in South and Central America use a combination of transport options including private air conditioned coaches and mini buses, public buses, ferries and internal flights. All transport is chosen with the safety, efficiency and comfort of the traveller in mind.

Camping tours

Camping within and nearby the national parks is an ideal way to access nature's beautiful trails. Grand American Adventures uses high quality dome tents, field kitchens and camp chairs so you can comfortably relax and enjoy the natural surroundings. We provide all the necessary camping equipment including tents, inflatable sleeping mats, cold food storage containers, camp lights, stoves and other camping accessories. The only thing you need to bring is a sleeping bag and a pillow. Our high quality tents are very easy to set up and take down on your own, and your leader will show you how. We camp with two people in each spacious tent, which leaves more than enough room for your luggage. Most meals whilst camping are included in the price of your tour (please see your itinerary and tour dossier for included meals), and your tour leader will help you to prepare fresh, delicious meals during your trip.

Many campgrounds are situated in stunning settings giving our groups opportunities not found by conventional tourists. When we camp near major city destinations, nearly all the campgrounds have full facilities such as showers, pools, shops and laundromats. Virtually all national park campgrounds have pay showers, flush toilets and basic facilities. Occasionally, our groups will choose to stay in more isolated areas or 'wilderness camps' where the surroundings will quickly make you forget any lack of facilities. Most camping based trips will also spend some nights in hotels during the tour, usually in the cities. This is usually on a twin share basis, but on occasion may be multi share. These night stop stops are shown by the (🏠) on the itinerary for each tour.

Sleeping bags

You need to bring your own sleeping bag for all our camping based trips. We recommend a 'three season' bag during the summer months and a 'four season' bag the rest of the year, as some nights can be cool to cold, especially in mountainous and desert areas. Grand American Adventures do not provide pillows on our camping tours.

Participation when camping

Tour leaders will organise food shopping, meal preparation and clean up on camping based tours. With instruction from your tour leader, passengers will set up, pack their tents / kitchen, help prepare meals and assist leaders as requested.

Hotel accommodation

Grand American Adventures hotel accommodation is based on comfortable hotels (typically three star standard) that are chosen for their friendly atmosphere, amenities and location. You may also stay in cabins, guest ranches and other unique accommodation depending on your itinerary. On some of our tours we also offer the chance to stay in historic and characterful cabins or lodges that lie within the national parks themselves. On hotel based tours, you'll eat in local restaurants and get the chance to sample local specialities.

Rooming and Solo Sleepers

Accommodation on our tours is based on twin share, so if you're travelling on your own, you'll share a room or tent with a passenger of the same sex. Grand American Adventures do not charge any compulsory single supplements (except on Alaska Adventure Cruises, Churchill Polar Bear Experience, and Whales and Polar Bear Experience, where a single supplement is compulsory).

However, if you would prefer your own space then we can offer an optional Solo Sleeper on the majority of our tours. This will give you your own room or tent for every night or the majority of nights on your trip. Where this is not possible every night it is usually due to spending the night in unique or remote locations. For tour specific information, please see our website or your tour dossier. The number of Solo Sleepers we can offer per tour is limited and is subject to availability so it's best to book early if you would like this option. Look out for the Solo Sleeper icon on the tour pages in this brochure to see where this option is available.

Rooming on family tours

Accommodation on hotel based tours will be allocated on a twin share basis. Anyone under 18 will be assigned a room with an adult. If you have young children you have the option of requesting a room for three or four people at a discounted rate. These rooms are triple or quad share (sharing two queen sized double beds), rather than three or four bed rooms. This should be requested at the time of booking. If there is one adult and two children under 18 years in your family, you will all be allocated the same room. On camping trips, one tent will be allocated for every two people.

Guided day hikes

Our leaders enjoy spending as much time as possible on the trail with their groups. As interests and capabilities do vary, our leaders will typically choose to guide day hikes according to each group's needs and the difficulty of the hike. On walking tours with two leaders, depending on their working hours, the leaders will either guide separate hikes or offer additional activities and support. It will not always be possible for every hiker to be accompanied by a guide when groups divide up to explore different trails. Also please note that in Denali National Park, Death Valley National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Mount Rainer National Park and Glacier National Park, regulations do not allow guided hikes. Our tour leaders will provide detailed briefings, directions, maps and transportation, although they are not permitted to walk with you on trails.

Optional activities

On each tour there are numerous optional activities and attractions to choose from, which are not included in the holiday price because not everyone will want to participate. This way each member of the group can choose exactly which activities they want to do according to their budget and interests. All our recommended optional activity providers have been assessed for quality and safety. For a detailed list and price guide please refer to each tour page on our website or the tour dossier.

Itinerary changes

Our routes have been carefully chosen to include the best night stops and highlights. However, because operational conditions may vary and unforeseen circumstances can arise, we reserve the right to make itinerary changes when necessary.

About our tours

Small group touring

Grand American Adventures maintains a maximum group size of 13 people on most tours in North America (12 on some walking tours), with travellers from all over the world sharing the common desire to experience and explore the great outdoors. Group sizes vary on some specialist tours and tours in Central and South America. See individual tour pages for information on the maximum group size.

Age limits

Our tours are designed for adults 16 years and older (under 18 must be accompanied by an adult). While most passengers are 25-65, we get many people both above and below this range. For safety reasons, travellers over 70 will be asked to complete a self-declaration of fitness. On our Family Discovery Tours the average age of children is 13 years old and the minimum age is usually eight years old (six and seven year olds considered on request). Minimum ages are specified on the individual tour pages. Children 16 years and under receive a 10% discount off family tours.

Language

Our travellers may come from many countries around the world, but all Grand American Adventures tours are conducted in English.

Grand American Adventures team

We're proud to be a small and specialist team, dedicated to providing you with the best trips across North, Central and South America. Many of our team have worked or travelled extensively in the Americas and some have previously led tours across these regions. We love all things Americas and look forward to sharing our love of these amazing regions with you.

Any last questions?

If you have any questions or would like further information on any aspect of our tours, please consult your travel agent, visit our website, email us at info@grandamericanadventures.com or call us on 0333 003 8249.



The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the NHS has up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit us at www.grandamericanadventures.com/travelaware

The advice can change so check regularly for updates.

