

Welcome to Southwest USA

The Southwest is America's playground, luring adventurous travelers with thrilling red-rock landscapes, the legends of shoot-'em-up cowboys and the kicky delights of green-chile stew.

The Great Outdoors

Beauty and adventure are a fun-loving team in the Southwest. They crank up the white-water, unleash the singletrack, add blooms to the trail and drape a sunset across the red rocks. This captivating mix of scenery and possibility lures travelers who want to rejuvenate physically, mentally and spiritually. The big draw is the Grand Canyon, a two-billion-year-old wonder that shares its geologic treasures with a healthy dose of fun. In Utah the red rocks will nourish your soul while thrashing your bike, while in southern Colorado ice climbing and mountain biking excite. Take a scenic drive, an art walk or a lazy slide down a shimmery dune in New Mexico, or chase the neon lights in Vegas.

This Is the Place for History

The Southwest wears its history on its big, sandy sleeve. Ancient cultures left behind cliff dwellings and petroglyphs, while their descendants live on in reservations and pueblos. Navajos and Apaches arrived next, followed by Spanish conquistadors. Then the missionaries left a string of stunning missions in their wake. Mormon religious refugees arrived with Brigham Young in the Salt Lake Valley, and their cities have flourished. The lure of gold and copper drew prospectors, and vast tracts of land drew cattlemen.

Multicultural Meanderings

It's the multicultural mix – Native American, Hispanic, Anglo – that makes a trip to the Southwest unique. There are 19 Indian pueblos in New Mexico, and the Navajo Reservation alone covers more than 27,000 sq miles. Monument Valley and Canyon de Chelly, two of the most striking geologic features in the Southwest, are protected as sacred places. Tribal traditions and imagery influence art across the region. The Spanish and Mexican cultures are also a part of daily life, from the food to the language to headlines about immigration.

Local Food & Drink

Green-chile sauces in New Mexico. Sonoran dogs in Tucson. Steak in Colorado. Regional specialties are pleasingly diverse in the Southwest and sampling hometown fare is half the fun of a trip. Top restaurants are increasingly focused on fresh and locally grown fare – anyone up for a little foraging? A crop of new microbreweries has opened across the region, and Arizona wines are also winning fans.



Why I Love Southwest USA

By Amy C Balfour, Author

Because I never get bored. Deserts, mountains, red-rock canyons. Wherever I hike in the Southwest, I know there will always be a cool new view around the bend. But it's not just the scenery that's compelling. Behind every beautiful landscape there is, inevitably, an interesting story or bit of history that adds to the richness of the experience. And outdoor fun? Seriously, there are enough adventures here to fill several lifetimes. Yep, the Southwest – it's worth an extended visit.

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