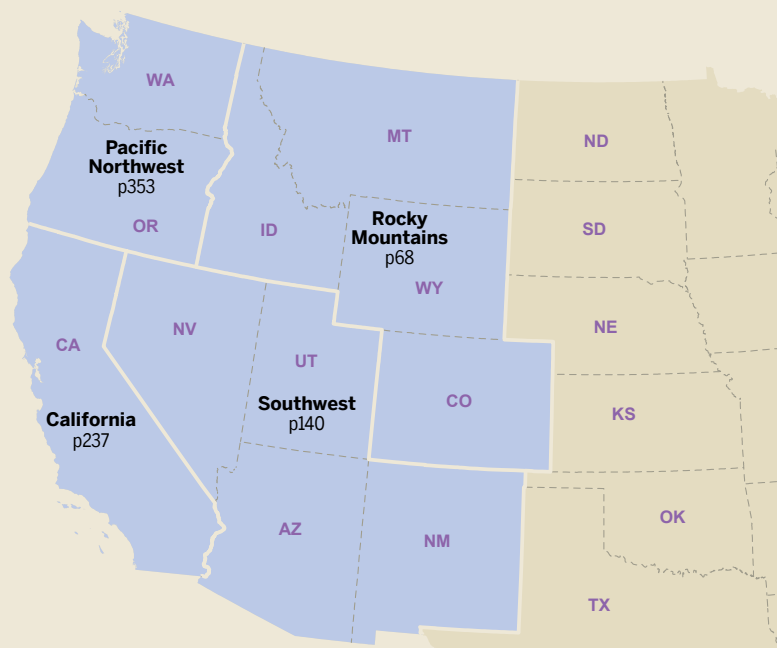




Western USA



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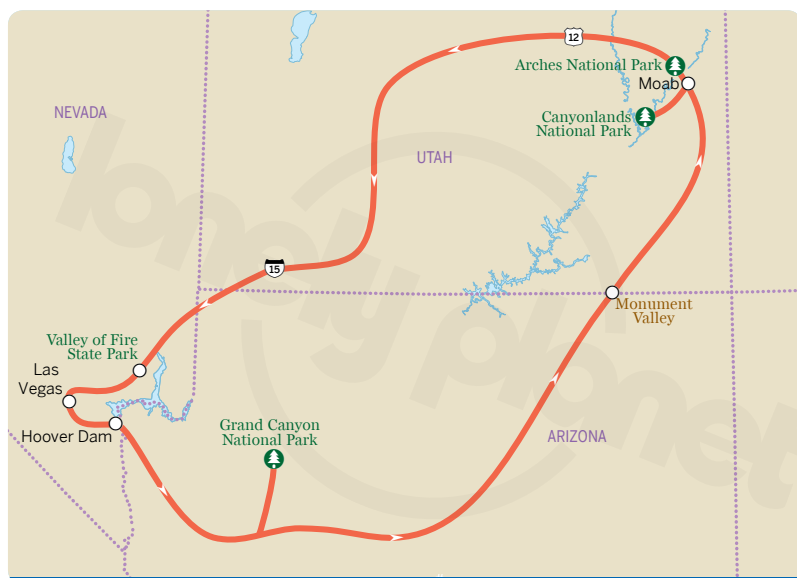
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Itineraries

**2
WEEKS**

Best of the Southwest

Cameras get a workout on this tour, which spotlights the most iconic sites in the Southwest. You'll loop past the region's most famous city, its biggest canyon and its most breathtaking red-rock scenery.

Start in **Las Vegas** and spend a few days traveling the world on the Strip. Partied out? Swoop east past **Hoover Dam**, then say hello to the **Grand Canyon**. Spend two days exploring America's most famous park. For a once-in-a-lifetime experience, descend from the South Rim into the chasm on a mule and spend the night at Phantom Ranch on the canyon floor. From the Grand Canyon head northeast to **Monument Valley**, with scenery straight out of a Hollywood Western, and then to the national parks in Utah's southeast corner – they're some of the most visually stunning in the country. Hike the shape-shifting canyons of **Canyonlands National Park**, mountain bike slickrock outside **Moab**, or take a photo of Balanced Rock in **Arches National Park**. Drive west along a spectacular stretch of pavement, Hwy 12, until it hooks up with I-15. Swing south for a sunset meditation at **Valley of Fire State Park**, before heading back to Las Vegas.

4
WEEKS

Winding Down the West Coast

Hug a tree, surf a wave and taste the fresh deliciousness of West Coast fare on this nature-lover's trip, which ribbons from Seattle to San Diego.

Kick off with fresh-roasted coffee in java-loving **Seattle** and check out the city's sprawling food markets, microbreweries and waterfront. Heading south, visit **Mt Rainier National Park**, where superb hiking trails and relaxing inns nestle beneath the snow-covered peak. Continue to the cutting-edge city of **Portland**, known for its sprawling parks, eco-minded residents and progressive urbanism – plus food carts, coffeehouse culture and great nightlife. Wonder at waterfalls and indulge in fresh roadside produce with a scenic drive east along the **Columbia River Gorge**, then turn south to get to **Mt Hood** for winter skiing or summer hiking. Further adventures await at the **Sisters**, a trio of 10,000ft peaks, and the striking blue waters of **Crater Lake**. Catch a Shakespearian play in sunny **Ashland**, then trade the mountains for the foggy coast. Enter California via Hwy 199 and stroll through the magnificent old-growth forests in **Redwood National and State Parks**.

Hug the coast as it meanders south through funky **Arcata** and seaside **Eureka**, lose yourself on the **Lost Coast**, and catch Hwy 1 through quaint **Mendocino**, where the scenic headlands and rugged shoreline make a wander mandatory. For wine tasting with a photogenic backdrop, travel inland to the rolling vineyards of the **Napa and Sonoma Valleys**, then continue south to romantically hilly **San Francisco**. Return to scenic Hwy 1 through surf-loving **Santa Cruz**, stately bayfront **Monterey** and beatnik-flavored **Big Sur**. In no time, you'll reach the surreal **Hearst Castle** and laid-back, collegiate **San Luis Obispo**. Roll into Mediterranean-esque **Santa Barbara** for shopping and wine tasting then hop aboard a ferry in Ventura to the wildlife-rich **Channel Islands**. The pull from **Los Angeles** is strong. Go ahead – indulge your Hollywood fantasies then stroll the rugged hills of Griffith Park, followed by a cruise through LA's palm-lined neighborhoods. After racking up a few sins in the City of Angels, move south to wander the bluffs of **Laguna Beach** then cruise into picture-perfect **San Diego**.



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Top: Golden Gate Bridge (p309), San Francisco

Bottom: Folk dancers, Albuquerque (p214)



3 WEEKS Rocky Mountain High

Pack your bathing suit, mountain bike and hiking boots for this high-altitude cruise atop the Continental Divide; it's big skies, big peaks and big wildlife the whole way.

Spend your first two days enjoying craft beers and singletrack mountain-biking trails in **Durango**, a fine mountain town. From here, take the Million Dollar Hwy (Hwy 550) north through the San Juan Mountains, sightseeing in **Silverton** and dipping into hot springs in **Ouray**. Take a side trip to **Telluride** for a festival – there's one almost every weekend in summer. From Montrose, drive east on Hwy 50 to the Arkansas River Valley and white-water rafting through Brown's Canyon National Monument in **Salida**. Hwy 24 continues past Colorado's tallest peaks; finish your first week in style with an overnight stay in historic **Breckenridge**.

Enjoy tubing, happy hour and people-watching in funky **Boulder** then twist up to **Rocky Mountain National Park** to hike and horseback ride. While here, drive the thrilling Trail Ridge Rd up above the treeline. Continue north on I-25. In Wyoming, take I-80 west to Hwy 287; follow this highway to **Lander** for rock climbing.

Continue north to **Jackson Hole**, another fun gateway town. Anchored by a central park surrounded by chic stores and cowboy bars, it's a good place to relax, indulge in a gourmet meal or spend the night before rafting the Snake River. From here, it's an easy glide north into **Grand Teton National Park**, a scenic spot for a lazy lake day and bison photo-ops. Next up is mighty **Yellowstone National Park**, where geysers, bears and hiking are highlights.

Start your last week with a drive on the gorgeous Beartooth Hwy, following it into Montana then hooking onto I-90 west to **Bozeman** and **Missoula**; both are good places to stock up before the final push. Serious wilderness awaits in the **Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex**, while **Glacier National Park** is a place to visit now – there are still some 26 glaciers hanging tight, but they may not be there for long. Scan for wildlife on a hike, then end with a drive on the stunning Going-to-the-Sun Road.



Western US Grand Tour

This lasso loop corrals the best of the West as it rolls north along the California coast, cruises through the lush landscapes of the Pacific Northwest, the alpine towns of the Rockies and the glowing red-rock beauty of the Southwest, with a final swing back into California for a hit-parade tour of the state's national parks.

From sunny **San Diego**, follow Hwy 1 north through the surf-loving coastal villages of **Orange County**, detouring to **Disneyland** before driving into shiny **Los Angeles**. Continue up the coast on scenic Hwy 1, stopping to shop and sample wine in glossy **Santa Barbara**. Gawk at gawdy **Hearst Castle** then continue north through woody **Big Sur**. Dine and shop then wander through Alcatraz in bohemian **San Francisco**. Return to Hwy 1 for the quirky towns dotting the northern California coast.

View the big trees in **Redwood National and State Parks** and continue into Oregon, taking time for outdoor fun in **Bend**. Soak in the greenery while traveling west along the **Columbia River Gorge**, then spend a few days savoring brews and views in **Portland**. Zip up the Space Needle in **Seattle** and drive east into wide-open Montana, heading for the outdoor wonders of **Glacier National Park**. Continue south into **Yellowstone National Park** where Old Faithful blasts regularly beside its namesake lodge, and sightseers brake for buffalo. Swoosh below majestic peaks in **Grand Teton National Park** before swinging southeast through Wyoming's vast cowboy plains.

In Colorado, breathe deep in outdoorsy **Boulder** then uncover current hot spots in burgeoning **Denver**. The mining towns of central Colorado are next, followed by **Mesa Verde National Park**. Just south in New Mexico, artist meccas **Taos** and **Santa Fe** are fab stops for one-of-a-kind gifts. Slurp green chile in **Albuquerque** and follow Route 66 west into Arizona, stopping at **Meteor Crater** before detouring north for **Grand Canyon National Park**. Continue west to **Las Vegas**, then drive into central California for **Death Valley National Park**, and **Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks**, concluding with **Yosemite National Park**. Complete the loop with a glass of Californian wine in **San Francisco**.

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Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book

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Pacific Northwest Becky is a freelance writer, editor and critic based in Portland, Oregon. She writes guidebooks and travel stories about Scandinavia, Portland and elsewhere for Lonely Planet. When she's not covering ground for Lonely Planet, Becky is working on a book about motorcycles and the paradoxical appeal of risk.

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California's North Coast & Redwoods Josephine first got her taste of not-so-serious travel when she slung a guitar on her back and traveled in Europe in the early '70s, along the way working on a kibbutz in Israel and meeting her husband. She primarily covers Spain and Italy for Lonely Planet.

**Andrea Schulte-Peevers**

The Deserts Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has traveled the distance to the moon and back in her visits to some 75 countries. She has earned her living as a professional travel writer for more than two decades and authored or contributed to nearly 100 Lonely Planet titles.

**Helena Smith**

Lake Tahoe, Gold Country Helena is an award-winning writer and photographer covering travel, outdoors and food. Helena is from Scotland but was partly brought up in Malawi, so Africa always feels like home. She also enjoys living in multicultural Hackney and wrote, photographed and published *Inside Hackney*.

**John A Vlahides**

San Francisco John has been a cook in a Parisian bordello, luxury-hotel concierge, television host, safety monitor in a sex club, French–English interpreter, and is one of Lonely Planet's most experienced guidebook authors. When not talking travel, John sings with the San Francisco Symphony, and spends free time in the Sierra Nevada.

**Benedict Walker**

Nevada Berlin-based Ben grew up in the 'burbs of Australia, spending weekends and long summers by the beach, and while he's magnetically drawn to big mountains, beach life is in his blood. Ben thinks that the best thing about travel isn't as much about where you go as who you meet: living vicariously through the stories of kind strangers really adds to one's own experience.

**Clifton Wilkinson**

Santa Barbara County Clifton has been in love with California since first visiting in 1995. Christmases spent near Sacramento, bike rides across the Golden Gate Bridge and hiking in Yosemite National Park have all reinforced Clifton's opinion that the Golden State is the best state in the whole US, and Santa Barbara is one of its most beautiful corners. Having worked for Lonely Planet for more than 11 years, he's now based in the London office, but hoping for the call back to CA's Sideways country and the chance to show that Merlot isn't all that bad.

**Sara Benson**

[Marin County & the Bay Area, Coastal California](#) The author of more than 70 travel and non-fiction books, Sara's writing has featured in national and international newspapers and magazines, including numerous Lonely Planet titles, CNN and *National Geographic Adventure*, as well as on popular travel websites such as Jetsetter.

**Alison Bing**

[San Francisco](#) Over 10 guidebooks and 20 years in San Francisco, author Alison Bing has spent more time on Alcatraz than some inmates, become an aficionado of drag and burritos, and willfully ignored Muni signs warning that safety requires avoiding unnecessary conversation.

**Cristian Bonetto**

[Los Angeles, Southern California](#) Cristian has contributed to more than 30 Lonely Planet guides, while his musings on travel, food, culture and design appear in numerous publications around the world. When not on the road, you'll find the reformed playwright and TV scriptwriter slurping espresso in his beloved hometown, Melbourne.

**Celeste Brash**

[California's Northern Mountains](#) Celeste has been writing guidebooks for Lonely Planet since 2005 and her travel articles have appeared in publications from BBC Travel to *National Geographic*. She's currently writing a book about her five years on a remote pearl farm in the Tuamotu.

**Jade Bremner**

[San Diego](#) Jade has been a journalist for more than a decade, and has edited travel magazines and sections for Time Out and Radio Times, and worked as a correspondent for *The Times*, CNN and *The Independent*. She feels privileged to share tales from this wonderful planet we call home and is always looking for the next adventure.

**Nate Cavalieri**

[Sacramento](#) A writer and musician based in California, Nate has authored over a dozen titles for Lonely Planet, including *Epic Bike Rides of the World*. He's cycled across China and Southern Africa as a guide with Tour d'Afrique and played third chair percussion in an Orlando theme park.

**Michael Grosberg**

[Yosemite & the Sierra Nevada](#) A prolific Lonely Planet author, Michael's other international work prior to his freelance writing career included development on the island of Rota in the western Pacific; investigating and writing about political violence in South Africa; and teaching in Ecuador. He has a Masters in Comparative Literature, and has taught literature and writing as an adjunct professor.

**Ashley Harrell**

[Napa & Sonoma Wine Country, Northern California](#) After studying journalism and working as a reporter, Ashley traveled widely and moved often, from a tiny NYC apartment to a vast California ranch to a jungle cabin in Costa Rica, where she started writing for Lonely Planet. From there her travels have only become more exotic.

**Carolyn McCarthy**

[Colorado](#) Specializing in travel, culture and adventure in the Americas, Carolyn has contributed to forty guidebooks and anthologies for Lonely Planet, and written or *National Geographic*, *Outside*, *BBC Magazine*, *Sierra Magazine*, *Boston Globe* and other publications.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Hugh McNaughtan

Curator, Arizona A former English lecturer, Hugh swapped grant applications for visa applications and turned his love of travel into a full-time thing. He's never happier than when on the road with his two daughters. Except perhaps on the cricket field...



Brett Atkinson

California's Central Coast Based in New Zealand, but frequently on the road for Lonely Planet, Brett's a full-time travel and food writer specialising in adventure travel, unusual destinations, and surprising angles on more well-known destinations. Craft beer and street food are Brett's favorite reasons to explore places.



Loren Bell

Rocky Mountains, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming When Loren first backpacked through Europe, he was in the backpack. That memorable experience corrupted his six-month-old brain, ensuring he would never be happy sitting still. When he's not demystifying destinations for Lonely Planet, Loren writes about science and conservation news.



Greg Benchwick

Northern Colorado A long-time Lonely Planet travel writer, Greg has rumbled in the jungles of Bolivia, trekked across Spain on the Camino de Santiago, interviewed presidents and grammy-award winners, dodged flying salmon in Alaska and climbed mountains (big and small) in between.



Andrew Bender

Los Angeles; Disneyland & Orange County Award-winning travel and food writer Andrew Bender has written three-dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks (from Amsterdam to Los Angeles, Germany to Taiwan and more than a dozen titles about Japan), plus numerous articles for lonelyplanet.com.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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