



Tribes of the Southwest USA Trip #2

NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES OF THE COLORADO PLATEAU (Hopi, Navajo and Zuni Pueblo)

8 days (7 nights)

Our journey will take us across Zuni, Navajo and Hopi lands in the southwestern United States. We will be spending time in both modern towns and ancient communities, with a lot of contact with local people, including in their homes. We shall also visit sites of breathtaking natural beauty, which retain great spiritual significance for Native American peoples.

This is an excursion rich in people and places, sights and activities, and one in which we will be fully involved. There will be visits to museums, opportunities for shopping, and participation in cultural activities, such as song, dance, arts and crafts. We will be fortunate enough to have knowledgeable, friendly local guides and teachers to help us better understand the world we are in. They will tell us about the history and heritage of their people, as well as introducing us to contemporary Native America.

In addition we shall also spend time out in the open, where we can better appreciate the environment in which Native Americans have for centuries lived in balance with their surroundings.

Itinerary:

Day 1:

Airport transfer from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Arizona, to a comfortable motel in Sedona for the first night.

Day 2:

From our starting point in Sedona, Arizona we drive into Zuni territory in New Mexico. Our journey into Native American culture takes us across the Arizonan badlands of the **Painted Desert**, whose shimmering colours were created over thousands of years by winds and water cutting into stratified layers of mineral, animal and vegetable matter.

Once we arrive in **Zuni Pueblo**, the largest of the nineteen New Mexico Pueblos (the name given to the sophisticated Native American urban centres encountered by early Spanish explorers), we shall enjoy lunch and hospitality in a local home.

Afterwards a Zuni guide will take us out to see sights such as the **Hawikuh Ruins**, the largest and first Zuni Pueblo which Europeans came across, and La Purisima Concepción, the historic mission church nearby which was destroyed in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

We then drive to Gallup, New Mexico - sometimes called the “**Indian capital of the world**” for its closeness to so many Native American lands - to settle in at a cosy historic inn before visiting a hogan, or traditional Navajo dwelling, where we shall enjoy an evening of Navajo food, song and cultural sharing.

Day 3:

We remain in Gallup for the morning, where a Navajo guide will introduce us to many of the town's most interesting places, including stops at a **historic trading post** and other specialists in Native American arts.

Our journey then takes us to the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico, located in the **Chaco Canyon**. Found here are many excellent examples of Chacoan pueblos, the villages around which the Ancient Pueblo (Anasazi) people developed their advanced urban society one thousand years ago. As well as being rich in history, the whole Chaco Canyon area remains of great spiritual significance to the modern day Pueblo, Navajo and Hopi peoples as a place of pilgrimage, and is a site of great natural beauty. The complex collection of buildings erected here by the Ancient Pueblo people - which includes some containing hundreds of rooms - involved great human effort in bringing in construction materials, and it is believed to have been carefully laid out in alignment with solar and lunar cycles.

After our packed day, we travel to the **capital of the Navajo Nation**, Window Rock, for a restful evening.

Day 4:

Today is the Fourth of July, and we have the honour of spending it in Window Rock in the company of some of the original American people. In the morning we will take part in a circle of sharing creative activity, before a tour of the town, which is home to the **Window Rock** itself, a red stone arch through which the sun dances in the day time, and an important location in Navajo cosmology. Later on in the day there will be a special Independence Day concert and fair, with fireworks, fun and traditional Navajo song and dance.

Day 5:

We spend a last morning with our Navajo hosts in Window Rock, where we will take part in creative activity circles, before heading to **Tsaile**, Arizona, where Diné College, the oldest Native American college in the United States, was established in 1968. Our activities here will include a viewing of creation murals, a visit to a traditional Navajo hogan in the Black Rock backcountry area for a demonstration of tribal weaving, a talk on the role of women in Navajo culture, and the chance to take part in sand painting. A Navajo spiritual leader will even guide us in a fire blessing circle.

Containing important cultural and archaeological artefacts of the Ancient Pueblo and Navajo peoples, **Canyon de Chelly**, Arizona, has many wondrous sights to offer the visitor, such as Spider Rock, the sandstone spire which reaches up out of the canyon basin, as well as great hiking opportunities. We will explore as much as we can before stopping off at a Navajo cafe for dinner.

The next stage of our trip takes us into the **Hopi Reservation**, an area entirely contained within the Navajo Nation. Here we shall spend a night resting from today's activities and in preparation for tomorrow's.

Day 6:

The morning is free for us to explore the local area on our own in order to ease us into Hopi culture, with many options available, including museum visits, shopping, or even getting a Hopi massage in the privacy of our own room. Our day will then be given over to visiting the **First and Second Mesa** village areas, where urban Hopi life has developed for many hundreds of years. Hopi culture saw the establishment of networks of villages collected around, and then on top of large, sheer-sided, flat-topped rock formations called mesas, and these communities remain today. During our visit we may see some ceremonial dances, and in the evening we will be welcomed into a Hopi home for dinner, take part in a special circle with songs, and learn how to make a gourd rattle, as well as simply talking with local people. The day will be topped off with demonstrations of traditional Hopi art, which includes silver overlay jewellery, woven baskets, pottery and Kachina carving, and the chance to buy a unique work direct from its creator.

Day 7:

Our time with our Hopi hosts will continue with a blue corn pancake breakfast in a Hopi home, followed by a circle of sharing. In the afternoon we visit villages of the **Third Mesa** - Oraibi, the oldest continuously occupied village in North America, which was established in around 1100AD, and Hotevila, where spring-fed terrace gardens and a plaza area present a great place from which to enjoy the sights, sounds and bustle. We may also strike out into the Hopi backcountry to visit a large rock art site. As the sun sinks lower in the sky we will participate in a **fire circle**, with the option of a session in a purification lodge.

As our trip comes to a close, we will enjoy one last meal together in a Hopi home, before bidding our Hopi friends goodbye, and returning to our starting point in Sedona, Arizona, memories of our Colorado Plateau experience fresh in our minds. Overnight Sedona motel.

Day 8:

Airport transfer to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport for flight home.

Includes:

Land transportation and airport transfers; guides and teachers; lodging for 7 nights (double occupancy); entry fees; meals listed (2 dinners and 1 breakfast at Hopi, 1 Zuni feast, 1 Navajo dinner, 2 breakfasts at Window Rock, rattle-making supplies. Optional activities not included in the trip cost: 4th of July concert, sweatlodge and Hopi massage (local payment or donation based).

What to expect:

This is a journey into living Native America, where lessons from the past inform the present and help shape the future. Much of our time will be with local people keen to share their time and space with us, but please be aware of personal and community boundaries. Our guides will be happy to help us to engage with our hosts in a friendly, respectful fashion.

What to wear:

Summers are hot, temperatures can reach the 90s (Fahrenheit); however, evenings can be cool. Be prepared with proper clothing befitting seasonal weather changes. You are advised to bring good hiking shoes, hat, sunblock and rain gear.

Health:

Obtain health clearance. Disclaimer available for any activities assumed by participants. Physical activities will not be excessive.

Culture:

Be prepared for any preconceived notions about Native American culture to be challenged. Come with an open mind and an open heart.