






Global Explorers

WHERE // Canyon Skies: U.S. Southwest




Program Highlights

-  Warm yourself by a campfire as you visualize ancient tales recounted by a Navajo storyteller and flute player under the endless stars of Canyon de Chelly.
-  Enjoy a true escape as you raft the San Juan River, embrace the mystical power of the desert and conduct important research on the impact of sound on the environment.
-  Explore hidden and mysterious cliff dwellings and learn how their original inhabitants faced conservation issues similar to those we face today.

Program Description

The stunning scenery of the Southwestern United States never fails to awe and inspire those who take the time to discover its riches. The U.S. Southwest showcases dramatic geologic formations and sits at a crossroads of Native American, Spanish and American cultures. As a testament to the unique combination of natural and cultural history in the region, the Colorado Plateau boasts the highest concentration of National Parks and Monuments in the United States. On this journey, students raft the San Juan River, explore spectacular National Monuments, and visit the Navajo Nation, the largest Native American reservation in the country. There's no better place to contemplate our place in the universe than under the desert skies, gazing at a magnificent array of stars. For more details, photos and a downloadable flyer, please visit our website.

Pre-Travel Curriculum

-  Desert ecology, soundscape research and Southwest conservation issues.
-  Navajo culture and Spanish, Native American and U.S. history.
-  Leadership skills, service learning and responsible travel knowledge.



*"The day was challenging, but I kept feeling that I made it one step farther than I ever thought I could before."
- Allie, Student Explorer*



Program Itinerary

Day 1

Depending on our flight arrival time, we either settle into a hotel in Phoenix or hop aboard a shuttle to Flagstaff where we stay in a hotel for our first night.

Day 2

Today we drive to Sand Island, our put-in site on the San Juan River. We receive our river orientation this afternoon and enjoy the dramatic desert surroundings. Tonight we camp at Sand Island.

Days 3 – 5

We begin our river voyage on one of the most spectacular rivers in America, the San Juan. As we float along the river we join our nonprofit partner, Grand Canyon Youth, in an exploration of ecology, water management and conservation. Tonight, we camp on the river banks under the desert sky. On the second and third days of our river expedition, we explore the impact of sound on the environment using scientific techniques designed by the National Park Service. We paddle, swim, float and meander through the red rock walls along the river.

Day 6

We depart the river at Mexican Hat and head to Chinle, Arizona – gateway to Canyon de Chelly National Monument. At night, we settle into the rustic and

beautiful Spider Rock Campground. If time permits, we may explore the rim of the canyon before nightfall.

Days 7 – 8

Before we hike down into the dramatic red rock walls of Canyon de Chelly, a Navajo Park Ranger introduces us to the challenges of protecting an area that's been inhabited by humans for over 5,000 years. Our resting spot is a campground next to the Antelope House ruins in the heart of the canyon. Tonight, we are captivated by fireside Navajo storytelling and music as we gaze at the stars above. On Day 8, we engage in a service project that will help the residents of Canyon de Chelly call this place home for years to come. We may help clear the area of invasive species or assist Canyon elders with a special project. At night, we return for one more night at Spider Rock Campground on the rim of the canyon and finish with a closing ceremony under the Navajo skies.

Day 9

After packing up camp, we depart for the historic Hubbell Trading Post, where we learn about its importance to the Navajo Nation and have an opportunity to buy gifts. In the afternoon, we return to Phoenix and catch an evening flight back home.

Program Details

Expedition Length: 9 days

Location: U.S. Southwest – Canyon de Chelly in Arizona and the San Juan River in Utah

What's Included:

Tents for camping are provided for the duration of this program; all meals and drinking water in Arizona and Utah; all transportation in Arizona and Utah; all daily activities and related fees; Global Explorers Expedition Leader; local guides and drivers; all gratuities; basic travel insurance; airport departure fees; preparatory materials and support; t-shirts and journals.

What's Not Included:

Travel between your home city and Phoenix, AZ; sleeping bags and pads for camping are not provided but are available for rent; expenses as a result of travel delays or cancellations that fall outside of Global Explorers' control.

Maturity Level:

This program is open to middle school and high school groups.

Group Size:

Group size must be between 15 and 20 students to participate in the San Juan rafting portion.

Accommodations:

Students camp at sites with varying levels of facilities. The river portion of the expedition is a wilderness experience with no facilities. Food is prepared by local guides and clean drinking water is always available.