

Utah: Bryce Canyon & Zion National Parks

Bike Vacation Only

Cycle into a world of geologic wonder. Where fairy chimneys carved over eons point skyward. Red sandstone panoramas evoke an otherworldly aura. And mammoth rock mountains preside over every mile you spin. VBT's new Bryce Canyon and Zion bike tour leads you to the heart of Utah's most beloved natural wonders. This is the Southwest of your dreams, and there's no more intimate way to experience it than by bicycle – with opportunities to hike some of the nation's most breathtaking walking paths. You'll ride a pleasant mix of bicycle trails, shared use trails, and scenic roadways into a world that time seems to have forgotten. And savor the indulgence of time itself to soak in the epic glory of this great American landscape.

Cultural Highlights

- Cycle among the dramatic red sandstone landscapes of Snow Canyon.
- Ride to Bryce Canyon City along the Red Canyon Bicycle Trail, a stunning canvas of red earth, low shrub and rising slopes.
- Marvel at the spindly hoodoos of Bryce Canyon at the park's famed Inspiration Point.
- Explore the unique geological formations of Bryce Canyon by foot when you opt for a half-day hike.
- Pedal along the Pa'rus Trail, tracing the Virgin River, and follow the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive to the Temple of Sinawava, a spectacular natural amphitheater.

What to Expect

This tour offers a full range of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills, ideal for both beginner and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is available for those who would like assistance with the hills. Vehicle support will be limited on the scenic drives in both Bryce Canyon National Park and Zion National Park. Leaders will provide you with extra snacks and supplies during these rides.

Average Daily Mileage: 10 - 40 miles

Average Cycling Time: 01:00 - 05:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 53°/24°, May 63°/32°, Jun 74°/39°, Jul 80°/47°, Aug 77°/45°, Sep 70°/37°, Oct 58°/28°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 0.9, May 1.4, Jun 0.6, Jul 1.4, Aug 2.1, Sep 1.6, Oct 1.5

DAY 1: VBT Bicycling Vacation begins

Your Bryce Canyon and Zion bike tour begins with a warm-up ride into Snow Canyon State Park. Your stunning route traces the paved Whiptail Trail on a slight ascent, passing the region's famed red-rock and white Navajo sandstone into an otherworldly landscape of ancient lava flows and soaring cliffs. There'll be time to explore by foot if you wish. Reach a scenic overlook near the highest point, then return as you came or enjoy a longer loop. Tonight, get to know your fellow travelers and learn about the upcoming week during a casual reception hosted by your trip leaders, followed by a delicious welcome dinner sourced from local ingredients.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-up St. George to Snow Canyon Out and Back — 7 miles OR Warm-up St. George Out to Snow Canyon Loop — 17 miles

What to Expect:

Ride from the hotel to Snow Canyon State Park on the paved Whiptail Trail, taking in spectacular views as you ascend into the park. You may stop if you'd like and explore the park by foot. After approximately six miles, you have the choice to return to the hotel by retracing your path along the Whiptail Trail through Snow Canyon or taking a longer loop ride on the bike path along Highway 18.

Cumulative Distance Range: 7 – 17 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 2: Dixie National Forest / Red Canyon / Bryce Canyon City

After breakfast, you shuttle to Cedar Breaks National Monument, where you may start today's ride with a total of a 34-mile gentle descent to the town of Panguitch. One of Utah's most historic settlements, this classic frontier town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Enjoy an included lunch here,

then cycle to Bryce Canyon.

Your route today passes the dramatic contours of Utah's wilderness, a breathtaking tableau of an Old West desert. An optional, moderate ride from Panguitch Lake to Panguitch may be offered if weather conditions allow for the more intrepid cyclists. The main ride leaves Panguitch and enters into the Dixie National Forest, stopping at the Red Canyon Visitor Center. Then continue on the Red Canyon Bicycle Trail, pedaling past low shrub, red earth, towering walls, and majestic ponderosa pines. The colors of the earth here are spellbinding: red-rust, deep orange, and ghostly striations of white. Pause to marvel at some of the most inspiring vistas you'll ever see, from massive buttes to spindly hoodoos. A highlight of your ride is the Red Canyon Arch, a spectacular natural formation etched into the sandstone.

At ride's end, you arrive in Bryce Canyon City, known as Ruby's Inn until a name change in 2007. The town has been built on tourism since its founding in 1916 by Reuben C. "Ruby" Syrett. It remains a tiny settlement today, with a population of just a couple hundred. Dinner here is on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Cedar Breaks to Panguitch — 34 miles | Panguitch to Bryce Canyon — 22 miles

What to Expect:

After lunch in Panguitch, you ride to Bryce Canyon City. The first portion of the ride from Panguitch is on Highway 89 and Highway 12; you ride on the road's shoulder with passing traffic. If you prefer to avoid highway cycling, you can shuttle in the support vehicle (approximately 10 miles) with your trip leaders to the start of the Red Canyon Bicycle Trail. The bike trails ascend through the buttes and hoodoos. After reaching the highest point of today's ride near Coyote Hollow Trailhead, enjoy the gentle descent to the hotel. Along the bike path you see the Red Canyon Arch. Please note: The optional ride this afternoon is rated moderate because it is steep and has a narrow shoulder.

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 – 56 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3: Bryce Canyon National Park

The natural spectacle of Bryce Canyon National Park is yours to explore today. Pack a lunch that you can enjoy along the bike route, stop at the Bryce Canyon Lodge for a take-out lunch to enjoy rim-side, or plan

to have lunch back at the hotel.

After breakfast, you get an early start on the Bryce Canyon Shared Use Path. At the entrance to the park, you stop at the visitor center. Its exhibits provide a preview of the geological wonder about to unfold before you.

Your route leads you into the park, passing stunning rock formations and stands of ponderosa pine. When the path was completed, it provided leisurely outdoor access from Bryce Canyon City to Inspiration Point, your first destination. Though Inspiration Point lies at 8,100 feet, the bike trail never exceeds a grade of 6%, making for an easy-to-moderate ride. Once you arrive, you gaze upon a spectacular canvas of finger-like hoodoos standing in a natural amphitheater, the Boat Mesa stretching out behind.

You may return to the hotel the way you came, or our longer option follows the Bryce Canyon Scenic Drive. This magnificent route runs the entire length of the park, 18 miles. You pause along the way to take in remarkable views of the Natural Bridge, an 85-foot-long arch eroded away over millennia, and the sweeping expanse of Agua Canyon, home to the majestic condor. The culmination of your ride is Rainbow Point, at 9,100 feet, from where you can gaze across the entire park.

This afternoon, your trip leaders are happy to help you plan some hiking in Bryce. After a full and rewarding day, gather together for an included dinner at a local restaurant.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bryce Canyon National Park — 10 – 41 miles

What to Expect:

Today's ride starts at the hotel and offers numerous opportunities to stop and take in the magnificent vistas of Bryce Canyon National Park. The first portion of the ride is on the Bryce Canyon Shared Use Path. There'll be time to stop at the Visitor Center before following the path to Inspiration Point. After, you may choose to return to the hotel or continue to ride on Bryce Canyon Scenic Drive. You share the road with cars on this portion of the ride. The ride, with a steady ascent with never more than a 6% grade, ends at the highest point in the park, at Rainbow and Yovimpa Points.

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 – 41 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Zion National Park

This morning you shuttle to Springdale, gateway to Zion National Park and your home for the next two nights. After a pre-ordered lunch beside the Virgin River, you enter Zion National Park by bike, following the Pa'rus Trail as it winds into the canyon. At trail's end, you meet the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, car-free except for park service shuttles. Ride past magnificent sandstone monoliths throughout your ride, in one of the most scenic regions of the American West. There'll be many opportunities to stop and take in more breathtaking panoramas. Your destination is the spectacular Temple of Sinawava, an incredible vertical wall and amphitheater 3,000 feet deep. After time to admire its splendor, you ride back to the hotel.

After a refreshing break, take in the beauty of the Virgin River and dramatic vistas from another angle as you travel back to Springdale by bike or by shuttle. Don't miss the opportunity to discover Springdale at your leisure this afternoon.

Tonight, you have ample choices for dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Zion Canyon Scenic Drive — 16 miles

What to Expect:

Ride from your hotel along the Pa'rus Trail to the Zion Scenic Drive. You can continue up the Zion Scenic Drive if you like, taking in panoramic views along the way

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5: Zion National Park Hike

Leave the bikes behind today to explore Zion National Park by foot. Your trip leaders will help you choose a trail that suits you. Perhaps walk the Emerald Pools Trail, a series of short trails along a lush river whose waters form several scenic pools. The Scout Lookout Trail leads to spectacular views of Zion. And the West Rim Trail features a dramatic zig-zag up a soaring rock wall. No matter your choice, the scenery is sure to inspire you. Plan for lunch on your own.

If you prefer a restful day, relax at the hotel pool or indulge in a spa treatment, explore Springdale or browse the Zion National Park Visitor Center. Alternately, uncover the past of the region at the Zion Human History Museum. This evening, celebrate your week during a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

What to Expect:

Non-biking day: Take a break from your bike to enjoy hiking in Zion or spend time in Springdale. Spend the day at your own pace.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6: Zion National Park / VBT Bicycling Vacation ends / St. George

This morning choose between an early ride with your leaders or a self-guided hike; both options depart from the hotel. The ride is an out and back and follows Route 9 southwest through the charming town of Springdale to the small village of Rockville. Here you cross the Virgin River on a historic bridge passing orchards and farms before stopping for a creekside snack. Should you wish to enjoy one last hike, the Watchman Trail ascends through a canyon to a plateau with views of Zion National Park and Springdale. Return to your hotel in time for a quick shower before your departure.

VBT has made arrangements for two shuttle options from the hotel back to the St. George airport, one arriving in St. George at 10:30 a.m. and one arriving in St. George at 1:30 p.m. If you need to take the early shuttle to the airport, you will not have time to do the morning ride.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Springdale to Rockville — 13 miles

What to Expect:

Choose between an early ride with your leaders or a self-guided hike today.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Red Mountain Resort (Day: 1)

Spread across 55 acres that blend into a stunning landscape of red-rock cliffs and canyons, the Red Mountain Resort exudes the spirit of a desert community. Its focus on whole-body wellness has inspired its spa, wellness workshops, cuisine, and robust roster of outdoor activities. During your stay, connect with the desert when you walk its meditative labyrinth. Savor a healthy dinner at the elegant Canyon Breeze Restaurant, and ease into the relaxed rhythm of life in southern Utah. Each air-conditioned room offers all the amenities you need for a comfortable stay.

Best Western Bryce Canyon Grand Hotel (Days: 2,3)

One mile from Bryce Canyon, your conveniently located hotel is surrounded by spectacular views of hoodoos. Start the day off right with a hot breakfast, and soak your tired muscles in Bryce Canyon Grand Hotel's private pool or hot tub after a rewarding day in the park.

Cable Mountain Lodge (Days: 4,5)

Set at the foot of stunning red-rock mountains, the Cable Mountain Lodge offers quick and easy access to Zion National Park. The park entrance is just steps away. During your stay, treat yourself to a spa treatment. Visit Zion Canyon Village. Stroll the lush banks of the Virgin River, right on the property, perhaps enjoying a picnic under the cottonwood trees. Or take a cool dip in the pool or a soothing soak in the hot tub. Each air-conditioned room is inspired by the rustic beauty of your surroundings.