

UTAH 2026

Mighty Five

November 1–13, 2026

12 Nights · 5 Stops · Road Trip

Ian · Rachael

Kinsley (9) · Peter (4)

Gregg · Barbara

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Utah's Mighty Five 2026 — Master Overview

November 1–13, 2026 · 12 nights · Salt Lake City → Moab → Torrey → Bryce Canyon → Springdale → Las Vegas

Confirmation numbers, tickets and receipts are in email and Wallet, not in this app.

The Crew

Who	Age	Notes
Ian	adult	Primary name on every hotel and the van
Rachael	adult	
Kinsley	9	Holds the Every Kid Outdoors pass, so she must be in the van at park entrances. Old enough for a fitted drysuit in the Narrows.
Peter	4	Walks every trail on his own feet (no carrier). Ear defenders for the joust. Stays on the Riverside Walk at Zion.
Gregg	adult	Flying separately; second room at each Utah stop, shared suite in Las Vegas
Barbara	adult	Flying separately, with Gregg

Trip at a Glance

Dates	Stop	Nights	Drive in	Hotel
Nov 1–5	Moab — Arches, Canyonlands	4	235 mi · 3.5–4 hrs from SLC	Homewood Suites Moab (2 studio suites)
Nov 5–7	Torrey — Capitol Reef	2	145 mi · 2.5 hrs	Skyview Hotel (2 rooms)
Nov 7–9	Bryce Canyon	2	110 mi · 2.5 hrs on Byway 12	Best Western Plus Bryce Canyon Grand (2 rooms)
Nov 9–12	Springdale — Zion	3	~165 mi · ~3 hrs via I-15 (van expected to be too wide for the Zion tunnel road; decided at pickup)	SpringHill Suites Springdale (2 suites)
Nov 12–13	Las Vegas — Tournament of Kings	1	160 mi · 2.5–3 hrs	Holiday Inn Express LV SW–Spring Valley (1 suite)

- **Out:** Delta 1016, Sun Nov 1, SEA 9:42 AM → SLC 12:50 PM (Ian, Rachael, Kinsley, Peter)
- **Home:** Alaska 664, Fri Nov 13, LAS 10:42 AM → **SEA** 1:35 PM. That's SeaTac, not Paine Field.
- **Time zones:** daylight saving ends at 2 AM on Nov 1, so the whole Utah leg runs on Mountain Standard Time. Las Vegas (Nov 12–13) is Pacific, **one hour behind**.
- **Sunset ~5:15–5:25 PM** in Utah, and ~4:35 PM (Pacific) in Las Vegas. Plan to be off trails and off unfamiliar roads by dark.



Driving & Park Passes

The van: Alamo Ford Transit Wagon (or similar), picked up at SLC on Nov 1 and dropped at LAS on Nov 13.

- The pickup is listed for noon, but DL 1016 lands at 12:50 PM. Call Alamo if the flight is late.

- Return at LAS **before** the 10:42 AM flight, even though the booking says noon.
- **At pickup, measure the width across the mirrors.** 94" (7'10") or less: the van may use Zion's tunnel road, so Nov 9 can go through the tunnel and Nov 11 can be the east side (both alternatives are in the Springdale plan). Over 94": keep the I-15 / Kolob Canyons plan. Height must also be under 11'4".

Park entry: Kinsley's **Every Kid Outdoors** pass covers everyone in the van at all five national parks.

- It must be the **printed paper voucher**; a phone screenshot is not accepted.
- Kinsley must be present.
- It does **not** cover Dead Horse Point State Park (pay at the gate).
- Nov 11 (Veterans Day) is fee-free anyway, so expect crowds.

Fuel and services: fill up whenever the tank is half empty. Services are sparse on:

- I-70 between Green River and Salina
- UT-24 through Hanksville
- UT-12 between Escalante and Tropic

Signal: patchy or none on UT-12, inside Capitol Reef and in most of Canyonlands. Download offline Apple/Google maps for southern Utah before Nov 1.

Daily briefing. Every morning before leaving the hotel:

1. Check the NPS alerts page for today's park (links in each day's plan).
2. Check the forecast for the park itself, not "southern Utah". Bryce at 8,000 ft is 15–20°F colder than Zion.
3. Check road conditions ([UDOT Traffic](#)) and set a "head back by" time that beats dark.
4. Pack water, snacks, warm layers and the offline map.
5. Confirm dinner is open. Small-town restaurants cut hours in November.

Key Dates & Deadlines

Free-cancellation deadlines (local time):

- **Oct 26, 11:59 PM:** Homewood Moab, 2-guest room
- **Oct 27, 4:00 PM:** Homewood Moab, 4-guest room
- **Oct 29, 7:00 PM:** both Skyview Torrey rooms
- **Nov 6, 12:00 AM:** both Best Western Bryce rooms
- **Nov 7:** both SpringHill Suites rooms
- **Nov 10, 12:00 AM:** Holiday Inn Express Las Vegas

Before leaving home:

- Print the Every Kid Outdoors voucher (paper only)
- Download offline maps and the NPS app's offline content for all five parks
- Download the Delta and Alaska boarding passes and all six Tournament of Kings mobile tickets
- Confirm Alamo will hold the van for a 12:50 PM arrival
- Check the additional adults' flight times line up with the van pickup

One week out (~Oct 25):

- Forecast for each park, UDOT for UT-12 and UT-24, and Bryce snow, road and trail status
- Decide on traction (microspikes) for Bryce, sized for every walker including Peter
- **Narrows:** contact an outfitter with Kinsley's age, height, weight and shoe size. Reserve gear only if the forecast, flow and fit all look good.
- Confirm Torrey and Bryce restaurant hours
- **Zion–Mount Carmel Highway:** since June 7, 2026, vehicles over 7'10" (94") wide **including mirrors** are banned (no escort option). A Transit is ~97", so the plan routes around it via I-15 and swaps the east side for Kolob Canyons. **Decide at pickup** (see Driving & Park Passes).

Packing Reminders

- **Layers for a 40°F swing.** Bryce nights are ~22°F; Zion afternoons reach the mid-60s. Every day needs a warm hat, gloves and a windproof shell.

- **Grippy closed-toe shoes** for slickrock and sand, and spare socks for Sand Dune Arch.
- **Traction** for Bryce only if the forecast calls for ice. Closed trails stay closed regardless.
- **Ear defenders** for Peter at Tournament of Kings.
- **Headlamps.** Dark falls at ~5:20 PM, and Bryce's night sky is worth going out for.
- **Water bottles, lip balm, sunscreen.** Desert air is dry even when it's cold.
- **Car kit:** snacks, paper towels, a trash bag, phone chargers for every row of the van.



Moab — November 1–5, 2026 (4 Nights)

Hotel: [Homewood Suites by Hilton Moab, 132 N Main St, Moab, UT 84532](#)

Rooms: two studio suites with kitchenettes · check-in 3:00 PM · check-out 11:00 AM

Parks: [Arches](#) (~10 min) · [Canyonlands, Island in the Sky](#) (~40 min)



Getting There

Salt Lake City to Moab — 235 mi · 3.5–4 hrs

- **Delta 1016** lands at SLC at **12:50 PM**. Follow the Rental Car signs to Alamo for the Ford Transit Wagon.
- Route: I-15 S → US-6 E through Price → I-70 E at Green River → US-191 S to Moab.
- Sunset is ~5:20 PM, so the last hour or more is in the dark. US-191 has deer; take it steady.



Food

- The suites have kitchenettes, so breakfasts and packed lunches are easy. Stock up at [City Market](#) on Main St.
- There's no food inside Arches or Canyonlands. Pack lunch and more water than seems sensible.
- Moab's Main Street has the most restaurant choice of the whole trip; enjoy it before Torrey and Bryce.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 — Sunday, November 1: Fly SEA → SLC, Drive to Moab

Travel day — no planned activities.

- **Delta 1016 · SEA 9:42 AM → SLC 12:50 PM.** Daylight saving ended at 2 AM, so the clocks are already on standard time.
- Collect the van and be rolling by ~2:00 PM. Measure its width across the mirrors before leaving the lot (it decides the Zion plan; see Springdale). The pickup is listed for noon, so call Alamo if the flight is late.
- Dinner in Green River (~5:00 PM), then the last hour into Moab in the dark (arrive ~7:00 PM).
- Homewood Suites, 132 N Main St. Check-in from 3 PM.

Tamarisk Restaurant, Green River — ~5:00–6:00 PM (~1 hr)

Roughly two-thirds of the way to Moab, and the last real stop before it. Comfort food, Navajo tacos and good pie, on the bank of the Green River.

- **For the kids:** Peter gets out of the car seat for an hour; Kinsley can watch the river from the window.
- **Hint:** Fill the tank here, because fuel is dearer in Moab. There's very little between Green River and Moab after dark.

Day 2 — Monday, November 2: Arches, Before the Crowds

- **Leave the hotel by 8:00 AM.** There's no timed entry in 2026, but the parking lots fill.
- Windows → Double Arch → Landscape Arch → Delicate Arch Lower Viewpoint → Sand Dune Arch
- Pack lunch and water; there's no food in the park.
- Head back by 4:30 PM; sunset ~5:15 PM.

Morning check: [Arches conditions](#)

The Windows & Turret Arch — 8:30–9:30 AM (~1 hr)

Three enormous arches within a few hundred flat yards of the car park, which makes this the best value in the park for small legs. Start here and everyone gets a win early.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can find Turret Arch framed through North Window, the classic photo. Peter can run the whole loop.
- **Hint:** Go before 9 AM, when the lot is still half empty.
- **Little legs:** 0.5 mi, flat gravel loop. Easy for Peter.

Double Arch — 9:30–10:15 AM (~45 min)

Directly across the road from the Windows: two spans rising from a single point of rock, with a short scramble into the bowl beneath them.

- **For the kids:** The scramble into the bowl is the highlight; children reliably love it more than the view.
- **Little legs:** 0.5 mi with a short, gentle scramble at the end. Hold hands on the way down.

Landscape Arch via Devils Garden — 10:45 AM–12:30 PM (~1.75 hrs)

The longest span in North America, and the most achievable of the trip's bigger walks: 1.6 miles there and back on flat gravel. Treat the walk itself as the destination.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can lead; Peter can count fins and lizards. Eat lunch at the trailhead picnic area.
- **Hint:** Devils Garden is the busiest lot in the park. If it's full, swap the order and do Sand Dune Arch first.
- **Little legs:** budget double the posted time. Turn back whenever it stops being fun.

Delicate Arch Lower Viewpoint — 2:00–2:45 PM (~45 min)

The full trail is three miles over open slickrock with an exposed ledge, which is a red for this group. The Lower Viewpoint shows the same icon for a five-minute stroll.

- **Hint:** Late-afternoon light turns the arch properly orange. Come back at ~4 PM if energy allows.
- **Little legs:** flat and short. Skip the Upper Viewpoint, which is steep.

Sand Dune Arch — 3:15–4:00 PM (~45 min)

A slot between sandstone fins with a floor of deep, soft red sand. Shaded, sheltered and effectively a natural sandpit.

- **For the kids:** Peter may rate this above every arch in the park. Shoes will fill with sand, and that's fine.
- **Little legs:** 0.3 mi, soft sand. No climbing on the arch itself.

Day 3 — Tuesday, November 3: Canyonlands — Island in the Sky

- Leave by 8:30 AM, ~40 min to the visitor center.
- Mesa Arch → Grand View Point → Green River Overlook → Dead Horse Point State Park on the way home
- **Windy and exposed:** shells, hats and gloves. Unfenced drops everywhere, so hold hands at every overlook.
- Head back by 4:30 PM.

Morning check: [Canyonlands conditions](#) · [Utah State Parks alerts](#)

Mesa Arch — 9:30–10:30 AM (~1 hr)

A half-mile loop to an arch perched on the cliff edge, framing a hundred miles of canyon. It's Utah's most famous sunrise shot and good at any hour.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can spot Washer Woman Arch through the opening.
- **Hint:** The drop behind the arch is sheer and unfenced. Adults stay between the kids and the edge.
- **Little legs:** 0.5 mi loop with a few rock steps.

Grand View Point — 11:00 AM–12:00 PM (~1 hr)

The end of the road and the biggest view in the park. The overlook by the car park is plenty; the rim trail beyond adds exposure without much extra scenery.

- **Hint:** This is reliably the windiest stop of the day, so eat lunch in the van.
- **Little legs:** the overlook is flat and paved. Skip the rim trail.

Green River Overlook — 12:45–1:15 PM (~30 min)

A thirty-second walk from the van to one of the great river views of the West. Minimal effort, maximum payoff.

- **Little legs:** essentially roadside.

Dead Horse Point State Park — 2:30–4:00 PM (~1.5 hrs)

On the way back to Moab: a gooseneck bend of the Colorado 2,000 feet below, arguably a finer view than anything in the national park.

- **Hint:** This is a **state park**, so pay the entrance fee at the gate. The Every Kid Outdoors pass doesn't cover it.
- **Little legs:** the main overlook is paved with railings in places. Hold hands everywhere else.

Day 4 — Wednesday, November 4: Moab Flex Day

- A deliberate gap. Decide at breakfast; don't fill it in advance.
- Weather recovery day, a repeat favorite, Highway 128 along the river, or a slow morning in the suite.
- Last night in Moab: pack the van tonight for an 11 AM checkout.

Highway 128 along the Colorado — flexible (~1.5 hrs round trip)

If the day wants a drive rather than a hike, this is it: the river on one side, red walls on the other, and pull-offs whenever someone wants out.

- **Hint:** As far as Castle Valley and back is about 90 minutes. The light is best late in the afternoon.

Fisher Towers — optional (~1.5 hrs)

Dark spires rising straight out of the desert floor, about 40 minutes up Highway 128. The first few hundred yards of trail are enough to feel the scale of them.

- **Little legs:** the first stretch is fine; the full trail is long and exposed.

Or go back to Arches

Repeating a hit is allowed. A second, unhurried run at the Windows or Sand Dune Arch is often the memory that sticks. The park pass already covers re-entry.



Weather Backup Plans

- 1. Wind or cold on the mesa:** swap Days 3 and 4. Canyonlands is the most exposed day of the Moab stay; Highway 128 is sheltered in the river canyon.
- 2. Rain:** stay off dirt roads and out of washes and slot canyons entirely. Drive the paved Arches road with short walks to the Windows and the Delicate Arch Lower Viewpoint between showers.
- 3. Snow or ice on the park roads:** check the NPS conditions page before leaving. The Moab Information Center on Main St makes an easy indoor stop.



Practical Notes

- **Groceries:** City Market, 425 S Main St (largest in town).
- **Fuel:** Moab has plenty but is pricier than Green River.
- **Nearest ER:** Moab Regional Hospital, on the north side of town.
- **Parking:** the Homewood has height restrictions in parts of the lot. Use the open surface spaces for the van.
- **Laundry:** the Homewood has a free self-service guest laundry. With four nights here, an evening wash on Nov 3 or 4 is the easiest one of the trip.
- **Checkout Nov 5 at 11:00 AM.** Leave Moab by ~9:00 AM to make the most of the afternoon at Capitol Reef.



Torrey — November 5–7, 2026 (2 Nights)

Hotel: [Skyview Hotel, 876 W SR-24, Torrey, UT 84775](#)

Rooms: two rooms · check-in 3:00 PM · **front desk closes 10:00 PM** · check-out 11:00 AM

Park: [Capitol Reef Visitor Center](#) (~15 min east on UT-24)



Getting There

Moab to Torrey — 145 mi · 2.5 hrs

- US-191 N → I-70 W → exit 149 to UT-24 W through Hanksville → Torrey.
- **Fuel:** fill in Moab or Green River. Hanksville is the only stop on UT-24 and has limited services.
- The road crosses open desert, then enters Capitol Reef from the east along the Fremont River. You'll pass the park on the way in.



Food

- Torrey is tiny and many places close or cut hours for the season by November. **Confirm dinner is open before 4 PM each day.**
- The Skyview sells a to-go breakfast (~\$17 per person, not included in the rate).
- Bring groceries from Moab for lunches. Capitol Reef has no restaurant, but it does have the Gifford House pies (Day 2).



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 — Thursday, November 5: Moab → Torrey & Capitol Reef

- Homewood checkout by 11:00 AM; leave Moab ~9:00 AM to arrive by ~11:30 AM.
- Picnic lunch, then the Scenic Drive and the Petroglyph Boardwalk.
- Skyview check-in from 3:00 PM. The **front desk closes at 10 PM**, so arrive well before.
- Head back by 4:30 PM; sunset ~5:15 PM.

Morning check: [Capitol Reef conditions](#)

The Petroglyph Boardwalk — 11:45 AM–12:30 PM (~45 min)

A flat boardwalk beneath a cliff carved with Fremont figures a thousand years old: bighorn sheep, and human shapes with broad shoulders and headdresses. It's right on UT-24 as you drive in.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can count the bighorn sheep carvings; Peter can look for the people with "horns".
- **Hint:** Bring binoculars if you have them; some panels are high on the wall.
- **Little legs:** flat boardwalk, fully accessible.

The Scenic Drive — 1:30–3:30 PM (~2 hrs)

Ten paved miles south into the Waterpocket Fold, a hundred-mile wrinkle in the Earth's crust. It's done almost entirely from the van, which suits an afternoon after a morning of driving.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can track the rock layers changing colour; there are frequent pull-offs for Peter to get out.
- **Hint:** Pay at the self-pay fee station, which the Every Kid Outdoors pass covers. Allow 60–90 minutes with stops, longer with Capitol Gorge (Day 2).
- **Little legs:** car-based, with short stops.

Day 2 — Friday, November 6: Capitol Reef — Pie, Hickman Bridge & Capitol Gorge

- **Gifford House opens at 9:00 AM. Be there by ~9:30**, because pies sell out by noon.
- Hickman Bridge (as far as is fun) → Fruita orchards → Capitol Gorge
- Everything today is inside the park, within ~20 min of the hotel.
- Head back by 4:30 PM.

Gifford House & the Fruita District — 9:30–10:15 AM (~45 min)

A green valley of historic orchards, a one-room schoolhouse and grazing mule deer, hemmed in by red cliffs. The Gifford House bakes fresh fruit pies daily, in what may be the most unlikely bakery in the national park system.

- **For the kids:** Pie for breakfast at a national park. Peter can look for the mule deer in the orchards; Kinsley can peek into the Fruita Schoolhouse.
- **Hint:** Open ~9:00 AM–4:30 PM with a lunch closure ~12:00–12:45. Parking is limited to 30 minutes, so buy, then picnic in the orchard.
- **Little legs:** flat throughout.

Hickman Bridge — 10:45 AM–12:30 PM (~1.75 hrs)

A 133-foot natural bridge reached by 1.8 miles of trail with a 400-foot climb, almost all of it in the first ten minutes.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can lead to the first viewpoint; walking underneath the bridge is the goal if everyone's still cheerful.
- **Hint:** Pick a turnaround before you start. Reaching the first viewpoint and heading back is a perfectly good result, not a failure.
- **Little legs:** the climb comes first and is the hard part. Hold Peter's hand on the rocky steps.

Capitol Gorge — 2:00–3:30 PM (~1.5 hrs)

At the end of the Scenic Drive, a flat walk into a canyon narrow enough to feel the walls close in, past pioneer names scratched into the rock in the 1880s.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can hunt for the Pioneer Register names and dates; Peter will like how small the sky gets.

- **Hint:** The last stretch to the trailhead is a graded dirt road in a wash. **Never enter if rain threatens;** it's a flash-flood channel and can close independently of the Scenic Drive.
- **Little legs:** 1 mi, flat, hard-packed sand.



Weather Backup Plans

1. **Rain or flash-flood warning:** skip Capitol Gorge and Grand Wash completely. Do the Petroglyph Boardwalk, the Fruita orchards and the Gifford House, then the Visitor Center film and exhibits.
2. **Scenic Drive closed** (weather, rockfall): UT-24 runs through the park along the Fremont River. Stop at the Fremont River pull-offs, the petroglyphs and the Fruita Schoolhouse.
3. **Cold, windy morning:** reverse Day 2. Go to Capitol Gorge first, while the canyon blocks the wind, and do Hickman Bridge in the warmer afternoon.



Practical Notes

- **Groceries:** very limited in Torrey; stock up in Moab before leaving.
- **Fuel:** fill up in Torrey before the Byway 12 drive. UT-12 has few stations, and services in Boulder are limited out of season.
- **Nearest hospital:** Sevier Valley Hospital in Richfield, ~1 hr 15 min west. Signal is patchy, so note the route before you need it.
- **Laundry:** Skyview has no guest laundry. The nearest is the coin laundry at [Austin's Chuckwagon](#), 12 W Main St, about 1 mi east (buy a key at the general store, open ~7 AM–10 PM). It runs March–November, so call (435) 425-3335 before counting on it. Better to wash in Moab.
- **Front desk closes at 10 PM.** Contact the hotel if you'll arrive later.
- **Checkout Nov 7 at 11:00 AM.** Download offline maps before leaving, because UT-12 has little or no signal.



Bryce Canyon — November 7–9, 2026 (2 Nights)

Hotel: [Best Western Plus Bryce Canyon Grand Hotel, 30 N 100 E, Bryce Canyon City, UT 84764](#)

Rooms: two two-queen rooms · check-in 4:00 PM · check-out 11:00 AM

Park: [Bryce Canyon Visitor Center](#) (~5 min)



Getting There

Torrey to Bryce Canyon on Scenic Byway 12 — 110 mi · 2.5 hrs (allow 4+)

- From Torrey, **UT-12** S over Boulder Mountain → Boulder → the Hogback → Escalante → Tropic → UT-63 to Bryce Canyon City.
- Boulder Mountain tops out above 9,000 ft. **Check [UDOT Traffic](#) before leaving;** UT-12 can be wintry even when Torrey is clear.
- Signal is patchy to none. Download offline maps in Torrey.



Food

- **Pack lunch for the Byway 12 day.** Boulder's restaurants are seasonal and shut by November.
- Bryce Canyon City is small but open year-round, with the hotel's neighbours along UT-63 a short walk away. Confirm hours on arrival.
- There's no food in the park in November apart from what you bring. Carry hot drinks in a flask; it's the coldest stop of the trip.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 — Saturday, November 7: Torrey → Bryce on Scenic Byway 12

- Skyview checkout by 11:00 AM; **leave Torrey ~10:00 AM** with a packed lunch and a full tank.
- Boulder Mountain → Hogback → Head of the Rocks Overlook → Escalante → Bryce
- Best Western check-in from 4:00 PM.
- **Sunset Point for the last light (~5:15 PM)**, then stars after dinner.

Morning check: [UDOT roads](#) · [Bryce conditions](#)

Scenic Byway 12 & the Hogback — 10:00 AM–2:30 PM (driving + stops)

The road climbs from desert over Boulder Mountain's aspen forest, then crosses the Hogback, a ridge with the ground falling away on both sides at once. It's one of the most spectacular drives in America; allow far longer than the mileage suggests.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can watch for the narrowest part of the Hogback; Peter can count the colours of rock.
- **Hint:** No shoulder on the Hogback. Don't stop on it; use the pull-offs either side.
- **Little legs:** stretch stops at overlooks only.

Head of the Rocks Overlook — ~12:30 PM (~30 min)

A huge view over the slickrock of Grand Staircase–Escalante. The best picnic stop on the drive.

- **Hint:** Windy and exposed; eat in the van if needed.

Sunset Point — 4:30–5:30 PM (~1 hr)

Arrive for the last hour of light, when the hoodoos turn from orange to deep red and the temperature drops like a stone.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can find Thor's Hammer below the rim; Peter can wave at the hoodoos "standing in line".
- **Hint:** Coats, hats and gloves; it's ~22°F overnight up here.
- **Little legs:** the overlook is paved but can be icy.

After dark — the night sky (optional)

Bryce is an International Dark Sky Park, and November's clear, cold air is among the best of the year. Orion, the Pleiades and the winter Milky Way are all up.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can stay up for it; Peter gets ten minutes in a sleeping bag in the van.
- **Hint:** Sunset and Inspiration Points have open sky and nearby parking. For a guaranteed show, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours runs private evening sessions just outside the park (book ahead).

Day 2 — Sunday, November 8: Into the Amphitheater

- The park shuttle **ended Oct 18**, so drive the van into the park.
- Thor's Hammer → Rim Trail (Sunset to Sunrise Point) → Queen's Garden partway → Mossy Cave
- After storms, the main road may close past ~Mile 3. Traction (if the forecast calls for it) on the Rim Trail.
- The coldest day of the trip: thermal layers, hand warmers, a flask.

Morning check: [Bryce closures](#) · [Bryce winter guidance](#)

Thor's Hammer & Sunset Point — 9:00–9:30 AM (~30 min)

The most recognisable hoodoo in the park, visible from the rim just below Sunset Point. No descent needed.

- **Hint:** Best light early, before the amphitheater flattens out.

Rim Trail: Sunset to Sunrise Point — 9:30–10:30 AM (~1 hr)

A flat, paved half-mile between the two great viewpoints, with the whole amphitheater beside you. The best hoodoo-per-step ratio in Utah.

- **For the kids:** Peter can walk all of it; Kinsley can pick the "best hoodoo" and name it.
- **Hint:** The paving ices over in November. Use traction if it's icy. **Closed trails stay closed regardless of gear.**
- **Little legs:** 0.5 mi paved, but the edge is close in places. Hold hands.

Queen's Garden — partway — 10:45 AM–12:15 PM (~1.5 hrs)

The gentlest way down among the hoodoos. Going down is easy; climbing back out is the problem, so go partway and turn round while everyone is still cheerful.

- **For the kids:** Walking among the hoodoos rather than looking down on them is the trip's big "wow" for Kinsley.
- **Hint:** Wall Street on the Navajo Loop is usually closed in winter; ask at the Visitor Center about Two Bridges.
- **Little legs:** every step down is a step back up at 8,000 ft. Turn back early for Peter.

Mossy Cave — 2:00–3:00 PM (~1 hr)

Outside the main amphitheater on UT-12, a short walk to a grotto that grows icicles by November, plus a small waterfall. A completely different feel from the rim.

- **For the kids:** icicles! Peter can count them; Kinsley can find the waterfall.
- **Little legs:** 0.8 mi, mostly flat; ~15 min drive from the hotel.



Weather Backup Plans

- 1. Snow or road closure past Mile 3:** Sunset, Sunrise and Inspiration Points are all near the start of the road and are the reliable fallback. The rim views are spectacular under fresh snow.
- 2. Icy trails:** stay on the rim with traction; skip Queen's Garden. Use the Visitor Center exhibits and film to warm up.
- 3. Snow on UT-20 on Nov 9 (to Springdale):** go south instead. US-89 S, staying on US-89 through Mount Carmel Junction → Kanab → US-89A →

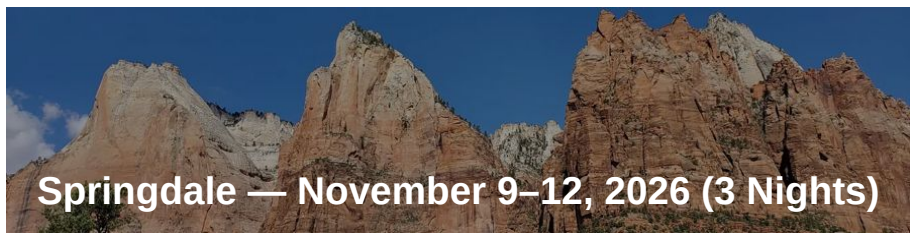
AZ-389 → UT-59 → Hurricane → Springdale. The van can't use the Zion tunnel road unless it measured 94" or less at pickup.

4. Byway 12 closed or snowy on Nov 7: take UT-24 → US-89 S → UT-12 E via Panguitch. It's longer, but lower and usually clearer. Check UDOT before choosing.



Practical Notes

- **Altitude:** ~8,000 ft. Everyone tires faster; drink more water than feels necessary.
- **Groceries and fuel:** Bryce Canyon City has a general store and gas year-round, but a small one. Tropic has a little more.
- **Nearest hospital:** Garfield Memorial Hospital in Panguitch, ~30 min.
- **Laundry:** the Best Western has a guest laundry, open during the day.
- **Traction:** decide one week out. Size it for every walker, including Peter.
- **Checkout Nov 9 at 11:00 AM.** The route to Springdale is via Panguitch and I-15, because the van is expected to be too wide for the Zion–Mount Carmel Highway (unless it measured 94" or less at pickup).



Hotel: [SpringHill Suites by Marriott Springdale Zion National Park, 1141 Canyon Springs Rd, Springdale, UT 84767](#)

Rooms: two one-bedroom suites (two queens + a twin trundle each) · check-in 3:00 PM · check-out 11:00 AM

Park: [Zion Visitor Center](#) via the free Springdale shuttle or a walk



Getting There

Bryce Canyon to Springdale via I-15 — ~165 mi · ~3 hrs

- **The van probably can't take the Zion–Mount Carmel Highway** (measure at pickup). Since June 7, 2026, vehicles wider than **7'10" including mirrors** (or 11'4" tall, 35'9" long) are banned between the East Entrance and Canyon Junction, with no escort option ([NPS large vehicles](#)). A Ford Transit passenger van is ~97" wide with mirrors.
- Route: UT-12 W → US-89 N to Panguitch → UT-20 W → I-15 S → exit 16 → UT-9 E through Hurricane and La Verkin → Springdale. **Check the route in Maps, and never turn west onto UT-9 at Mount Carmel Junction.**
- **If UT-20 is snowy** (summit ~7,900 ft): US-89 S through Mount Carmel Junction (stay on US-89) → Kanab → US-89A → AZ-389 → UT-59 → Hurricane → UT-9 E to Springdale. Longer (~3.5 hrs), but lower.
- The van **may** enter by the South Entrance in Springdale and park in the large-vehicle lot by the Visitor Center.
- **If the van measured 94" or less across the mirrors at pickup:** take the classic way instead. US-89 S → UT-9 W at Mount Carmel Junction → east entrance → Checkerboard Mesa → the tunnel → switchbacks → Springdale

(72 mi, 1.5–2 hrs).

Getting around Zion

- **Zion Canyon Scenic Drive is shuttle-only:** no private cars, even before or after shuttle hours.
- **Park shuttle (from the Visitor Center):** first departure 7:00 AM, last outbound 5:00 PM, **last return from Temple of Sinawava 6:15 PM**. Don't plan around the last bus.
- **Springdale shuttle:** starts ~8:00 AM; last return from Zion Canyon Village ~6:00 PM.
- The east side (Canyon Overlook, Checkerboard Mesa) is **off-limits to the van** unless it measured 94" or less at pickup; see above.



Food

- Springdale has the best food choice since Moab, mostly along Zion Park Blvd and walkable from the shuttle stops.
- No food on the Scenic Drive apart from the Zion Lodge area; pack lunches for Day 2.
- Groceries: Sol Foods market on Zion Park Blvd near the park entrance.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 — Monday, November 9: Bryce → Springdale via I-15

- Best Western checkout by 11:00 AM; **leave Bryce ~10:30 AM** with a full tank.
- Route via Panguitch, UT-20 and I-15 (**not** the Zion–Mount Carmel tunnel, unless the van measured 94" or less at pickup; the default route assumes it is too wide).
- SpringHill check-in from 3:00 PM, then the Pa'rus Trail at sunset.

- It's the warmest stop of the trip (low 60s°F by day); the winter layers can come off.

Morning check: [Zion conditions](#) · [UDOT roads](#)

Pa'rus Trail — 3:45–5:15 PM (~1.5 hrs)

A flat, paved path along the Virgin River from the Visitor Center. Gentle enough to end a driving day on.

- **For the kids:** Peter can throw stones at the river's edge; Kinsley can spot mule deer in the cottonwoods.
- **Hint:** Watch the Watchman catch the last light from the footbridge (~5:15 PM).
- **Little legs:** paved and flat; walk as far as is fun and turn back.

Day 2 — Tuesday, November 10: Zion Canyon & the Narrows Split

- **On a 7:00–8:00 AM park shuttle.** The Springdale shuttle doesn't start until ~8 AM, so walk or drive the van to the Visitor Center (park in the large-vehicle lot).
- Court of the Patriarchs → Lower Emerald Pool → Riverside Walk → **the split** at the Narrows
- **Mandatory morning checks for the Narrows** (below). Any red flag: everyone does the Riverside Walk.
- Narrows turnaround **2:00 PM**; everyone on a shuttle out by ~4:30 PM. The last return (6:15 PM) is not a plan.

Mandatory morning checks:

- [Zion conditions & Narrows status](#)
- [Narrows safety](#)
- [Flash-flood forecast](#)
- [USGS flow gauge 09405500](#) (bottom-up commonly closes around 150 CFS; check the trend, not just the number)
- [Cyanobacteria advisory](#)

Court of the Patriarchs — 8:15–8:45 AM (~30 min)

Three sandstone peaks named for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from a viewpoint a hundred yards above shuttle stop 4.

- **Little legs:** 100 yards uphill on pavement.

Lower Emerald Pool — 9:00–10:30 AM (~1.5 hrs)

A paved trail from Zion Lodge (stop 5) to a pool beneath a dripping overhang. You walk behind the waterfall itself.

- **For the kids:** walking behind the waterfall is the highlight for both.
- **Hint:** The rock behind the falls stays slick year-round. The upper pools get rough; the lower pool is the family one.
- **Little legs:** 1.2 mi return, paved, a few gentle grades.

Riverside Walk — and the split — 11:30 AM–4:30 PM

A flat, paved mile from the last shuttle stop (Temple of Sinawava, stop 9), between thousand-foot walls, to the mouth of the Narrows. Where the pavement stops, the river becomes the trail, and the group divides.

- **Kinsley + adult(s): into the Narrows**, if every check is green and her drysuit fits properly. Bottom-up needs no permit; [Mystery Falls](#) is a conservative turnaround. **Turn around by 2:00 PM at the latest**, wherever you are. The canyon floor loses light well before the ~5:20 PM sunset, and the water is ~40°F.
- **Peter + adult(s): Riverside Walk, dry and warm.** Pavement's end is his turnaround. Picnic by the river and look for the hanging gardens. If it's cold in the shade, ride the shuttle back to Zion Lodge or the Visitor Center to warm up, and meet the Narrows group there.
- **Hint:** Never put Peter in an oversized suit or carry him in moving water. Every drysuit in Springdale starts at age 8, and in 40°F water a flooded suit is a hypothermia risk.
- **Hint:** Never drink river water, even filtered or boiled, and avoid putting your head under. That's the cyanobacteria rule.

Day 3 — Wednesday, November 11: Kolob Canyons · Veterans Day

- **Fee-free day; the main canyon will be crowded.** Kolob Canyons is a quieter corner of Zion, reached by car off I-15. Leave ~8:30 AM (~1 hr each way).
- Kolob Canyons Road (5 mi scenic drive) → Timber Creek Overlook → picnic
- Back in Springdale by mid-afternoon; **pack the van tonight** for an 11 AM checkout and a 1:30 PM departure tomorrow.

Morning check: [Zion conditions](#)

[Kolob Canyons Road](#) — 9:30–11:00 AM (~1.5 hrs)

Five paved miles climbing into the finger canyons of Zion's northwest corner: red cliffs that rise straight out of the road. Start at the Kolob Canyons Visitor Center at I-15 exit 40.

- **For the kids:** Kinsley can compare these cliffs with the main canyon's; Peter can watch for the pull-off where the road ends.
- **Hint:** The entrance pass covers Kolob too. The road can close for snow at the top; check with the visitor center.
- **Little legs:** car-based, with stops at the pull-offs.

[Timber Creek Overlook Trail](#) — 11:00 AM–12:00 PM (~1 hr)

A short trail from the end of the road along a ridge to a big view over the Kolob finger canyons and, on clear days, toward Pine Valley Mountain.

- **For the kids:** a "summit" Peter can reach on his own feet.
- **Hint:** Breezy at the end; bring the shells. Picnic at the end-of-road area afterwards.
- **Little legs:** ~1 mi round trip with a gentle climb. Hold hands at the overlook.

Alternative if the van measured 94" or less: the East Side

Swap Kolob for the east side of the main park, by van up the Zion–Mount Carmel Highway (open to vehicles within the size limits).

- **[Canyon Overlook Trail](#)** (8:15–9:45 AM): a mile of rock steps and ledges to a view down the length of Zion Canyon. The car park at the tunnel's east end is tiny, so go early. **Little legs:** unfenced drops; hold Peter's hand

throughout, or one adult waits at the car with him.

- **Slickrock country** (10:00 AM–12:00 PM): open domes of pale sandstone near [Checkerboard Mesa](#), with easy scrambling and the van close by.
- **Desert bighorn sheep**: Zion's best herd lives here, often beside the road. Drive slowly and stay in the van when they're close.



Weather Backup Plans

- 1. Narrows closed, high flow, or flash-flood risk:** everyone does the Riverside Walk, then the Lower Emerald Pool and the Zion Lodge lawn. Nobody enters the river.
- 2. Rain:** stay out of slot canyons and off the slickrock entirely. Take the shuttle to the viewpoints (Court of the Patriarchs, Big Bend), and visit the Visitor Center exhibits. Waterfalls appear on the canyon walls after rain; it's spectacular from the shuttle.
- 3. Snow on the Kolob Canyons Road:** Day 3 moves to the canyon floor. Ride the shuttle end to end (expect Veterans Day crowds) and walk the Pa'rus Trail again.



Practical Notes

- **Groceries:** Sol Foods, on Zion Park Blvd near the park entrance.
- **Fuel:** Springdale has stations; fill up before leaving for Las Vegas on Nov 12.
- **Nearest hospital:** St. George Regional Hospital, ~1 hr west.
- **Laundry:** SpringHill Suites has a self-service guest laundry. Wash on Nov 10 or 11 so wet Narrows layers are dry before the flight home.
- **Narrows gear:** decide about one week before the trip (~Oct 25), with Kinsley's age, height, weight and shoe size ready for the outfitter. Reconfirm the conditions the evening before, and pick up the gear then.
- **Checkout Nov 12 at 11:00 AM; leave Springdale by 1:30 PM Mountain Time.**



Las Vegas — November 12–13, 2026 (1 Night)

Hotel: [Holiday Inn Express & Suites Las Vegas SW–Spring Valley, 6220 S Rainbow Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89118](#)

Room: one suite for six (2 queens + sofa bed) · check-in 3:00 PM · check-out 11:00 AM

Show: [Tournament of Kings, Excalibur, 3850 Las Vegas Blvd S](#) · 6:00 PM · six mobile tickets



Getting There

Springdale to Las Vegas — ~160 mi · 2.5–3 hrs

- UT-9 W → I-15 S at exit 16 → through the Virgin River Gorge → Las Vegas → I-215 W → Rainbow Blvd.
- **Leave Springdale by 1:30 PM Mountain Time.** Las Vegas is on **Pacific Time, one hour behind**, but I-15 traffic, parking and casino navigation eat the gain.
- Fill up in St. George or Mesquite.



Food

- **Dinner is the show.** Tournament of Kings includes a hands-only feast, so don't eat late in the afternoon.
- Breakfast is included at the Holiday Inn Express (check times; it's an early start on Day 2).



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 — Thursday, November 12: Springdale → Las Vegas & Tournament of Kings

- SpringHill checkout by 11:00 AM. Last lunch in Springdale, then **leave by 1:30 PM MT**.
- Holiday Inn Express check-in from 3:00 PM (Pacific): drop the bags, change, regroup.
- **Rideshare from the hotel at ~4:45 PM PT** (two cars for six). The hotel is off-Strip, and the van probably won't fit casino garages.
- Tournament of Kings at **6:00 PM**. Download all six mobile tickets **before** leaving the hotel.

Tournament of Kings at Excalibur — 6:00–7:30 PM (~1.5 hrs)

Dinner and a jousting tournament in a castle arena, eaten with your hands, with horses at full gallop a few feet away. Ages three and up need a full ticket, so all six travelers have seats.

- **For the kids:** each section cheers for its own knight. Kinsley will be all-in; Peter gets a soup-and-chicken feast with no cutlery rules.
- **Hint:** Digital/mobile tickets only; screenshots aren't a backup plan. Arrive 30–45 minutes early to find the arena inside the casino.
- **Little legs:** loud, with horses close by. **Ear defenders for Peter.** The casino walk to the arena is long; hold hands through the gaming floor.

Day 2 — Friday, November 13: Fly LAS → SEA

Travel day — no planned activities.

- **Leave the hotel by ~7:45 AM PT.** Return the van well before the flight, even though the booking says noon.
- Alamo return at the [LAS Rent-A-Car Center](#), then the shuttle bus to the terminal (allow 20–30 min).

- **Alaska 664 · LAS 10:42 AM → SEA 1:35 PM.** It lands at SeaTac, **not Paine Field**, so plan the drive home.



Weather Backup Plans

1. **Wind or dust storm on I-15:** check [NDOT / Nevada 511](#) and UDOT before leaving Springdale. The 1:30 PM departure has ~1.5 hours of buffer; leave earlier if there are warnings.
2. **Delays on I-15 through the Virgin River Gorge:** call ahead, but the show starts on time. If it is past ~4:30 PM PT, check in, leave the van, and rideshare straight to Excalibur without changing.
3. **Rain in Las Vegas:** no plan changes; everything here is indoors.



Practical Notes

- **Time zone:** everything here is Pacific Time, one hour behind Utah. Phones switch automatically; the van's clock may not.
- **Getting to Excalibur:** a Transit van is ~7–9 ft tall depending on roof height, and casino garages often clear only ~7 ft. Rideshare is the default; check the van's height at pickup if you'd rather drive.
- **Laundry:** the Holiday Inn Express has a guest laundry, but with one night and an early flight, plan not to need it.
- **Van return:** refuel before the Rent-A-Car Center; stations near the airport are pricier.
- **Checkout Nov 13 at 11:00 AM**, but you'll be gone by 7:45 AM.