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Explore Monument Valley and experience the Old West on a gap year in the USA

No [gap year in the USA](#) would be complete without experiencing the Old West, or what many would term 'real America'. As dizzying as the bright lights of the cities may be, the lure of the vast canyons and dusty red rocks, familiar from so many films, cannot be denied. So, in your [travel across America](#), make sure you experience some of the nation's most iconic scenes with your own eyes, as well as some of that cowboy spirit!

Monument Valley is fixed in our minds as a popular culture icon. You may not recognise the name instantly, but all you need to do is think back to those old westerns you watched as a child - chances are that the enormous sandstone buttes ridden through by the heroes of the hour were the very landscape of Monument Valley.

So, Monument Valley is an unmissable location on any [adventure tour](#) in your gap year and a fantastic way to start experiencing the Old West. There are a number of walking tours that will guide you through the valley; however, if you would prefer to make your own way you can take Wildcat Trail - the only route that can be walked without a Navajo guide.

Tours on jeep and horseback are available for a real sense of cowboy adventure, as well as nights camping in the dusk of the valley. If you would like a more raw experience of life in the Old West, you can stay in a Hogan - the traditional home of the Navajo people. In the summer months, you can finish off your stay with a mind-blowing ride over the valley in a hot air balloon, making your [gap year travel](#) truly memorable.

The proximity of other American landmarks, so important to the idea of the Old West, makes them essential places to visit during your adventure tour. The Grand Canyon is an ideal place to trek to next - breathtaking views from the canyon's edge will inspire a great sense of awe and really cement the feeling of experiencing the Old West for real.

For those who want a more complete view of its depths, helicopter flights are available over this world-famous landmark. Viewing the canyon at sunrise or sunset can increase its romance, drama and mystery, making it well worth the effort to be there at set times.

No less bestowed with beauty and hordes of visitors, Yosemite Park is another key location during a [gap year in the USA](#). Famous for its clear streams, waterfalls and granite cliffs, the park is mostly wilderness spanning over 700,000 acres open for exploring and adventuring.

Western America has several other national parks that beg to be visited, calling to travellers and inhabitants alike to experience more than the modern world has to offer. Death Valley is a vast desert, famous for being one of the driest and hottest locations of North America. Visiting the sheer expanse of desert here, again you cannot help but get a sense of the Old West we all imagined as children.

The views of Death Valley will be striking all year round, but it has more to offer besides. A moment of calm on your adventure tour is offered by the golf course integrated into the valley - so, if you are looking for a little less adventure for the afternoon in stunning surroundings, a wonderful break is offered here.

A quick stop-off in Las Vegas will dazzle you all the more for the contrast with the rocky scenes. Escape into the neon landscape for shows, casinos, helicopter flights and more to experience Vegas at its most impressive.

Zion's National Park will transport you back to the fabled 'real America', with stunning views equal to but oh-so-different from the unforgettable Death Valley. Wrapped around the Virgin River, this nature haven incorporates the wonders of American landscape, with gentle beauty blown up to epic proportions - massive, yet peaceful.

And of course, a great way to finish off your Western travel across America is to visit the sun-drenched San Diego. Boasting some of the most wonderful weather in the country, this bustling city has something to allow everyone to ease back into modern life after their trip to the Old West. You can relax on some of the most gorgeous beaches in America, or shop in the fabulous Seaport Village for souvenirs of your adventures.

Adventure tours through Monument Valley and the Old West in your [gap year](#) have so much to offer - they show America at its rustic best, allow you to live out countless cowboy classics and show you mind-blowing sights. They also offer unforgettable experiences of modern American life at its most dazzling, from a neon wonderland to wonderful beaches. Monument Valley and the Old West truly are locations not to be missed in your travel across America.