



## San Rafael Swell 3-4 Day

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*Zion, Bryce, Canyonlands, Arches, Natural Bridges, Dinosaur, Capital Reef, Grand Staircase... in a state brimming with national parks, it's easy to overlook another national treasure. Utah locals call it 'THE SWELL' a three thousand-foot fold of sandstone and shale on the edge of the Colorado Plateau. Its hidden canyons provided sanctuary to old west outlaw Butch Cassidy. Today the same red-wall canyons are your sanctuary from the everyday grind.*

*You will ride back in time past abandoned mining camps and turn of the century ranches. Stop to explore cowboy camps, prehistoric Indian rock art, we might even see a few dinosaur prints. Your ride ends at the Wedge Overlook, Utah's 'Little Grand Canyon'. A thousand feet below, the San Rafael River counts another day in the eons... from above we count ourselves fortunate that such a place exists at all.*

### SAMPLE ITINERARY

One of the advantages of a bike trip is the flexibility of the daily itinerary. **It can vary widely from one trip to the next based on group desires, Mother Nature, and courtesy for other groups on the trail.** The "Swell" is well known for its spectacular scenery and abundance of historical sites. Dispersed camping offers the ultimate opportunity for choose your own adventure exploration of the vast maze of old mining roads and slot canyons. Expect to ride 20-30 miles per day.

**Day 1:** Meet at Holiday River Expeditions headquarters in Green River, Utah. A one and one-half hour van ride takes us to Temple Mountain. The ride begins with a dirt trail that cuts through the San Rafael Reef, then parallels the uplifted rock faces. Stop and see a three thousand year old pictograph panel in the first mile. Test your skills with a quick sampling of the variety of roads, trails and terrain the trip offers. Choose a longer afternoon ride, or shorter ride and an optional hike. Spend the evening in Chute Canyon, just south of the Behind the Reef Road.

**Day 2:** Continuing southwest, the rough 4wd road climbs and descends through Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons. A turn to the north at Ding and Dang Dome climbs up onto the plateau. At 6500 ft., the isolated mountain ranges that dot the red rock canyon country of the Colorado plateau become visible. Take in expansive views of the virtually undeveloped 3100 square miles of San Rafael Swell while riding on an improved road for the last few miles before camp overlooking Tomsich Butte and the Muddy Creek Drainage.

**Day 3:** Start the day with a nice descent to the Muddy Creek followed by a long, but gentle climb up Reds Canyon. Along the way, explore the Lucky Strike Mine, developed during the uranium boom of the 1950's. Continue up the drainage after lunch to camp near Family Butte.

**Day 4:** The morning ride heads north, through a maze of old ranching and mining roads in search of sites like Eagle Canyon arch, the Lone Warrior and Head of Sinbad rock art panels, and the Swasey cabin. Sites seen and miles ridden are dependent on group interests and abilities. Have lunch along the trail or at the finishing point. Our van will meet us here for a two-hour drive back to Green River.

As mentioned earlier, this is a **sample itinerary** and should not be thought of as the trip you will experience. It is intended to give an idea of what the trip will be like. It could also be exactly what you do. Keep an open mind, be flexible, go with the flow, and enjoy!

# Getting Here...

(If you need assistance with your travel arrangements, please ask your Holiday River Expedition reservation agent.)

**We meet for your trip** in Green River, Utah at Holiday River Expeditions headquarters, (2075 E Main St. Green River, UT 84525) at **7:00 a.m. (Mountain Time)** the morning your trip begins. Our headquarters is located 1/4 mile east of the Green River Bridge, across the highway from the Motel 6 and behind the Comfort Inn. . If you plan on arriving in Green River by shuttle, bus, Amtrak, or plane, call our office ahead of time (801-266-2087) to make arrangements to have you and your gear transported to our headquarters the morning of the trip. Also please give any last-minute updates to our headquarters directly at (435-564-3273). If you are driving, your car can be left at our headquarters.

**Flying:** While most of our guests fly into Salt Lake City International Airport and rent a car, there are a few options to consider.

- **Salt Lake City to Green River:** Salt Lake City located 180 miles northwest of Green River, Utah (about a 3 hour drive). Most guests rent a car from any of the major rental agencies at the airport and drive to our headquarters.
- **Grand Junction to Green River:** Grand Junction is located 100 miles due East of Green River (about a 1.5 hour drive). Delta, United and American Airlines all service Grand Junction Airport. Rental option from GJ Airport include: Alamo, Hertz, Budget, Enterprise and National.
- **Moab to Green River:** Moab is located 52 miles southeast of Green River and now offers one flight a day in and out operated by [United Airlines/ SkyWest Airlines connecting through Denver](#). Moab has rental car service through [Enterprise](#)

\*\*\* While rental cars are typically the best transportation option, in rare instances, including large groups, shuttles may become a reasonable alternative:

**Shuttle Service** from Salt Lake City, Grand Junction or Moab airport to Green River include:

- Moab Express Shuttles 435-260-2389 [www.moabexpress.com](http://www.moabexpress.com)
- Redrock Express 800-259-2869 [www.redrockexpress.com](http://www.redrockexpress.com)
- Road Runner Shuttles 435-259-9402 [www.roadrunnershuttle.com](http://www.roadrunnershuttle.com)

**Lodging** before and after your trip can be booked at one of six locations:

- [River Terrace Inn](#) 435-564-3401 (locally owned, pool, hot tub, full breakfast, riverside rooms available) \*10% discount
- [Comfort Inn](#) 435-564-3300 (inside pool, hot tub, continental breakfast – in front of our headquarters) \*10% discount
- [First Choice Inns](#) 435-564-4439 (inside pool, hot tub, continental breakfast – west of our headquarters)
- [Super 8](#) 435-564-8888 (inside pool, hot tub, refrigerator, microwave)
- [Motel 6](#) 435-564-3436 (pool, kids free, lower rates)
- [Sleepy Hollow](#) 435-564-8189 (clean with lower rates)

\*When making advance reservations at the River Terrace Inn or Comfort Inn, mention that you are on a Holiday River Expedition trip and you will be extended a discounted rate on your room. You will need a trip invoice at check-in.

**BE SURE TO MAKE ADVANCE RESERVATIONS!**

**If you are camping out**, there are two campgrounds in Green River: the Green River State Park (no pool, lower rates and may have mosquitoes – call 435-564-3633 to make reservations), and the KOA Campground (435-564-8195 – across from our headquarters).

## Before You Go...

**Beginning of the trip:** Upon your arrival at Holiday River Expeditions headquarters (7:00 a.m., Mountain Time), we will issue your bags. You can buy any last minute items from our accessory's store at this time (see our *packing check list* for a list of items you can find at our store). Before leaving our headquarters, each guest along with a Holiday guide will perform a pre-trip inspection of your bikes. If you are providing your own bike, please make sure that it is in good repair, we recommend a complete service by a professional shop prior to the trip. Guests with bikes' that fail our inspection will be asked to rent a Holiday bike for \$170.00/person. We will then take a two-hour van ride to the embarkation point.

**After the trip:** We will meet our van at the Wedge Overlook, and then we will take you back to our headquarters in Green River (2 hour van ride). Our expected time of arrival back at our headquarters is 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**The Bicycling:** The San Rafael bike route is a technically challenging route. This undeveloped dirt road has steep downhill, loose rocks, sand, and ruts. Riders who have no off-road bicycling experience, or who are not athletic will most likely find this trip too challenging. All riders should prepare for the trip by riding their bike on a regular basis prior to the trip.

**The best place to eat** in Green River is Ray's Tavern. Ray's is a true small town bar rich in atmosphere and good food. They serve incredible hamburgers, pork chops, salads and steaks. The Tamarisk Restaurant offers family dining with riverside seating.

**Packing** The waterproof bags provided will contain all of your belongings except for your tent, poles and if you rented sleeping gear, your pad. Your larger waterproof bag (16" X 2' high) which will hold your sleeping bag, pillow, & most of your clothing/ toiletries for morning and evening use. If you brought you own sleeping pad it will also fit into this large bag. We suggest packing your clothing etc in the bottom of your bag, that way at camp you can empty your sleeping equipment into your tent and not have to unpack the majority of your belongings. The smaller "day bag" (8" X 20" high) will hold anything you need access to during the course of the day on the trail: Sunscreen, chapstick, a mug, your favorite book, a rain jacket, maybe a pair of hiking shoes etc. Your tent (rental or owned) will go into a "tent bag" and your tent-poles in a mesh "pole bag". This ensures our water-proof bags are soft, & easy to pack.

**Weather:** In the early and late seasons (May to mid-June and late-August to September) the daytime temperatures are 70 to 90 degrees, with nighttime temperatures 50 to 60 degrees. It seldom rains in, but when it does, it can cool temperatures considerably in May and September. From mid-June to mid-August the days are hot, and temperatures average 80 to 100 degrees during the day and 60 to 75 degrees at night. This may seem hot but remember the humidity is very low. There will be an abundance of sun, so bring a hat and plenty of suntan lotion and/or sunscreen. *\*Please avoid spray on sunscreen for the health and safety of your guide and fellow-guests*

**Bugs, snakes, etc.** are generally no problem. In fact, the lack of pesky insects is one of the reasons wilderness camping in the desert is so pleasant. Any wilderness trip, however, is subject to an occasional localized insect hatch. **During these hatches (most common in June to mid-July) mosquitoes can be bothersome. Be sure to bring long sleeve clothing and a generous supply of repellent.** Insect repellents that contain "deet" are by far the most effective during heavy hatches. Citronella-based products work only in light hatches. We rarely see any snakes, but if the thought of them bothers you, try sleeping on the beaches or in a tent instead of rocky or bushy areas.

**Hiking** is a highlight of the trip, however, it is strictly an optional activity. Please be aware that some of the hikes on this trip can be more strenuous due to heat and elevation gain. There are many interesting short hikes available. Hiking can be done in durable sneakers or lightweight hiking boots. Remember that hiking and other activities vary widely pending time, and what other plans are ahead for the day.

**Bathing:** we bring a solar shower situated on top of our support vehicle; you are welcome to use it for quick rinse-offs with your favorite biodegradable soap (like Dr. Bronners or Campsuds). Alternately, disposable antibacterial towelettes like baby wipes are a great for cooler weather trips.

**Electronics:** Often times the best part about the trip is 'unplugging'. The use of electronic devices can often take away from the 'wildness' of your trip. Therefore we ask that you please be mindful of their impact to others and yourself and consider instead truly disconnecting. However, some of our guests travel with their smartphone even though there is no cell service. We ask that you bring headphones if you intend to listen to music. And remember, were in the back-country and cannot provide a power source.

**Beverages:** We provide ice water, lemonade, one soda per day per person and ample cooler space. If you choose to bring any specialty sodas and/or alcoholic beverages, we have no problem taking whatever you want to bring – within reason. **Don't** bring beer, wine coolers or sodas in glass containers. Wine packaged in a box is ideal. Mark beverages that you bring so they are packed on your boat. The liquor store in Green River, Utah is located in the back of the West Winds restaurant. **In Utah, wine or liquor is not sold after 7:00 p.m., before 11:00 a.m., or on Sundays and holidays.**

**Medical emergencies:** Our guides are trained in first aid and carry first aid supplies only. **REMEMBER** to bring your own prescription medicines. **ALERT** our guides to any medical problems you might have such as diabetes or allergic reactions. Wilderness expeditions are a long way from hospitals, doctors, and pain-relieving medicines. Evacuations to modern medical care are uncertain, and protracted. In case of evacuation and/or medical treatment beyond first aid, expenses incurred are the responsibility of the participant.

**Cancellation Policy:** If cancellations are made prior to 90 days before the trip, monies will be refunded less a \$50.00 service charge per person. If cancellations are made within 90 days and outside of 60 days of the trip date monies will be refunded less a \$100.00 service charge per person. **Cancellations made within 60 days of the trip date are non refundable.** Prior to 60 days to the trip date we will transfer reservations to another trip in the same year with a \$25.00 service charge per person. All policies will be enforced and we strongly recommend trip cancellation insurance. Cancellation of a trip is very unlikely, but we reserve the right to cancel any trip due to river or weather conditions or the lack of sufficient reservations. A full refund will be made if such is the case.

**Insurance:** Medical Evacuation and cancellation insurance on a vacation plan can be obtained from numerous insurance companies. You are responsible for these potential expenses and we strongly encourage all guests to have this coverage. We offer plans by TRAVEL GUARD that cover evacuation, baggage and cancellation claims. Information should be enclosed with this package. It is available to American and Canadian citizens, as well as citizens of another country as long as you have a U.S. address. If you would like a quote or you have questions give us a call. Also, if you are bringing expensive cameras, binoculars, or other items we suggest you have insurance coverage for them (commonly available through Homeowners Policies). In the event of a loss, our insurance will not cover those items.

**Tipping the guides:** From sunup to sundown your guides strive to make your trip unforgettable. It is customary to tip your guides, especially if you feel they have been instrumental in the success of the trip. A suggested gratuity range is from \$20.00 to \$30.00 per guest, per day (about 10% of trip costs). Please direct your gratuity to the trip leader in the form of cash or check made out to the trip leader. They will then distribute it evenly to the other crew-members.

**Things to see in the area:** John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River, Utah. Arches National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, Canyonlands National Park, Fisher Towers, Colorado National Monument, Goblin Valley State Park, San Rafael Swell, Capitol Reef National Park, Natural Bridges National Monument, Bears Ears National Monument and the La Sal and Henry Mountains.

**MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE PACKING CHECKLIST!**

**IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TRIP, OUR GREEN RIVER HEADQUARTERS NUMBER IS  
435-564-3273**