



## TOPDECKER, meet North America

There are regular vacays. And then there's The Big Easy. No comprende? Let us break it down. On this gem of a trip you can compare the Cuban eats of Miami with the Cajun flavours of New Orleans, get your dose of palm trees and Prada in LA, scratch beneath the surface of über-cool Austin and gawk at the bright lights of Vegas. Throw in a stop at the Grand Canyon and you've got yourself one tasty, sun-filled adventure. Let's go!

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Download app



Meals

# Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

### INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Orientation tour of Baton Rouge
- Visit Houston Space Center (home of NASA)
- Driving tour of Austin
- Entry to The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas
- Visit Fort Worth Historic Stockyards
- Spray paint cadillacs at Cadillac Ranch
- Ranch visit
- Entry to Monument Valley Tribal Park
- Monument Valley Navajo Jeep tour
- Entry to Grand Canyon National Park
- Driving tour of the Las Vegas Strip

# YOUR ITINERARY

## DAY 1 | MIAMI

Meet with the group and prep yourself for an unforgettable adventure. Take a trip to Little Havana to people-watch in the cafés, stroll by pretty pastel houses and dodge the Speedo-clad skaters of South Beach, or take an optional speed boat trip. Tonight, join a club crawl and watch Miami come to life (as if this place could get any more lively!).

### ★ OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Miami speedboat ride

## DAY 2 | MIAMI TO FLORIDA GULF COAST

Ease into things in Florida's Gulf Coast by throwing yourself into the nightlife at one of its many beach bars.

### MEALS:

- Breakfast

## DAY 3 | FLORIDA GULF COAST TO PANAMA CITY BEACH

'Gators, begone! We're off to seek out turquoise waters and sandy beaches. At Panama City Beach you can while away the afternoon shopping, exploring or just plain lying around doing very little.

### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 4 | PANAMA CITY BEACH TO NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

A relaxing day by the beach will just about ready you for the awesome assault on the senses that is New Orleans. Music lovers will be spoilt for choice with all of the city's jazz clubs and dancing spots. Foodies will have a hard time picking between gumbo and po-boys, jambalaya and muffulettas, beignets and bananas Foster. Maybe just try 'em all. Tonight, the legendary party vibes of Bourbon Street await, so arm yourself with a Hand Grenade cocktail and get those toes tapping.

### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 5 | NEW ORLEANS

Today's the day to tick off any leftover items on your 'things I MUST do in the Bayou' list. Swing dance in NOLA, creep yourself out in one of the 'Cities of the Dead', find out what a steam calliope sounds like, or just have a taste of true New Orleans crawfish. Today's optionals? We're glad you asked. Choose from a swamp tour, a cooking demo or a paddleboat cruise.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Cooking demonstration
- Swamp tour
- Paddleboat cruise

## DAY 6 | NEW ORLEANS TO LAKE CHARLES

On our way to Lake Charles we'll make a pit stop at Baton Rouge, where there's an orientation tour on the cards.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation tour of Baton Rouge

## DAY 7 | LAKE CHARLES TO AUSTIN, TEXAS

Reawaken those childhood dreams of riding in a rocket at the Houston Space Center before we rock up in Austin. Tonight: feast on a Texan BBQ.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Houston Space Center (home of NASA)
- Driving tour of Austin

## DAY 8 | AUSTIN

The city is yours today. Hello thrift shopping, Airstream cuisine (cooler than regular food trucks), nudists, boot scooters, cheese makers and a cathedral of junk. When you're done with the weird, there's Zilker Park and SoCo to check out. Be sure to hit 6th Street tonight for a live music smorgasbord.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

## DAY 9 | AUSTIN TO DALLAS/FORT WORTH

First today, we'll pay a visit to The Sixth Floor Museum – the fateful place where JFK was shot. Afterwards, we're off to Dallas and the Fort Worth Historic Stockyards for a step back in time to the Wild West. From its original brick walkways to its wooden corrals, Fort Worth has it all. Tonight, we highly recommend Billy Bob's Texas – the World's Largest Honky Tonk. This enormous dancehall has over 30 bars and can hold up to 6,000 people! Time to get your two step on.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Entry to The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas
- Visit Fort Worth Historic Stockyards

## DAY 10 | DALLAS/FORT WORTH TO AMARILLO

Amarillo is a 'go big or go home' kinda place. See someone take the 72oz steak challenge at a Texan steakhouse for proof.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 11 | AMARILLO TO ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Feeling artistic? Good. It's time to channel Banksy at Cadillac Ranch (an art installation of half-buried Cadillacs) on Route 66. You'll get to crack out the spray paint and get creative on the tailfins of these all-American automobiles. Next up: Albuquerque (the home of Breaking Bad).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Spray paint cadillacs at Cadillac Ranch

## DAY 12 | ALBUQUERQUE TO DURANGO, COLORADO

Wanna get that adrenaline pumping? Durango's the place to do it, so feel free to get involved in some optional whitewater rafting on the Animas River today. Less bumpy options include hiking, biking and ziplining.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Horse riding (summer only)
- Whitewater rafting (summer only)
- Ziplining (summer only)
- Chuckwagon Dinner Show
- Mountain bike tour (summer only)
- Snowmobile tour (winter only)



## DAY 13 | DURANGO

You've got a free day in Durango, so make it count. There's a whole bunch of exciting optionals to choose from – or if you'd rather slow the pace, you could simply spot prairie dogs and gaze at the cracking scenery from the Durango Silverton steam train. Later, we've got a ranch visit to get down with, so zip up those boots.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Ranch visit



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Horse riding (summer only)
- Whitewater rafting (summer only)
- Ziplining (summer only)
- Chuckwagon Dinner Show
- Mountain bike tour (summer only)
- Snowmobile tour (winter only)

## DAY 14 | DURANGO TO GRAND CANYON REGION, ARIZONA

Today feels like a Navajo jeep tour kind of day. One that goes through Monument Valley. Even though it's a bumpy ride, you'd be forgiven for wanting to miss the bus, especially once you learn the stories of the mesas from our Navajo guide. Tonight: the Grand Canyon awaits.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Entry to Monument Valley Tribal Park
- Monument Valley Navajo Jeep tour

## DAY 15 | GRAND CANYON TO LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Today we're rolling from the red stripes of the Grand Canyon (where you could take to the skies on an optional heli-tour) to The Strip in Vegas, where we've got a driving tour all lined up. When the sun sets, don your finest outfits – it's time to board the party bus. Afterwards, there's some optional club entry to take advantage of. Don't mind if we do!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Entry to Grand Canyon National Park
- Driving tour of the Las Vegas Strip



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Heli-tour over the Grand Canyon
- Club entry

## DAY 16 | LAS VEGAS

Anything goes in Vegas. Our suggestions? Well, you could go high with an optional heli-tour over The Strip, ride the High Roller Observation Wheel or visit a shooting range. Whatever you choose, just remember to save some energy for one last Sin City night out.



### MEALS:

- Dinner



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Heli-tour over the Las Vegas Strip
- Ride the High Roller Observation Wheel
- Visit a shooting range

## DAY 17 | LAS VEGAS TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Wipe away the last traces of glitter and board the coach – it's time to head back to La La Land, where this trip wraps up.

## MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

Breakfasts (usually continental breakfasts) are included every day, except on the first morning of your trip. A typical continental breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yogurt, bread, croissants, cold meats, and cheese – with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast, though on some occasions some hot food may be available.

Included meals will be provided in a mixture of local restaurants and places in which we stay. In most cases, table water is provided with meals. If you wish to purchase additional drinks, you can do so at your own expense.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater to tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

# OTHER INFORMATION

## TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



## YOUR SAFETY

### NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

### DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER:** if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!



- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

## TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

# RESPECT ON THE ROAD

## RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

## HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

# INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

## TIPPING

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save travelling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

### TIPPING CULTURE IN NORTH AMERICA

In North America, tipping is customary. Please bear in mind that you will be expected to leave a tip for optional meals and activities, as well as during nights out.

## WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers

- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket
- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**