

WEATHER IN THE SOUTHERN ROCKIES

**** Grand Canyon – see note below ****

Perhaps no other region in the Rocky Mountains West experiences the dramatic variations in weather than those characteristic of the Southern Rockies. Temperature swings can exceed 50 degrees within the context of a single tour. Precipitation can vary from high improbability in the arid high deserts to increasing probability that is generally associated with increases in elevation.

Elevation clearly dictates weather pattern in this region. Warm to hot temperatures should be anticipated in areas below 5000 feet, even during the Spring and Fall periods, but particularly beginning in late-May and continuing through September. Temperatures will be markedly more moderate in the early-Spring and late-Fall at these lower elevations. Rainfall will be infrequent and generally in the form of afternoon showers.

As the elevation increases, maximum temperatures will decrease and precipitation opportunities increase. Contrasted with readings from the mid-80's to mid-90's at lower elevations, participants should be prepared for daytime temperatures as low as the low-50's in the areas like Cedar Breaks (10,272') in Utah, Arizona's White Mountains and Bobcat Pass (9,850') in New Mexico. Lower readings are not uncommon at these altitudes both early and late season. And, in case you're wondering, we've experienced snow in these regions on our earliest and latest tour dates.

Preparation, then, is essential to maximize your comfort and enjoyment of your adventure in the Southern Rockies. For all of our many programs in this area, participants must anticipate not only warm, dry conditions, but also potentially cool to cold periods with a reasonable chance of an occasional afternoon shower at higher elevations. Most importantly, the variations during a single day can be remarkably dramatic.

Warm weather gear definitely should dominate your clothing selection, with an emphasis on shorts, short sleeve shirts and plenty of sun protection. But don't overlook the essential rain gear, sweater or warm shirt, leg tights or warm-ups and warm gloves for those chilly experiences at the summit of a high altitude mountain climb and it's exciting, but chilly descent.

Evenings in most area will be comfortably cool to surprisingly cold. Our dinners are always casual and jeans and a sweater and/or jacket will be welcome for an evening stroll.

** Note for Grand Canyon Hikers – Elevations range from 8,800 feet on the North Rim, 7,800 feet on the South Rim to 2,570 at Phantom Ranch and 3,200 feet at the Supai Village. Evenings will be mild at both Phantom Ranch and Havasupai Lodge, but quite cool on the South and North Rims.