

Cedar City is the perfect place to be, if you want to see and experience astonishing National Parks within the United States. All National Parks in Utah are easy accessible and definitely worth a trip.

Two requirements to see all of them exist though:

1. You need to be patient, especially as you will spend lots of time in your car
2. You need to love the outdoors or at least nature, otherwise you may get bored after a while

If you fulfill these requirements, plan at least 2 Trips during your stay in Utah.

If you don't, skip the following section.

- Utah/Arizona National Parks

First of all, plan at least 3 days for this trip, so you may need to skip some classes. If you are not only interested in taking pictures but also in outdoor experiences, plan at least 5 days.

Starting in Cedar City, take [the I15](#) towards St. George and Exit 27 to get to Page. Make sure you have enough time in Page to see Antelope Canyons (if you have to choose between Upper and Lower Antelope Canyon, I would suggest going for the Lower one because most people told me it is more spectacular than the Upper Canyon) Best time to see them and take pictures is noon, as the light conditions are perfect. Note that you need a tour guide there, but it's not hard to get one. Just show up there and they will help you out.

Also visit Antelope Point Marina, it is close to the Canyons and worth a short stop. Your next stop should be Horseshoe Bend, the view there is awesome!

If you have enough time, you can visit Glen Canyon Dam, I haven't seen it but from what I have heard, it is pretty nice and you can rent a boat there and so forth.

Stay in Page for one night and plan a stop at Monument Valley for the next day. If you have enough time for the 17mile drive, make sure you rent an SUV or Truck because the terrain is pretty wild. Once you have seen enough of Monument Valley, go on to Mexican Hat, stop for a picture of the river and continue your trip to Moab.

There are several Parks in this area, Arches National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, Canyonlands National Park. You should definitely see Arches National Park (stop at all view points and make sure you do the Delicate Arch hike), unfortunately I haven't seen any of the others and can't tell you if it is worth to visit them, but ask our outdoor center for more information.

Stay in Moab for one night and return to Cedar City the next day.

[View route on Google Maps](#)

- California National Parks and Cities

As I have seen most of the parks in CA last year, I only wanted to see Sequoia National Park this year. But anyways, here is what I would suggest everyone who has not seen the beauty of CA:

Plan your arrival in the United States 2 to 3 weeks prior the semester begins. Land in Las Vegas, rent (probably cheaper if you do it via a travel agency back home) or buy a car and start your trip.

First stop should be Death Valley National Park. It will be extremely hot at this time of the year, so make sure you have enough water with you!

Once you've seen everything that's interesting for you and experienced the unbelievable silence in this National Park, go up north towards Bishop to stay there for one night. Get up early next morning and visit Mono Lake and Bodie Ghost Town.

Take the Tioga Pass to enter Yosemite National Park and plan to stay at Yosemite Valley for at least one night. If you want to hike, stay for several days - Yosemite is impressive!

Here comes the tricky part. You have to decide how important it is to you, to see the biggest tree in the world located in Sequoia National Park. If you don't think it's worth missing San Francisco and Highway 1, you better stop at Mariposa Park to see other giant trees and follow the route below. If it is a must for you to hug the master of giants, go on to Sequoia National Park, enjoy the big trees and leave Sequoia towards LA.

If you like wine, your next stop might be Napa Valley. If not, forget about Napa (even though it's a nice area) and go on to San Francisco. Plan to stay there for a couple of days, it's a beautiful city and you need to see as much as possible (if you plan to visit Alcatraz, make sure you book your tickets online at the earliest time).

Take Highway 1 towards LA and stop in Monterey to see their Aquarium and read about other POIs on this route, there are plenty of them and Highway 1 itself is just awesome (rent a convertible and listen to the Beach Boys to get the whole experience ☺)

Your next stop will be LA – enjoy it; I guess you can figure out what to do there yourself!

If time allows it, go south to San Diego. There are plenty of things to do and the city is beautiful!

There are hundreds and thousands POIs and ToDos in CA, you may plan to see Joshua Tree National Park or go to Palm Springs, but I can't recommend any of these because I haven't been there (but no worries, you will see plenty of Joshua trees on your route!).

Anyways, there will be the day that you have to leave California towards Utah. Passing by Las Vegas again, you could stop at Hoover Dam and take a tour. You may even consider a Grand Canyon tour, but you will also get the chance to see Grand Canyon later.

[View on Google Maps \(too much POIs for a route..\)](#)

That's it about road trips.

Other than that, there are wonderful local National Parks close to Cedar City → Bryce Canyon, Zion and Grand Canyon. You definitely have to see all of them and usually the outdoor center offers several trips during the first weeks. Take your time to hike there and enjoy unbelievable impressions!

As you are based in Cedar City, you also have to go and visit Cedar Breaks at least once. It is a small National Park, but perfect if you plan to wander around a little bit.

If you like to ski or snowboard, make sure you join the Ski and Snowboard club. Maybe you are lucky and they will arrange free tickets and free Ski/Snowboard rental for Brian Head. You need to ski at least once if you are in Utah ☺

If you like swimming, Sand Hollow is a close and nice spot as long as it is warm enough.

I loved my stay here in Utah and the National Parks are definitely one of the reasons why this is a perfect place to study abroad!