



*Tribes of the Southwest USA Trip #1*

## **EARTH MEDICINE VISION QUEST RETREAT**

*10 days (9 nights)*

This is a special journey of self-exploration as much as it is an exploration of the southwestern Native American lands. Experienced teachers from Native American and cross-cultural backgrounds will teach us ways to reconnect with the natural world, and we will have the perfect environment in which to practise - a sacred space.

### **Itinerary:**

#### **Day 1:**

Airport transfer from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Arizona, to a comfortable motel in Sedona for the first night.

#### **Day 2:**

Sedona is where we begin our journey of discovery, with **foundational skills practices**. These focus on mystical shamanic journeying, soul retrieval work and creating our circle of power and support. Our Hopi spiritual woman Roanna Kagenveama will be present here to assist in the process.

There will also be an introduction to the ideas and tools we will be using later in our vision quest.

Overnight in Sedona motel.

#### **Day 3:**

Whilst still in Sedona we will complete our soul retrieval work, before loading up our vehicles and heading into Hopi Reservation. Once there, warm-hearted Hopi people will welcome us. We shall take part in ancient prayer vibrations, blessings and ceremonies. In addition there is the option of taking part in a Hopi purification.

Next we visit the **Hopi Mesas**, where age-old villages are built over great flat-topped rock formations. The people who live here have done so for generations and retain a firm connection with the natural world around them. The local Hopi will welcome us with a special blessing circle, and the opportunity may present itself for us to see a ceremonial dance. A purification lodge option is available, and we will enjoy a traditional meal as guests of a Hopi family in their home. Afterwards we shall retire to a good quality motel nearby on Navajo land.

#### **Days 4-9:**

After breakfast at the motel we drive to Chinle, from where our Navajo guide Winnie C Henry will lead us into **Canyon de Chelly** on foot, marking the beginning of our nature, soul and vision quest. We will follow a moderately difficult trail of around three miles in length, but we will take our time so we might use this as a time of coming into relationship with the spirit of the canyon. (There will be the option to ride in with the 4WD gear vehicles for those who don't feel they can manage the hike in).

Along the way we will pass the cliff dwellings carved out of de Chelly a thousand years past by the Ancient Pueblo people, as well as traditional Navajo Hogans and spellbinding rock art. Once in the womb-like canyon, we will set up **camp** on private Navajo land, and take the time to honour the spiritual presence of those who once lived here, their descendents and those who live here still, the Puebloan, the Hopi and the Navajo.

Our vision quest has now begun, and so we start to develop a range of **skills** to help us get the most out of the experience and ourselves, assisted by Navajo spiritual leader Daniel Stanley, Hopi artist Roanna Kagenveama, Navajo guide Winnie C Henry and earth-spirited facilitator-teacher Sandra Costentino. Our programme includes: deepening shamanic journey development, working with prayer and intentions, paying attention to signs, nature observation-communion, cognitive dreaming and intuitive insights.

The purpose of this is to provide us with the tools and the confidence with which to connect with the wild nature around us, through which we find a direct connection to Creation.

We will also carry out **ceremonies** including cross-cultural drum healing, re-dreaming, Navajo fire blessing and purification (sweatlodge), and each of us will undertake an overnight solo personal vision quest.

Our time in camp will be a **bonding** one, with campfire circles bringing us together through song, dance and storytelling. Our food will be wholesome camp fare (with vegan options), and there will also be both a Navajo cookout and a traditional meal enjoyed in a Hopi home.

We will each create our own **power shield** with willow and leather, on which we will paint our own insights and visions, giving us a medicine piece to take home with us as a tangible reminder of our personal medicine. In addition there will be cultural presentations on sand painting and weaving.

The experience not only gives us all this, but teaches us how to recreate our visions of ourselves as positive, expanding forces of evolution.

At the close of the vision quest, we shall hike out of the canyon (or travel out with the support vehicles if we feel unable), and drive back to our starting point in Sedona, Arizona, where we might begin to reflect upon all that we have been through and learnt, about ourselves, each other and the places which helped us learn. Overnight in Sedona motel.

**Day 10:**

Airport transfer to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport for flight home.

**Includes:**

Land transportation and airport transfers; guides and teachers; camp meals whilst on vision quest; dinner at Hopi; one night motel stay on Navajo land with breakfast, and 3 nights' motel in Sedona (room only); 5 nights' camping. All activities on vision quest except optional purification (sweat) lodge and massage (both donation based, please enquire for details).

**What to expect:**

Most of our time will be spent camping in the open during our vision quest. The facilities will be basic - solar shower, shade shelter, tents and outhouses - but the sense of community will be strong. The activities we will be participating in are likely to be profound, so it is advised to spend a day or so afterwards on personal integration before returning to the busyness of everyday life. We can arrange extra accommodation after the trip on request; also activities and accommodation for early arrival in Sedona prior to the tour.

**What to wear:**

Summers are hot, temperatures can reach the 90s (Fahrenheit); however, evenings can be cool. Be prepared with proper clothing befitting seasonal weather changes. You are advised to bring good hiking shoes, hat, sunblock and rain gear.

**Health and safety:**

You should be in reasonable health and prepared for the physical activities we will be taking part in. There will be the option to ride in with the 4WD gear vehicles for those who do not feel they can make the hike in or out of the canyon. The canyon is remote, and it is worth noting that mobile phones do not work there, and that we could be up to three hours away from the nearest medical facility. There is always an element of risk associated with outdoor activities. We emphasise safety but ultimately participants must take responsibility for themselves. No minors may participate without the presence of their parent or legal guardian. We reserve the right to refuse participation of anyone we feel poses a safety hazard to themselves or others.

**Culture:**

Be prepared for any preconceived notions about Native American culture to be challenged. Come with an open mind and an open heart.