

Come explore Arizona in Spring and learn about Astronomical Wonders & More!

Arizona Dark Skies

Archeoastronomy & Indigenous Peoples of the Southwest!

April 27 - May 5, 2027

Explore the archaeological wonders, cultural heritage, fascinating geology, striking scenery, and dark skies!

This 9-day expedition is an excellent introduction to the ruins of the prehistoric Ancestral Pueblo and Navajo people, and the natural history and dark skies of the American Southwest.

We invite travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery to explore the day and night wonderland of the famed American Southwest this spring!

The Itinerary includes:

- **Lowell Observatory** – where dark skies make the Milky Way a wonder to see!
- **Meteor Crater** – see the impact of the large meteor 50,000 years ago and imagine the crater-pocked surface of the Moon, Mars, and other planets.
- **Wupatki Pueblo** – built in the 1100's it was the center of a population of a few thousand in the surrounding region. The window openings give insight to the seasonal calendar of these ancient people and their knowledge of the night sky and the annual pattern of the Sun.



- **Sunset Crater** – at about 960 years old, this is one of the youngest volcanos in the lower 48 states.

- **Mesa Verde National Park** – over 2,000 mesa-top ruins and 200

cliff dwellings. Cliff Palace, the most famous, is eight stories high.



- **Magnificent Canyon de Chelly** – called Tsegi, “rock canyon,” by the Navajo, it includes two adjoining canyons. rising to heights of over a thousand feet, in the canyon’s walls are houses built in open caves by early Ancestral Pueblo people.

- **Petrified Forest** – named for its large deposits of petrified wood it is known for Triassic fossils, an ecosystem over 200 million years old with plants and animals now represented in the surreal landscape of the Painted Desert.

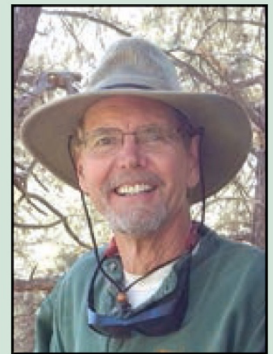
- **Hubbell Trading Post** – the oldest operating trading post on the Navajo Nation, people have come for supplies since 1878.

*Exploring the Southwest’s Native American heritage, natural habitats, breathtaking scenery and extraordinary dark skies with excellent leadership by archaeoastronomy and naturalist **Bryan Bates** will be an lifetime experience!*

LEADERSHIP

*Leading this expedition will be **Bryan Bates**. Bryan has a BA in Native American Studies and an MA in Environmental Sciences, and taught biology and geology at the Coconino Community College in Flagstaff. Bryan has a special interest in archaeoastronomy and events in the sky. He is*

on the Board of Directors of the Flagstaff Science Festival and is a founding member of the Conference of Archaeoastronomy of the American Southwest. Bryan looks forward to sharing his years of travel, study, teaching, and exploring Arizona and the night skies with you.





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THE BEST OF MAN AND NATURE WORLDWIDESM

ARIZONA SKIES, ARCHEOASTRONOMY & INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE SOUTHWEST

April 27 - May 5, 2027

DAILY ITINERARY



DAY 1 Apr 27 ARRIVE FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Arrive at the Flagstaff, Arizona Airport by 3 pm and transfer to your hotel. Meet your trip naturalist, Bryan Bates at 5:30 pm for a welcome reception and dinner. *Little America Hotel Flagstaff (2 nights)*. (D)

DAY 2 Apr 28 WUPATKI, SUNSET CRATER & LOWELL OBSERVATORY

This morning we will explore Sunset Crater. At 900 years old, this is one of the youngest volcanos in the lower 48 states. Legend says that the famous explorer of the southwest and the Grand Canyon, John Wesley Powell, named the crater for its red and yellow ash and cinders lining the crater rim. Walk in the area and see plants that thrive in this area of little soil, little water, and intense radiation. Then visit Wupatki

Pueblo, a 100 room pueblo built in the 1100's that was the center of a population of a few thousand in the surrounding region. The window openings give insight to the seasonal calendar of these ancient people and their knowledge of the night sky and the annual pattern of the Sun. Afternoon visit to the Museum of Northern Arizona for a chance to see superb Native American and natural history exhibits. An evening visit to the Lowell Observatory to see the astronomy displays and then view the night sky through the telescope. (B,L)

DAY 3 Apr 29 METEOR CRATER – WINSLOW, ARIZONA

This morning we will drive to Meteor Crater to see the impact of the large meteor 50,000 years ago. It displaced 300-400 million tons of rock and created a crater 4,100 feet wide and 571 feet deep. You may also see an Apollo test capsule and displays on meteors, asteroids, and space equipment. This will be an interesting tie-in to the many observations of craters on the Moon, Mars, and other planets. Tonight, we will stay in the historic city of Winslow known for its Route 66 heritage. *La Posada Hotel (2 nights)*. (B,L)



DAY 4 Apr 30 PETRIFIED FOREST – HOMOL'OVI

This morning we'll have a field expert from the Petrified Forest Field Institute join the group as we explore the Petrified Forest National Park. Afternoon visit to an Ancestral Puebloan/Hopi archaeological site Homol'ovi. "Homolovi" is Hopi for "Place of the Little Hills" — the traditional name for Winslow, Arizona. Homol'ovi State Park now serves as a center of research for the late migration period of the Hopi from the 1200s to the late 1300s. (B)

DAY 5 May 1 HUBBELL TRADING POST – CANYON DE CHELLY

This morning drive to Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site, founded in 1876. We'll see rooms stocked with intricately designed rugs and silver jewelry and have an opportunity to tour the historic Hubbell home. From here we will drive to Canyon de Chelly National Monument, protected in 1931 by President Hoover to preserve the important archeological resources that span more than 4,000 years of human occupation. *Thunderbird Lodge (2 nights)*. (B,L,D)

DAY 6 May 2 CANYON DE CHELLY

Today, we'll expand our exploration of Canyon de Chelly in specially provided vehicles with Navajo driver/guides. Most of these ruins were built between 1100 and 1200 A.D. and were abandoned around 1300 A.D., likely because of prolonged drought and raids by forerunners of the present-day Navajos and Apaches. Each spring hundreds of Navajos who prefer traditional lifestyles return to Canyon de Chelly to plant their crops and graze their sheep in the time-honored manner of their forefathers. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 May 3 CANYON DE CHELLY – MESA VERDE

This morning we'll leave Canyon de Chelly to journey to the ancestral Puebloan area. Along the way, stop at Four Corners Monument Navajo Tribal Park. Continue to Mesa Verde, one of the highlights of our trip, including some of the world's largest and best preserved cliff dwellings. The first archaeological site in the U.S. to be protected in this region and proclaimed by President Teddy Roosevelt under the 1906 Antiquities Act. *Far View Lodge (2 nights)*. (B,L)

DAY 8 May 4 MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK – CLIFF PALACE & BALCONY HOUSE

This morning, we venture out to explore Mesa Verde from dramatic mesa top overlooks. If possible, we will explore Cliff Palace and Balcony House with a Park Ranger as our guide. These hikes involve going up and down stairs with handrails and at Balcony House climbing an "ancestral style" ladder. They give us an incredible look at life in Mesa Verde in the early 1200's. Our Expedition Leader Bryan Bates will provide additional insights from his research at Mesa Verde. Weather permitting, Bryan will lead a night-sky watching adventure, with a focus on the Navajo constellations. Farewell Dinner. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 May 5 DEPART

Having had a tremendous journey, we pack our bags and head to the Durango, CO airport for flights departing after 12 noon. With innumerable memories we'll keep in touch with old and new friends looking forward to another adventure with Betchart Expeditions. (B)

COSTS & CONDITIONS

Questions, Reservations, Deposits, and Payments: To reserve your place on the Arizona Dark Skies expedition, please phone **Betchart Expeditions Inc. (800) 252-4910** or email: **betchartterri@gmail.com**.

Please mail the reservation form and your deposit check for \$500 per person to: Betchart Expeditions Inc., 17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014. The final payment is due 120 days before departure.

Expedition Fee: \$5,795 per person twin share + air fare to Flagstaff, Arizona, with return from Durango, Colorado. Singles are \$895 additional.

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport by 15-passenger van and half-day jeep drive in Canyon de Chelly; accommodations twin share; meals as indicated (8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 4 dinners); entrance fees; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: Air fare from your home to Flagstaff, Arizona, with return from Durango, Colorado; some meals; gratuity to expedition leaders; personal items such as laundry, alcoholic beverages; snacks, personal insurance; or optional activities.

What to Expect: This expedition is for travelers who would like to explore the archaeological and geological heritage of NW Arizona, SW Colorado and SE Utah, including superb national parks and national monuments. Dark skies astronomy viewing and archeoastronomy. Transportation will be by 15 passenger vans on this expedition. Travel with an excellent naturalist and popular archaeoastronomer with expertise in these areas will provide a superb experience. Walks of 1 to 3 miles daily, on various flat to moderately inclined uneven, rocky, unpaved walking trails, will be at a reasonable pace for discovery and exploration. Some trails at Mesa Verde are strenuous and involve going up and down narrow staircases, climbing ladders and elevation changes. No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals please.

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: All passengers should arrive in Flagstaff, Arizona by 3 pm April 27, 2027 and depart Durango, Colorado after 12 noon on May 5, 2027.

Accommodations: Are in comfortable hotels or lodges. Single accommodations are a supplement of \$895.

Reservations, Deposits & Payments: To reserve a place on this expedition, please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form. Balance is due 120 days before departure (December 18, 2026).

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 120 days before departure less a handling fee of \$250 per person. There is no refund after the 120-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$250 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

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RESERVATIONS **#1810**

YES! I/We want to join the **Arizona Dark Skies Expedition, April 27 - May 5, 2027** offered by Betchart Expeditions Inc. Please reserve _____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we have enclosed a check for \$_____ (\$500 per person), payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Membership (please circle): Planetary Society AAAS Sigma Xi ACS

Please reserve _____ double _____ twin or _____ single accommodations.

Please mail to: **Arizona Skies 2027**
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

Responsibility: Betchart Expeditions Inc. acts only as agent for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels and exercises every care possible. Betchart can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident, or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, terrorism, quarantine, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. © 2026 Betchart Expeditions Inc. All rights reserved. CST#2036304-40 registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California