

LET'S GET OUT OF TOWN

There comes a time when getting out of town is important to one's mental state. The spectacle of San Francisco and the surrounding area, as seen when departing San Francisco International Airport, is exceptional. The "City by the Bay" has been, and will continue to be, very special to those that both live there and visit it. This image taken from just southeast of Treasure Island offers a striking look at one of the most beautiful cities in North America. Surrounded by the San Francisco Bay and connected by two large bridges, it is unique in many respects.



Where to go? Visits to the National Parks in western part of the country offers the nature lover/photographer boundless opportunities for unique and amazing pictures.

The following picture of the Yellowstone River cascading over Yellowstone Falls and then continueing through the Little Grand Canyon of Yellowstone is "position one" on a Yellowstone tour. Versions of this picture are everywhere. Hordes of photographers gravitate to Artist's Point for a magnificent chance to capture the most prominent Yellowstone feature. I took a similar picture at this location about 12 years ago. It came out supersaturated with orange everywhere. While an outstanding view of the river below the falls, it failed in many ways. In

photography, it is all about the light. In the first picture the sun was immediately overhead, shadows were nil and the shot lacking. Ten years later, I checked for lighting before I got there; got up early in the morning insure eastern light on the valley and falls and I also cropped the falls centered image to align the falls to the right upper third of the picture. The result was better color and two strong highlights in the upper two corners of the image.



Just northwest of Yellowstone is Glacier National Park. We boarded buses for a magical oratory and view of the sensational surrounds in and around Glacier. The 1939, 18 passenger red touring buses pictured below are in front of Glacier Lodge. They and their drivers, referred to as “jammers” are a must when visiting this area. When riding in one of these busses, you will see more and better understand what the ice age did to our continent. The swirling driveway across the bottom third of this picture enhances the expectation of a great day.



The following picture is a great example of the heavy glaciation in what would become a national treasure in the western United States. You can see stratification in the rock on the left-hand side of the carved rock face. You can also see it on the wall of the “U” shaped valley that radiates from the bottom third of the picture. Along the picture’s righthand third, you can see cars driving on the “Road to the Sun”.



There is much to see at Glacier, make sure to visit the eastern side of the park. It is a great drive and a sensational venue.

Next, either drive or get on a plane and head for St. George, Utah. Delta Airlines connects out of West Yellowstone through Salt Lake City. Getting to Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks is worth the effort.



Zion may be my favorite. While not as big as the Grand Canyon, it is a great day trip with a profusion of color and geology. Zion offers one opportunity after another for photos such as this. The Virgin River has cut through seemingly endless, picturesque rock formations that rival any in the west for color and magnificence. The three peaks on the left side of this picture are examples of what Zion has to offer. Short side hikes, a swim in the river and a very drivable road enhance the majesty of Zion.

The last stop on this one-week trip is Bryce Canyon. Known for its crimson-colored, spire shaped rock formations called "Hoodoos", the main road offers views of multiple vistas that are truly unique. The picture below offers a spiraling colorful display of fascinating formations.



If you are not ready to give up, a drive to Moab or the Grand Canyon can easily fill another week. Enjoy the west, there is so much to photograph and see. Our National Parks are magnificent.