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MOUNTAIN WEST & DESERT ESCAPES

Greetings from SALT LAKE CITY

48 hours, solo, at your own pace

POCKET EDITION · 2027

48-HOUR GUIDE · SAFETY GUIDE · PLANNING CALENDAR

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Welcome to Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City is a compact, friendly capital with a mountain wall at the end of every street. The Wasatch Range rises right behind downtown, an enormous salt lake lies to the west, and the city itself is wide-avenued, walkable, and easy to read.

Traveling solo here works because the city is orderly and calm, with a light-rail line from the airport, a walkable downtown, and a well-run food scene. You can spend a morning in a garden, an afternoon at a museum, and an evening hiking or skiing within half an hour of your hotel.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through once before you go. Day One covers Temple Square, the Utah State Capitol, City Creek Canyon, and dinner downtown. Day Two heads to the Great Salt Lake and the foothills, then 9th and 9th for the evening. Section 03 is the new-for-2027 feature on the Great Salt Lake. Sundays are quiet in Utah, so plan shopping and some restaurants for other days.

ESSENTIAL QUICK FACTS

CURRENCY
US dollar (cards accepted nearly everywhere)

TRANSIT
UTA TRAX light rail · about $2.50 a ride

TIME ZONE
Mountain (UTC–7; UTC–6 in summer)

EMERGENCY
911 · non-emergency 801-799-3000

TIPPING
18–20% in restaurants

SALES TAX
About 7.75% — added at the register

01 DAY ONE

Temple Square · The Capitol · City Creek Canyon

The first day stays downtown: a gathering place, a view, a quiet canyon walk, and a dinner worth lingering over.

MORNING · 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

8:30 AM

Breakfast — Ruth's Diner

A long-running diner in Emigration Canyon, open since 1930, with big plates, a creekside patio, and the signature Mud Pie.

It is a short drive or rideshare from downtown; arrive early on weekends.

10:30 AM

Temple Square

The gardens and buildings around the Salt Lake Temple are free to wander. The domed Tabernacle is known for its acoustics and its organ, and short organ recitals are open to everyone.

Check the Tabernacle schedule for the recitals; the grounds are lovely in any season.

12:00 PM

Lunch — Red Iguana

A beloved family-run Mexican restaurant with seven moles on the menu, a lively dining room, and a loyal local following.

Lines are common at lunch. Join the line early, or sit at the bar if there is room.

AFTERNOON · 1:30 PM – 5:30 PM

1:30 PM

Utah State Capitol

A domed granite building on a hill above downtown, with free tours, a grand rotunda, and a sweeping view over the valley.

Walk the grounds for the view of the city and the Great Salt Lake on a clear day.

3:30 PM

City Creek Canyon

A paved and dirt trail up a creek canyon that starts near the Capitol, with shade, birds, and a quick escape from the city.

The paved road is closed to cars on certain days, which is ideal for walkers and cyclists.

EVENING · 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

6:30 PM

Dinner — Settebello Pizzeria Napoletana

A wood-fired Neapolitan pizzeria downtown, with a certified oven and a bar suited to a solo diner.

The pizzas are personal size, which is perfect for one.

8:30 PM

Walk the Gateway or Pioneer Park

The Gateway area has fountains, shops, and a lively crowd on summer nights; Pioneer Park hosts a Saturday farmers market in season.

Stay in busy, lit areas after dark.

02 DAY TWO

The Great Salt Lake · The Foothills · 9th and 9th

The second day looks outward at the lake, the mountains, and the neighborhoods, with plenty of room to pace yourself.

MORNING · 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

8:00 AM

Antelope Island State Park

A 40-minute drive north to the largest island in the Great Salt Lake, reached by causeway, with bison, birds, beaches, and wide views.

Bring water, sunscreen, and bug spray; the lakeside flies can be thick in early summer.

11:30 AM

Lunch — Crown Burger

A Salt Lake institution known for its pastrami burger, a pile of fries, and a classic diner feel.

The portions are huge; share a plate if you want to try more.

12:30 PM

Natural History Museum of Utah

A modern museum in the foothills with dinosaur skeletons, Native cultures, and a view over the city.

The building itself is worth a look, with a terrace and glass walls.

AFTERNOON · 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

2:00 PM

Red Butte Garden

Botanical gardens in the foothills with trails, a concert series in summer, and a calm place to wander.

Check the summer concert calendar before you go.

4:30 PM

Liberty Park and Tracy Aviary

A big, leafy city park with a pond, paths, and the country's oldest public aviary.

It is a good place to people-watch with a coffee.

EVENING · 6:30 PM – LATE

6:30 PM

Dinner — Mazza

A long-running Middle Eastern restaurant in the 9th and 9th neighborhood, with generous plates and a calm room.

The mezze plates are good for a solo table.

8:30 PM

9th and 9th

A walkable neighborhood of cafes, small shops, and bars. Wander, browse a bookstore, or settle into a corner.

Utah liquor rules are stricter than in many states; ask your server about drink options.

03 THE LAKE

The Great Salt Lake

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the Great Salt Lake is the largest saltwater lake in the Western Hemisphere?

The lake is a remnant of ancient Lake Bonneville, which once covered much of Utah. It has no outlet, so its water evaporates and leaves minerals behind, making it several times saltier than the ocean in places. Swimmers float effortlessly, and brine shrimp support millions of migrating birds.

A SHORT HISTORY

Native peoples lived around the lake for thousands of years before Mormon pioneers arrived in 1847. The lake level has risen and fallen over the decades, and in recent years low water has become a major concern for the region.

HOW TO SEE IT

Antelope Island State Park is the easiest way to experience the lake, with a causeway, a beach, hiking trails, and a herd of bison. The Great Salt Lake Marina and sunset views at Saltair are other options. Check lake and park conditions before going.

BEST TIME TO GO

Spring and fall have the mildest weather and the most birds. Summer is hot, and the lake can smell strongly of brine. Sunset is the best light for photography.

04 WHERE TO EAT

Moles, burgers, and mountain breakfasts

Salt Lake's food scene is friendly and diverse. Most places below suit a solo diner at a counter, bar, or patio.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Ruth's Diner
EMIGRATION CANYON · $12–20
A creekside diner since 1930, known for hearty breakfasts and the Mud Pie.

Red Iguana
POPLAR GROVE · $14–24
A family restaurant with seven moles and a devoted following.

Crown Burger
DOWNTOWN · $10–16
Pastrami burgers and fries in a classic diner setting.

Even Stevens
DOWNTOWN · $10–16
Sandwiches in a casual, community-minded shop that gives back.

DINNER & LATE NIGHT

Settebello
DOWNTOWN · $16–28
Wood-fired Neapolitan pizza and a bar for one.

Mazza
9TH AND 9TH · $16–30
Middle Eastern mezze, kebabs, and lamb in a calm dining room.

Squatters Pub
DOWNTOWN · $14–26
A downtown brewpub with burgers, salads, and house beer.

Pie Pizzeria
UNIVERSITY · $12–22
A basement pizza joint near the University of Utah with a student crowd.

05 GETTING AROUND

Navigating Salt Lake City

Downtown is compact and flat, and the TRAX light-rail lines connect the airport, downtown, and the University. A car helps for the mountains and the lake.

TRAX light rail	about $2.50	The Green Line links the airport and downtown; the Blue and Red lines reach more neighborhoods.
Airport (SLC)	TRAX or rideshare	About 25 minutes to downtown by train.
FrontRunner	by trip	A commuter train between Ogden, Salt Lake, and Provo.
Rideshare	by trip	Useful for evenings and the foothills.
Ski shuttles	by trip	Seasonal buses and shuttles serve Alta, Snowbird, and Brighton.
Walking	Free	Downtown blocks are large, so allow extra time between sights.

Salt Lake blocks are big, so distances are longer than they look. In winter, use the ski buses and traction devices in the canyons.

06 BACKUP PLANS

Salt Lake City on a rainy afternoon

Rain is gentle here, but winter storms and summer smoke can send you inside. These are good options.

FOOTHILLS
Natural History Museum of Utah
Dinosaurs, Native cultures, and a view over the city.

DOWNTOWN
Utah Museum of Fine Arts
A strong collection at the University of Utah.

DOWNTOWN
Church History Museum
Exhibits on Utah's settlement and the history of the region.

DOWNTOWN
Salt Lake City Public Library
A glass-walled library with a rooftop garden and city views.

SUGAR HOUSE
Sugar House Park cafes
Coffee shops and bookshops in a walkable district.

DOWNTOWN
Clark Planetarium
Free exhibits and a planetarium theater at the Gateway.

07 NEIGHBORHOODS

Know your neighborhoods

HEART OF THE CITY
Temple Square
The gardens, the Tabernacle, and the Conference Center.

GOVERNMENT & VIEWS
Capitol Hill
The Capitol, quiet streets, and a hillside view.

CAFES & BARS
9th and 9th
A walkable strip of small shops, cafes, and restaurants.

SHOPPING & GARDENS
Sugar House
A lively neighborhood with a big park and shops.

CAMPUS TOWN
The University
Red Butte Garden, the Natural History Museum, and student cafes.

ENTERTAINMENT
The Gateway
Shops, fountains, and a lively evening crowd.

08 GOOD TO KNOW

What nobody tells you

- Sundays are quiet. Many stores and some restaurants close, so plan accordingly.
- The mountains are close. You can ski in the morning and be in a downtown restaurant by evening.
- Utah has distinctive alcohol laws, with strict limits on alcohol in some venues. Ask your server what is available.
- Blocks are large. Allow extra time when walking between sights.
- Tip 18–20% in restaurants. Sales tax is about 7.75% and is added at the register.
- Air quality can dip in winter inversions and summer wildfire smoke; check local forecasts.

WHEN TO GO

Mar–May	Spring	Mild weather, blossoms, and snow still on the peaks.
Jun–Aug	Summer	Hot, dry days, outdoor concerts, and hiking in the canyons.
Sep–Nov	Best overall	Warm days, cool nights, and gold and red leaves in the foothills.
Dec–Feb	Ski season	Cold and snowy, with world-class skiing less than an hour away.

09 SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY

Is Salt Lake City safe?

Safe, with standard city awareness. Temple Square, Capitol Hill, and the foothills neighborhoods are calm and well-lit. Take normal care around the Rio Grande area on the west side of downtown at night.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

Temple Square	●●●●●
Capitol Hill	●●●●●
9th and 9th	●●●●●
Sugar House	●●●●○
The Gateway (evening)	●●●●○
Downtown at night	●●●○○
Rio Grande area at night	●●○○○

COMMON SCAMS

Panhandlers are common in some downtown blocks; decline politely and keep walking. Never leave belongings visible in a parked car.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

University of Utah Hospital and Intermountain Medical Center are the main hospitals. The altitude is about 4,300 feet, so drink water and wear sunscreen. Winter inversions can affect breathing, so check air-quality reports.

SOLO TRAVELERS

Share your plan with someone back home and keep your phone charged. In the mountains, tell someone where you are going, carry water, and check avalanche and weather reports before any winter trip.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police, fire, medical	911
Salt Lake City non-emergency	801-799-3000
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Nearest ER	University of Utah Hospital · 50 N Medical Dr.

10 PLANNING CALENDAR

Salt Lake City, month by month

Exact dates shift each year, so confirm before booking.

JAN–MAR SKI SEASON

- Alta, Snowbird, Brighton, and Solitude are all within about an hour of downtown.

JUN UTAH ARTS FESTIVAL

- Three days of art, music, and food in Library Square in late June.

JUL PIONEER DAY

- July 24 brings parades, fireworks, and rodeos across the state.

AUG CRAFT LAKE CITY

- A festival of local makers and artists in late summer.

OCT FALL COLOR

- The Wasatch canyons turn gold and red.

NOV–DEC HOLIDAYS

- Temple Square is filled with lights from late November.

SLC

Every Stop, Mapped

Scan the code to open the free interactive Salt Lake City map — every stop in this guide, filterable by day, food, and transport.

goingsolo.life/maps/salt-lake-city

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