We’re going to chase the beams of light,” says Cindy, our Navajo guide, in the afternoon sun, as we enter the canyon. Walking from the hot sandy desert through a crack in the rock, suddenly we’re in a stunning scenery made of red Navajo sandstone, coloured rock walls curving around like the curvatures of oil. The red and orange sandstone swiftly and terribly up and up, so showers of blue-sky appear through slits in the rock. In the next cove, a shaft of sunlight drizzles down like a torch beam, burning a circle off-light onto the sand. Cindy picks up some sand and throws it into the light. It forms a perfectly diamond-shape, slowly disappearing as we click our cameras.

This is Upper Antelope Canyon, a slot canyon in the Navajo Reservation, USA. Most people have the Grand Canyon on their list, but this state has so many other amazing canyons and rock features to explore, and I’m keen to see some of them through hacks, official drives and even by boat.

Antelope Canyon was created by the flow of water and wind through red sandstone over millions of years, creating the world’s most beautiful sandstone canyon with magical light through the narrow slot. Located in the Navajo Reservation, USA, largest Navajo American reservation, Cindy tells us that the canyon has always been a sacred place for the Navajo people. It is still being sculpted by nature — flash floods during rainy season can alter the floor level of the canyon from year to year.

It is at Lake Powell that I start to take in the magnificence and sheer scale of the canyon. The lake on the Arizona/Utah border was created when Glen Canyon Dam, the tallest concrete weir in the world, was filled. The dam created the largest man-made reservoir in the world, Lake Powell, with a surface area of 186,000 acres. It is 186m deep at its deepest point.

The lake in 203km long and has 90km of shoreline — about the same as the entire coastline of Ireland — filled with narrow canyons and unusual rock formations. On a boat tour we pass Antelope Island, admiring the multicoloured rocks, bridges and butte which pop out of the clear blue waters. Along the way, we hear stories of the Native Americans who lived in this area, and how these landscapes have been shaped over millions of years by the wind and rain. The lake is usually 186m deep at its deepest point, but water levels can change over time due to climate change and droughts.

WHERE TO STAY

Yvonne stayed at Mountain Shadows in Scottsdale, Phoenix (moutainshadows.com; rooms from $132/€112). The Red Agave Adventure Resort (redagaveresort.com; studios from $119/€106); Lake Powell Resort (lakepowellresort.com; from $117/€104) and Amangiri (aman.com/amangiri/Amangiri; rooms from $1,350/€1,182) including meals and drinks. See also visitarizona.com.

GET THERE & AROUND

Delta Airlines (delta.com) flies from Dublin to Phoenix via Atlanta. Antelope Canyon tours from $45/€38 (antelopecanyontours.com); Lake Powell boat tours from $80/€68 (lakepowell.com) and jeep tours in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, ($35/€30), jeeplakepowell.com.

FOR MORE TIPS, DEALS AND INSPIRATION, LOG ON TO INDEPENDENT.IE/TRAVEL

Click & Go

Disneyland Paris

3 night holidays from €159 pp

Pricing include:

- Return Aer Lingus flights
- 3 nights accommodation
- Shuttle bus from hotel to theme park

TRUSTED TRAVEL

Holidays are just a click away. Book today 01 906 9563 clickandgo.com