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Western Road Trip: Colorado and Utah

Sandy Bornstein

June 19, 2017

Travel Guide

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Shorter road trips are ideal for people who don't want to spend too many days driving. If you're ever in the Colorado-Utah area, make sure to check out these state and national parks that are within a short drive of each other, and sure to make for an excellent day ^{email} out with nature.

Colorado National Monument

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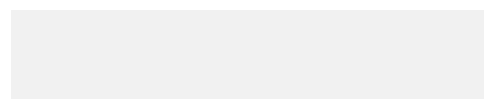
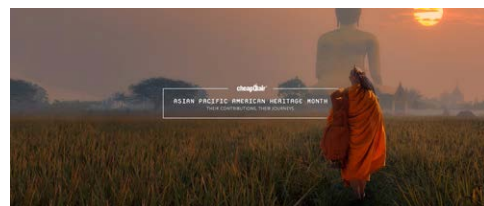
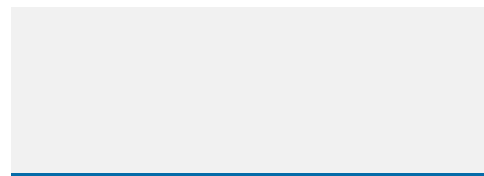




Image via Sandra Bornstein

STORIES

[This 32-square mile park](#) is accessed by Rim Rock Drive. It's best to stop frequently along the 23-mile winding road. The multicolored canyon is set in a semi-arid desert climate filled with pinion pines and Utah junipers. The park includes over a dozen trails of varying ability levels and numerous viewpoints that offer informative signage.

While most will plan on spending a half or full day at the Colorado National Monument, some may take a small detour to Lands End on the Grand Mesa to experience a panoramic view of western Colorado.

Canyonlands National Park and Arches National Park



Image via Sandra Bornstein

After reaching Moab, it's about a half hour drive between these two national parks. At [Canyonlands](#), kids and adults will see how water and erosion created a landscape lined with slick rock canyons, domes, cliffs, spires, buttes, and mesas. [Arches National Park](#) has the highest concentration of natural stone openings in the world.

Most can be viewed from the road or parking lot while others require a short walk. Both parks have trail maps that delineate easy to advanced trails. Some areas are only accessible by high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles. To take full advantage of the two parks, it's best to visit during the peak tourist season. Fewer visitors come when this high desert is blanketed with snow from December to February or during the scorching summer months.

Dead Horse State Park



Slightly east of Canyonlands, take the road that leads to [Dead Horse State Park](#). The Colorado River left immense beauty in its wake. Buttes and sandstone cliffs create a 2,000-foot high colorful canyon. The photo opportunities are worth the slight detour.

Goblin Valley State Park and Little Horse Canyon

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Image via Sandra Bornstein

If time allows, consider traveling off the beaten track to two other state-run parks. Millions of years ago, the land in [Goblin Valley State Park](#) was magically transformed into curious and unique shapes that resemble goblins. We recommend the 1.5 mile Carmel Canyon Trail for a chance to scamper through rock formations. At nearby [Little Horse Canyon](#), hikers can navigate their way through slot canyon trails for half a day or longer. It's advisable not to come when rain is forecasted. Due to the nature of the terrain, one could easily drown during a rainstorm.

Goblin Valley State Park and Little Horse Canyon are approximately 1 ½ hours from Moab.

Good to Know:

- It takes less than two hours to travel between Grand Junction, Colorado (Colorado National Monument) and Moab, Utah (Arches, Canyonlands, and Dead Horse State Park).

- Grand Junction has a regional airport that offers nonstop service from several nearby states. Once in town, visitors can select locally grown cherries, peaches, grapes, and other produce, and sip wine from one of the nearby wineries.
- Water is a necessity and is in limited supply in the parks. Make sure your vehicle has one-gallon water jugs for each passenger.
- We also suggest keeping the car's gasoline tank filled when heading to desolate areas.

Have you traveled to any of these parks? Got any tips that we should know about? Let us know in the comments!

ONE RESPONSE

sedona Shopping near Melbourne

June 21, 2017

That is a great tip particularly to those new to the blogosphere. Short but very precise info... Many thanks for sharing this one. A must read post!

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