

Red Canyon is a choice stop on the way to Bryce.

OPPOSITE Excursions of Escalante offers canyoneering trips; the Eaves Suite at Springdale's Under the Eaves Inn.



noise; all you hear is the flapping of a raven's wings and lizards rustling in the leaves."

Zion National Park

Other Southwest parks have vastness; Zion is intimate. As you walk through its narrow, winding canyons, each new turn makes you feel like the earth is unfolding before you. The classic hike here is the Watchman Trail into lower Zion Canyon.

Springdale

A lot of national park gateway towns are tourist traps, but Springdale (just outside Zion) is a charmer, sitting in the folds of red rock cliffs like an unwrapped present. Gallery hop, buy postcards to send to envious friends, and stay in a B&B.

Mt. Carmel

Nearly 70 years ago, Maynard Dixon made this corner of Utah his home.

Today, the artist's rustic studio in Mt. Carmel is open for tours. In August, it's the site of the Maynard Dixon Country festival, with exhibits by contemporary landscape artists.

Red Canyon

State 12, just east of U.S. 89, is a National Scenic Byway, and you'll see why as you enter Red Canyon, with its eerie hoodoos rising alongside the road like rock ghosts. From the Red Canyon Visitor Center, hike along the 1-mile Pink Ledges Trail, which gives you great vistas for little effort.

Bryce Canyon National Park

If Zion is considered intimate, Bryce is all-encompassing—a natural amphitheater studded with pinnacles and spires, as weirdly beautiful as dripping sandcastles. If you just want to gaze at Bryce, there are turnouts that let you do that; if you have time for a hike, a moderate short

one (2.9 miles round-trip) can be made on the Queens Garden/Navajo Loop trail, which takes you into the canyon.

Escalante

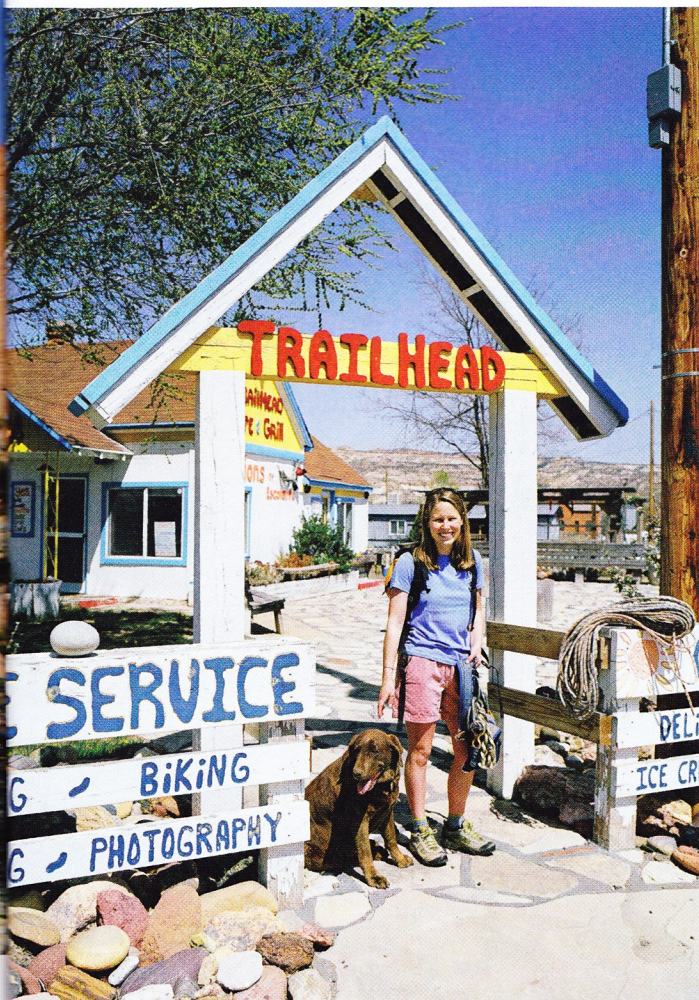
Once a sleepy Mormon town, Escalante has become an adventure spot for travelers who want to explore the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument. This area epitomizes the Southwest at its wildest; mazes of rocks descend along Escalante River toward the Colorado River.

Boulder

Between Escalante and Boulder, Utah, State 12 climbs onto a ridge that gives sweeping views; it's one of the most beautiful drives in the country. Amid the wilderness, you come upon a great place to stay, Boulder Mountain Lodge—a sophisticated surprise with one of the best eateries in the Southwest, Hell's Backbone Grill.

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INFO

St. George, Utah, is 120 miles northeast of Las Vegas via I-15. Kanab is 83 miles east of St. George on U.S. 89, and Boulder, Utah, is about 200 miles from St. George. Check on hiking and road conditions before heading out; heavy rains, typical in July and August, can cause flash floods.

WHERE TO STAY

Parry Lodge This is where stars such as Ronald Reagan slept when they filmed in Kanab. From \$77; parrylodge.com or 800/748-4104.
Under the Eaves Inn One of Springdale's many charming places to stay; it's a sweet little 1931 cottage. From \$95; undertheeaves.com
Desert Pearl Inn set along the Virgin River in Springdale. From \$148; desertpearl.com
Best Western Ruby's Inn After hiking in Bryce, stop for the night here. From \$135; rubysinn.com
Escalante Outfitters Get maps here, and stay in one of the seven cabins. From \$49; escalanteoutfitters.com

Boulder Mountain Lodge An amazingly civilized stop amid sweeping wilderness. From \$99; 800/556-3446.

WHERE TO EAT

The Rocking V Cafe and the Rafters Gallery Southwest fare, pastas, and vegetarian dishes. \$\$; 97 W. Center St., Kanab; 435/644-8001.

The Bit and Spur Restaurant and Saloon Sample the chile-rubbed steak asado. \$\$; 1212 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale; 435/772-3498.

WHAT TO DO

Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park Allows off-highway vehicle use, but with protected areas for hiking. On Sand Dunes Rd., off U.S. 89 north of Kanab; \$6; stateparks.utah.gov or 435/648-2800.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Drop by the visitor center for more info. Don't miss the Toadstools, bizarre formations on a 1.5-mile round-trip. Visitor center: 745 E. U.S. 89, Kanab; 435/644-4680. Toadstools trailhead 1½ miles east of Paria Contact

Station on north side of U.S. 89, 45 miles east of Kanab; 435/644-4680.
Maynard Dixon Living History Museum and Bingham Gallery Tours of Dixon's home and studio, self-guided and docent-led. The gallery features works by Dixon and leading American artists. Self-guided tours \$10; docent-led tours (reservations required) \$20; thunderbirdfoundation.com or 435/648-2653.
Willow Canyon Outdoor Knowledgeable staff, great coffee, and an assortment of gear and books. 263 South 100 East, Kanab; 435/644-8884.
Wire Pass The hike begins 8 miles down graded-gravel House Rock Valley Rd., 39 miles east of Kanab off U.S. 89, and lies within Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. The hike has scrambles down falls that may be tricky, but you can glimpse the slot canyon prior to these obstacles. \$5; blm.gov/az/paria or 435/644-4600 for more info.
Zion National Park The moderate Watchman Trail starts near the Zion Canyon Visitor Center and makes a 2.7-mile loop. This

summer, watch out for construction on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway/State 9. Call 435/772-3256 for current road conditions. \$25 per vehicle; nps.gov/zion
Red Canyon Drive north on U.S. 89 and east on State 12. The canyon is in Dixie National Forest. www.fs.fed.us/r4/dixie
Bryce Canyon National Park Hike into the coral canyons. \$25 per vehicle; nps.gov/brca
Excursions of Escalante Try canyoneering. From \$145; excursions ofescalante.com
Worthington Gallery Features work by owner and potter Greg Worthington and 20 other painters and ceramic, glass, and metal artists. 789 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale; 800/626-9973.
David Pettit Gallery Marvelous landscape photography. 975 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale; 435/772-3206.
 -DAVID HANSON AND PETER FISH