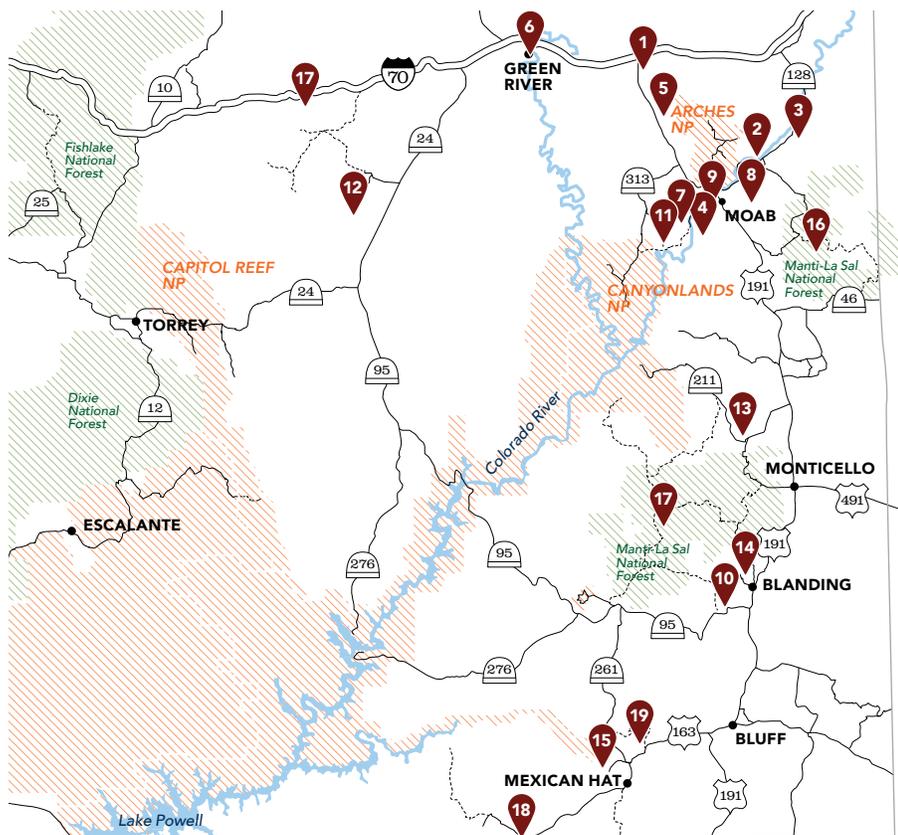


# AWESOME ALTERNATIVES TO UTAH'S NATIONAL PARKS

## ARCHES & CANYONLANDS



While Arches and Canyonlands national parks are highlights of visits to southeast Utah, they only scratch the surface of the region's range of outdoor adventure and vacation amenities. In addition to endless hiking and off-road adventure around Moab, you can also explore the San Rafael Swell, Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, multiple state parks — including the must-see Dead Horse Point State Park — and some of Utah's best scenic byways, like the dramatic Trail of the Ancients National Scenic Byway.

### WINTER FAVORITES

#### 1 **DINOSAUR DIAMOND NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY**

This region was once the world's real "Jurassic Park," an area teeming with dinosaurs that roamed the region for million of years. Today, dinosaur enthusiasts come to experience the byway and examine the land, looking for clues from prehistoric eras. Travelers will experience active dinosaur dig sites, and rock art panels. Numerous towns and sites are situated along the 512-mile byway, including Vernal and Moab. [visitutah.com/dino](http://visitutah.com/dino)

#### 2 **MOAB MUSEUM OF FILM AND WESTERN HERITAGE**

100 years of cowboy and movie history is the theme of this museum at Red Cliffs Lodge in Moab. Over a hundred movies and commercials have been filmed in the Moab and southern Utah region. The self-guided tour will take you on a journey with photos and movie memorabilia. [redcliffslodge.com/property/moab-museum-film-western-heritage](http://redcliffslodge.com/property/moab-museum-film-western-heritage)

#### 3 **FISHER TOWERS**

On this 5.2-mile round-trip trail, you will pass sandstone formations towering above the Colorado River, 20 miles east of Moab. Camping, geology and rock climbing are popular activities with distant views of Castle Valley, Fisher Mesa and the Book Cliffs. Explore Fisher Towers and other other Moab-area hikes outside the national parks. [visitutah.com/hikes-near-moab](http://visitutah.com/hikes-near-moab)

#### 4 **KANE SPRINGS ROAD**

Check conditions before setting out in this area. Kane Springs is home to the excellent Amasa Back mountain bike and jeep trail that begins approximately 5.9 miles up the canyon. The scenic Amasa Back is a

great primer for the more technical mountain bike rides that exist in and around Moab. You'll also pass filming locations from "The Lone Ranger." Or, if you're looking for a spectacular sunset, park your car and hike the Moab Rim Trail, which offers views of the Colorado River, La Sal Mountains and Moab. (If you're going at sunset, be sure to bring a headlamp or flashlight to ensure the hike down is a safe one — there are several large drops off the side of the trail.)

#### 5 **KLONDIKE BLUFFS**

A great introduction to Moab-area mountain biking, Klondike Bluffs is a 9.6-mile out-and-back ride over mostly moderate terrain. Check snow conditions, but frequently accessible in the winter. You'll travel through myriad sandstone outcroppings and dinosaur footprints before reaching a small gate at the entrance to Arches National Park. Here, you'll find scenic views into the park—a great place to relax before turning around to retrace your path back to the car. [utahmountainbiking.com/trails/klondike.htm](http://utahmountainbiking.com/trails/klondike.htm)

#### 6 **JOHN WESLEY POWELL RIVER HISTORY MUSEUM**

In Green River, the John Wesley Powell River History Museum pays homage to Powell, and teaches you about his expeditions, the history of the West's exploration, and the geography of the area. The museum was first built in 1990, and continues to attract river rats and history buffs alike. A stop by the John Wesley Powell River History Museum not only gives you a better understanding about the history of the area and its rivers, but also, a deep appreciation for those who were the first to explore it.

<http://www.powellmuseum.org/>

## 7 POTASH-LOWER COLORADO RIVER SCENIC BYWAY

The Moab area is well-known for its abundance of Native American rock art. Two signs along this scenic byway identify the locations of several petroglyph panels depicting what appear to be animals and human-like figures. Further along, another sign points out the location of large rocks above the highway where you will see a set of dinosaur tracks. Watch for Corona Arch, Bow Tie Arch, Jug Handle Arch, Cane Creek Mine and the cliffs of Dead Horse Point State Park along the way. [visitutah.com/byways](http://visitutah.com/byways)

## 8 SAND FLATS RECREATION AREA

Near Moab, this 9,000-acre recreation area is at the heart of the Colorado Plateau. Slickrock domes, bowls and fins in the east meet the colorful mesas and nearly 13,000 foot peaks of the La Sal Mountains. Bordering the area are the canyons of the Negro Bill and Mill Creek Wilderness Study Areas, the deep gorge of the Colorado River and Arches National Park. Famous Slickrock and Porcupine Rim bike trails and 40 miles of jeep trails are located here and are world-renowned for their combination of challenge and scenery. [sandflats.org](http://sandflats.org)

## 9 SCOTT M. MATHESON WETLANDS PRESERVE

The Scott M. Matheson Wetlands is an 894-acre oasis in the desert — a brilliant contrast to the surrounding red rock cliffs and arid desert. More than 200 species of birds flock to this oasis, also home to several species of amphibians, including the northern leopard frog, and aquatic mammals such as the beaver, muskrat and elusive river otter. This preserve is located in Moab, along the banks of the Colorado River. Click on “birding” under the Activities tab. [discovermoab.com/birding.htm](http://discovermoab.com/birding.htm)

## 10 THE ANCESTRAL PUEBLOAN RUINS OF S.R. 95

Many of the highlights on this list are part of Utah’s Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway. Along state Route 95 you’ll discover trailheads to astonishing ruins of ancient cliff dwellings in the stark beauty of Utah’s Canyon Country. Butler Wash, Comb Ridge and the South Fork of Mule Canyon to House on Fire are highlights of this archaeologically significant region. [utahscanyoncountry.com](http://utahscanyoncountry.com)

## 11 DEAD HORSE POINT STATE PARK

In winter, Dead Horse Point State Park is legendary for its snow-dusted red rock overlooks. There are few sites in Utah more beautiful than a light white dusting on red rock canyons towering 2,000 feet over the meandering Colorado River. Check out the view from the visitor center’s desk. And at this time of year, you’ll have the yurts, views and trails — mountain biking, hiking, and even, fat tire mountain biking — to yourself, unless an unkindness of ravens decide to dance above you on the updrafts of the wind. This park is also an internationally certified gold-tier dark sky park, magnificent for dark sky viewing. [visitutah.com/dead-horse-point](http://visitutah.com/dead-horse-point)

## 12 GOBLIN VALLEY STATE PARK

Always a place of geological whimsy, Goblin Valley State Park might be even more fascinating in the winter. Covered with sandstone goblins and fascinating formations, it’s kind of like trying out winter on Mars. This park is also an internationally certified gold-tier dark sky park and boasts two heated yurts open for reservation. [visitutah.com/goblin-valley](http://visitutah.com/goblin-valley)

## 13 INDIAN CREEK CORRIDOR SCENIC BYWAY AND NEWSPAPER ROCK

This byway traverses high sage plains before plunging down through a series of tight turns to Indian Creek and the pull-off to Newspaper Rock Recreation Site. A 50-foot high rock face covered with petroglyphs from several distinct cultures. From prehistory through frontier days, people felt the need to make their mark at this timeworn junction, and the result is a fascinating and crowded mix of messages that cover the huge rock slab. Indian Creek is also popular for rock climbing and the road skirts Dugout Ranch — one of the earliest and largest private cattle ranches in the area, now operated by The Nature Conservancy. [utahscanyoncountry.com](http://utahscanyoncountry.com)

## 14 EDGE OF THE CEDARS STATE PARK

Edge of the Cedars museum houses the largest displayed collection of Ancestral Puebloan artifacts in the Four Corners region. The park offers unique educational programs, including festivals and special exhibits, throughout the year. [stateparks.utah.gov/parks/edge-of-the-cedars](http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/edge-of-the-cedars)

## 15 GOOSENECKS STATE PARK

Visitors experience profound solitude as they gaze 1,000 feet into a chasm created by the San Juan River over 300 million years. The great gooseneck of the river — a rare entrenched river meander — is the longest geologic formation of its kind in North America. [stateparks.utah.gov/parks/goosenecks](http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/goosenecks)

## 16 MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST

The Manti-La Sal National Forest consists of three distinct destinations located in central, eastern and southeastern Utah. There are several high elevation lakes, and developed areas for camping. In south-eastern Utah, the La Sal and Abajo mountain ranges provide excellent opportunities for cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain climbing and dispersed (primitive) camping. They also serve as scenic backdrops to state and national parks in southeastern Utah. Dark Canyon Wilderness is a spectacular area offering solitude and adventure.

## 17 SAN RAFAEL SWELL

The San Rafael Swell is a rugged playground for OHV enthusiasts, mountain bikers and hikers — but this is a very isolated area so come prepared with plenty of supplies. [visitutah.com/san-rafael](http://visitutah.com/san-rafael)

## 18 MONUMENT VALLEY NAVAJO TRIBAL PARK

Monument Valley is an iconic symbol of the American West and is internationally recognizable because of its striking red rock spires, buttes and mesas. The valley is also known as the setting for dozens of movies. A visitor center offers information on the area and exhibits of Navajo archaeology, arts and crafts. A self-guided scenic drive leads to overlooks of the park’s famous formations, while further exploration is offered via guided tour. [visitutah.com/monument-valley](http://visitutah.com/monument-valley)

## 19 MULEY POINT, VALLEY OF THE GODS

A remote, scenic overlook near Mexican Hat, Muley Point offers sweeping panoramas of desert landscapes. This point is located about 30 miles south of Natural Bridges Monument off S.R. 261, accessible by a dirt road. On a clear day, the view includes Monument Valley, the Four Corners, Valley of the Gods, and the Goosenecks. Camping available. Valley of the Gods is a scenic backway with landscapes reminiscent of Monument Valley. The road is graded gravel and clay and suitable for all cars in dry conditions. [utahscanyoncountry.com](http://utahscanyoncountry.com)

FOR UPDATES:

Twitter: @visitutah | Facebook: facebook.com/utahofficeoftourism | Web: visitutah.com/shutdown