



# UTAH ROAD TRIP ITINERARY

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY **DANA BROWN**

## DAY 1 SALT LAKE CITY

### ARRIVE SALT LAKE CITY

- ◆ Pick up your rental car from the airport.
- ◆ Head to Walmart for all your road trip essentials.
- ◆ Stock up on fresh water, snacks and any extras you forgot to pack!



### SALT LAKE CITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Check out the Great Salt Lake — the best access points are Antelope Island State Park or the Great Salt Lake State Park. Spend the afternoon wandering the Temple Square Complex, Utah State Capitol Building and the National History Museum. If the Utah Jazz (the state's much-loved NBA team) are in town, get your hands on some tickets and treat yourself to the buzzing atmosphere of a basketball game. Have your first American dinner at **The Copper Onion** who focus on locally sourced produce. If you've got a little more time on your hands and can fly in earlier, get yourself out to Park City Resort — it's so close and would be a shame to miss especially during the winter.

**ACCOMMODATION:** **The Grand America Hotel**

## DAY 2 SALT LAKE CITY TO GREEN RIVER

DEPART SALT LAKE CITY THIS MORNING TO START DISCOVERING THE BEST OF UTAH.



### SALT LAKE CITY TO SAN RAFAEL SWELL

*(338 km - approx. 3.5 hours)*

Put on your favourite playlist, kick back and enjoy the jaw dropping scenery as you make your way to San Rafael Swell. Make sure you check out The Wedge. It's known as the little Grand Canyon and it has incredible views over the valley (you could even try your hand at canyoneering). Rochester Art Panel is another must for the historic petroglyphs.

You'll also find Goblin Valley State Park nearby but sit tight — we'll circle back there this week.

### SAN RAFAEL SWELL TO GREEN RIVER

*(58 km - approx. 40 minutes)*

After a big day of exploring, Green River is the perfect place to fill your belly and rest your head. Eat at **Tamarisk** — it's so 'Tam Good!'

**ACCOMMODATION:** River Terrace

## DAY 3 THE FIRST OF THE MIGHTY FIVE

ON THIS LEG OF YOUR JOURNEY, YOU'LL BE WONDERING WHY SOME OF THESE STATE PARKS ARE NOT UPGRADED TO NATIONAL PARKS.



### GREEN RIVER TO DEAD HORSE POINT STATE PARK

*(101 km - approx. 1 hour)*

First up today is Dead Horse Point State Park. If you're up for an early start, it's one of the best places to stargaze and was recognised as a Dark Sky Park in 2016.

### DEAD HORSE POINT STATE PARK TO CANYONLANDS

*(19 km - 16 minutes)*

Close by is the world renowned Canyonlands National Park where you'll find hundreds of miles of hiking trails. Mesa Arch is the most well known and if you can make it work for sunrise, you'll be glad you did (so will your Instagram stories!).

### CANYONLANDS TO SLICKROCK BIKE TRAIL

*(54 km - 45 minutes)*

Finish the day off with an adrenaline-fix by either hiring a mountain bike to tackle the Hells Backbone, or if you're not a fan of pedal power, you can also experience it by ATV or 4x4.

### SLICKROCK BIKE TRAIL TO MOAB

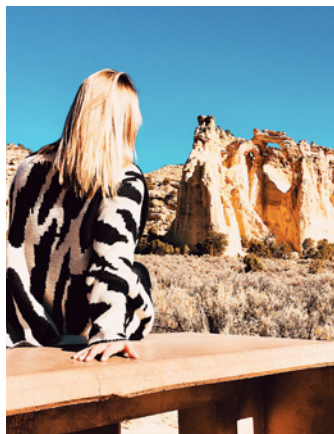
*(6 km - 10 minutes)*

After a day exploring some of the most unique scenery on earth, it's time to refuel in Moab (if you've got more time, you could easily spend a few days here). Treat yourself to a specially crafted beer at **The Moab Brewery** and do some carb loading at **Pasta Jays**.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Best Western Plus Canyonlands

## DAY 4 THE WILD WEST

YOU'RE OFFICIALLY HEADING INTO AMERICA'S FRONTIER LAND TODAY.



### MOAB TO ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

*(8 km - approx. 8 minutes)*

Start the day off right with a sunrise hike within Arches National Park's red rock wonderland. There are over 2,000 natural sandstone arches scattered throughout the park. Delicate Arch is my personal favourite and is best to photograph at sunset. However, if you decide to tackle it at sunrise, you can enjoy the peace with less people.

### ARCHES NATIONAL PARK TO BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

*(96 km - approx. 1 hour)*

Stop by one of the most extensive archaeological sites on earth. Bears Ears was the first ever monument within the U.S. requested by a collective of Indigenous tribes.

### BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT TO GOOSENECKS STATE PARK

*(162 km - approx. 1 hour 50 minutes)*

Another impressive stop on your adventure today is Goosenecks. Be sure to stop here to take in the sweeping views. The San Juan River has carved some pretty impressive tight turns deep into the Canyon that you must see.

### GOOSENECKS STATE PARK TO MONUMENT VALLEY

*(49 km - approx. 40 minutes)*

Get the famous shot at Forrest Gump Point before driving into Monument Valley. Make sure you book yourself on a tour while in Navajo Nation as it will give you access to areas that are not accessible to the general public. Goulding's has a range of tours, as well as lodging. Eat at Stagecoach Restaurant at Goulding's.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Goulding's Lodge — Villas

## DAY 5 MONUMENT VALLEY TO CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

STOCK UP ON SNACKS — YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER EPIC DRIVE TODAY.



### MONUMENT VALLEY TO NATURAL BRIDGES MONUMENT

*(109 km - approx. 1 hour 20 minutes)*

Keep an eye out for the hidden gem that is known as the 'Mexican Hat'. Not long after that, you're going to have your hairs stand on end as you ascend a series of switchbacks carved into the hillside, known as the Moki Dugway. Once at Natural Bridges, choose your hike.

Sipapu bridge is a highlight, being the second largest natural bridge in all of America.

### NATURAL BRIDGES MONUMENT TO GOBLIN VALLEY STATE PARK

*(218 km - approx. 2 hours 45 minutes)*

There is nowhere else like Goblin Valley. A sandstone wonderland where nature has shaped the stunning hoodoos into goblin-like shapes. It's the perfect maze for a game of hide and seek.

### GOBLIN VALLEY TO CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

*(98 km - approx. 1 hour)*

Hike the Hickman Bridge trail, and spend time in charming Fruita and its surrounding orchards.

### CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK TO TORREY

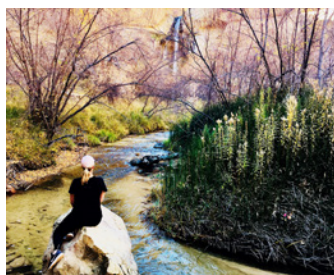
*(7 km - 10 minutes)*

You'll be hungry after today so head to Broken Spur Steakhouse.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Cougar Ridge

## DAY 6 WORKING ON THAT MIGHTY FIVE

STREET FOOD, WATERFALLS,  
ARCHES AND HOODOOS —  
IT'S ALL HAPPENING TODAY.



### TORREY TO LOWER CALF CREEK FALLS

*(73 km - approx. 1 hour)*

Grab breakfast at **Magnolia's Street Food Truck** in Boulder on your way. Enjoy the 6 mile return hike to Lower Calf Creek Falls as you pass by mineral streaked sandstone cliffs, rock art and falls that flow into an oasis-like pool.

### CALF CREEK FALLS TO KODACHROME BASIN STATE PARK

*(97 km - approx. 1 hour 15 minutes)*

Take the panorama loop to check out Chimney Rock, Shakespeare Arch and Ballerina Geyser.

### KODACHROME BASIN STATE PARK TO BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK

*(36 km - approx. 30 minutes)*

The trails here are endless but make sure you check out Queens Garden Loop Trail, Sunset and Sunrise Point. Eat at **I.D.K Barbecue**.

**ACCOMMODATION:** **Best Western Plus Bryce Canyon Grand Hotel**

## DAY 7 BRYCE CANYON TO KANAB



### BRYCE CANYON TO THE BELLY OF THE DRAGON

*(97 km - approx. 1 hour 11 minutes)*

Take advantage of a breathtaking sunrise over Bryce Canyon before driving south for a short but fun hike through the Belly of the Dragon.

### THE BELLY OF THE DRAGON TO CORAL PINK SAND DUNES STATE PARK

*(23 km - approx. 20 minutes)*

Take an ATV tour or rent a sandboard and revel in your childlike joy.

### CORAL PINK SAND DUNES STATE PARK TO BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SANCTUARY

*(26 km - approx. 22 minutes)*

Stop in for a hike at Red Canyon Slot (aka Peekaboo trailhead) & Moqui Cave along the way, before visiting the largest sanctuary of its kind in the US.

### BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SANCTUARY TO KANAB

*(11 km - approx. 10 minutes)*

Known as 'Little Hollywood', you'll find a bunch of abandoned film sets near town that have become attractions. Dinner at **Sego** is a must.

**ACCOMMODATION:** **Parry Lodge**

## DAY 8 THE FINAL FIVE



### KANAB TO ZION NATIONAL PARK

*(48 km - approx. 30 minutes)*

You want the full day to hike here. Check out Angels Landing, Eye of the Needle, and the Narrows. Dine at the **Red Rock Grill** for sweeping views over the canyon floor.

**ACCOMMODATION:** **Cable Mountain Lodge**

## DAY 9 ZION TO CEDAR CITY



### ZION NATIONAL PARK TO CEDAR BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

*(97 km - approx. 1 hour 10 minutes)*

You have time to squeeze in a sunrise hike at Zion before heading to Cedar Breaks National Monument. Native Americans call this the 'circle of painted cliffs', and it resembles a smaller Bryce Canyon — some even say the colours run deeper.

### CEDAR BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT TO DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST

*(15 km - approx. 13 minutes)*

More than just a forest, it stretches 170 miles across Southern Utah. Take a leisurely drive or a short hike to experience some of its beauty.

### DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST TO CEDAR CITY

*(18 km - approx. 15 minutes)*

You could take a moment to relax here but there is no excuse to do nothing in Cedar City. There are trails a plenty and a vibrant art scene. Dine at **Centro Woodfired Pizzeria**.

**ACCOMMODATION:** **Best Western Plus Cedar City**

## DAY 10 CROSSING THE FINISH LINE AND STATE LINES...



### CEDAR CITY TO SNOW CANYON STATE PARK

*(99 km - approx. 58 minutes)*

Exploding with photo opportunities, adventure, and geology, Snow Canyon is a must for hikers and bikers. Stop in nearby St George (15 minutes) to tour Brigham Young's winter home and the Daughters of the Utah Pioneer Museum. Grab Lunch at the **Painted Pony**.

### ST GEORGE TO LAS VEGAS

*(193 km - approx. 1 hour 50 minutes)*

The options are endless here. Spend a few nights enjoying all that Vegas has to offer or take another week and road trip **beyond the strip**.