



Around Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Escalante Grand Staircase B&B (p153)
- ➔ Boulder Mountain Lodge (p155)
- ➔ Canyons Lodge (p157)
- ➔ Basin Campground (p152)

Best Places to Eat

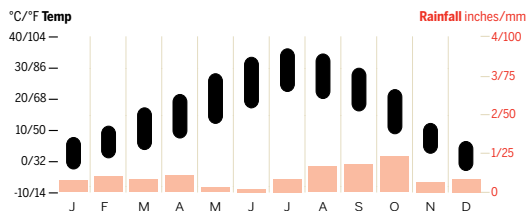
- ➔ Hell's Backbone Grill (p155)
- ➔ Burr Trail Grill & Outpost (p155)
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Why Go?

Highway 12 brings the vast majority of visitors to Grand Staircase, and as such you'll find the main visitor centers and services north of the national monument in the towns of Boulder and Escalante. Nearby Kodachrome Basin State Park features hiking and biking trails past petrified geysers and sandstone chimneys, but is best for pitching a tent – the campground here has showers, which definitely hit the spot after a day scrambling around in the dusty slots.

A full 120 miles from Escalante, at the southwest corner of Grand Staircase off Hwy 89, is cinematic Kanab, another good base for exploring the park and ideally situated between GSENM, Bryce, Zion and the Grand Canyon's North Rim. The remote Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs wilderness area is a must for hardcore explorers and landscape photographers, with tough multiday canyoneering treks and a coveted hike to the world-famous Wave formation.

When to Go Escalante



May–Aug

Temperatures soar, though nights are cool, and traffic is busy.

Mar–Jun, Sep & Oct

Generally pleasant but often unpredictable weather.

Nov–Feb

Snow at higher elevations; canyons are bitterly cold.

Kodachrome Basin State Park

Petrified geysers and dozens of red, pink and white sandstone chimneys – some nearly 170ft tall – resemble everything from a sphinx to a snowmobile at **Kodachrome Basin** (☎435-679-8562; www.stateparks.utah.gov; off Cottonwood Canyon Rd; day use per vehicle \$8; ☀day use 6am-10pm). The park lies off Hwy 12, 9 miles south of Cannonville and 26 miles southeast of Bryce Canyon National Park. Visit in the morning or afternoon, when shadows play on the red rock.

Most sights are along mountain-biking and hiking trails. The moderately easy, 3-mile round-trip **Panorama Trail** gives the best overview. Be sure to take the side trails to **Indian Cave**, where you can check out the hand prints on the wall (from ‘cow-boys’ or ‘Indians?’), and **Secret Passage**, a short hike through a narrow slot canyon. **Angel Palace Trail** (1-mile loop, moderate) has great desert views from on high. Red Canyon Trail Rides (p122), based near Bryce, offers horseback rides.

The 26 well-spaced sites at the reservable park service **Basin Campground** (☎800-322-3770; <http://utahstateparks.reserveamerica.com>; tent/RV sites \$19/28) have showers, full hookups for RVs and shade from juniper trees. The new **Bryce View Campground** (site \$16) has 11 reservable sites with fire rings, vault toilet and water tap.

The four **Red Stone Cabins** (☎435-679-8536; www.redstonecabins.com; cabin \$109; ☀Mar-Oct; 🍷🍷) are simple but cozy, with all the essentials (linens, microwave, minifridge and coffeemaker) and a king bed or two queens.

PARK RESOURCES

Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/wildareas/paria_vermilion.html)

Coral Pink Sand Dunes National Park (<http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/coral-pink>)

Kodachrome Basin State Park (<http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/kodachrome-basin>)

Escalante Petrified Forest State Park (<http://stateparks.utah.gov/parks/escalante-petrified-forest>)

The same family runs a little **camp store** (☀8am-6:30pm Sun-Thu, to 8pm Fri & Sat Apr-Oct).

Escalante

POPULATION 779 / ELEVATION 5600FT

Your gateway to the north side of the GSENM, Escalante is a mix of ranchers, old-timers, artists and post-monument-creation outdoors lovers. The town itself doesn't exude character, but a friendly selection of lodgings and restaurants make it a decent base camp. Numerous outfitters make this their base for hiking excursions, and you could, too. At the head of several park back roads, it's not far from the most popular GSENM hikes.

Sights & Activities

Hiking and driving in the monument are the main activities here. Reserve ahead to rent 4WD vehicles at **High Adventure Rentals** (☎435-616-4640; www.highadventurerentals.com).

Escalante Petrified Forest State Park

PARK

(www.stateparks.utah.gov; day use \$8; ☀day use 8am-10pm) Two miles west of town, the centerpiece of this state park is a 130-acre lake. Hike uphill about a mile on an interpretive route to see pieces of colorful petrified wood, millions of years old. Follow another short interpretive trail for further examples. The sites at the campground are reservable; showers available.

Tours

Escalante Outfitters

ADVENTURE SPORTS

(☎435-826-4266; www.escalanteoutfitters.com; 310 W Main St; natural history tours \$45; ☀7am-9pm) A traveler's oasis, this store sells area books, topographic maps, camping and hiking gear, and is attached to a cafe. Reputable guided hikes, fly-fishing, natural-history tours and mountain-bike rentals (from \$35 per day) available.

Escape Goats

ADVENTURE SPORTS

(☎435-826-4652; www.escapegoats.us; day hike \$100) Take an evening tour or day hike to dinosaur tracks, slot canyons and ancient sites. There's also fully catered backpacking trips (three days \$750) including gear. Recommended.

Excursions of Escalante

ADVENTURE SPORTS

(☎800-839-7567; www.excursionsofescalante.com; 125 E Main St; full day from \$150; ☀8am-