



# Moab

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## Best Hikes & Bikes

- The Whole Enchilada (p205)
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- La Sal Mountains (p207)
- Moonflower Canyon (p208)

## Best Places to Stay

- BLM Campgrounds (p215)
- ACT Campground (p215)
- Sunflower Hill Inn (p217)
- Sorrel River Ranch (p220)

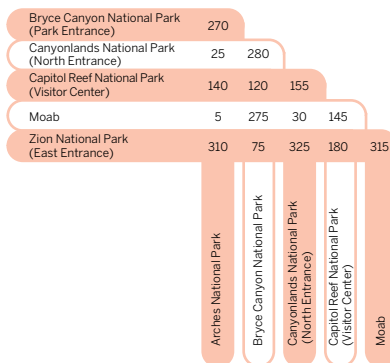
## Why Go?

Perfectly located in a little scrub brush valley amid some of grandest scenery in the American West, Moab is the pivot for adventures into Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.

It's also an adrenaline-seeker's paradise, with amazing access to some of the sickest single-track mountain-biking trails in the world, river-rafting and jetboating on nearby rivers, plus climbing, canyoneering, four-wheeling and hiking on an astro-fantastic desertscape that make this the best place on earth to play on Mars.

The town on its surface is little more than a strip of classic Americana motels, cheesy T-shirt shops, tour operators and bike outfits. Pull back the curtain and you'll discover hometown treats such as softball games, arts councils and fun-loving locals, brewpubs and bistros, and about a million visitors a year to create traffic mix-ups in a former uranium outpost that has a permanent population hovering around 5000.

## Driving Distances (miles)



Note: Distances are approximate

## History


Moab was founded by Mormon ranchers and farmers in the late 1870s after years of resistance from the Native American peoples of the region.



Nothing much changed until the Cold War of the 1950s, when the federal government subsidized uranium mining, and Moab's population tripled in three years. In search of 'radioactive gold,' miners bladed a network of primitive roads, laying the groundwork for the region to become a 4WD mecca half a century later. The miners also left ponds of radioactive tailings, residue from the mineral extraction process. Though uranium mining bottomed out in the 1980s when the feds quit paying premiums for the stuff, salt and potash mining continue, as does drilling for natural gas in the surrounding area, a contentious issue.

Hollywood loves Moab and has shot hundreds of Westerns in the surrounding countryside, mostly from the 1950s to the 1970s. But neither the mining boom nor Hollywood has had as much influence on Moab's current character as the humble mountain biker. In the mid-1980s, an influx of fatigue enthusiasts discovered the challenging and scenic slickrock desert and triggered a massive surge in tourism that continues unabated.



## Sights

**Moab Giants** AMUSEMENT PARK  
(www.moabgiants.com; Hwys 213 & 219; entrance from \$20; ) About to open at the time of research, this new paleo-amusement park features giant lifesize replica dinosaurs, walking trails, 3-D videos that might even bring you to a fourth dimension in some sections, information on dino tracks and more. It might be garish for some, but with a \$10 million initial investment, it will certainly be entertaining.

**Museum of Moab** MUSEUM  
(www.moabmuseum.org; 118 E Center St; adult/child \$5/free;  10am-6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct, noon-5pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr) Regional exhibits feature everything from paleontology and geology to uranium mining and Native American art.

**Moab Museum of Film & Western Heritage** MUSEUM  
( 435-259-2002, 866-812-2002; www.redcliffs.lodge.com/museum; Mile 14, Hwy 128;  8am-10pm) **FREE** Head out to the Moab Museum of Film & Western Heritage, based at Red Cliffs Adventure Lodge, 15 miles north of

town, to see Hollywood memorabilia from films shot locally; there are also historical displays on area ranches.

**Hole 'n the Rock** HOUSE  
(www.moab-utah.com/holeintherock; 11037 S Hwy 191; tours adult/child \$6/3.50;  9am-5pm; ) An unabashed tourist trap 12 miles south of Moab, Hole 'n the Rock is a 5000-sq-ft home-cum-cave carved into sandstone and decorated in knockout 1950s kitsch.

## Activities

**Mountain Biking**  
Local trail coalitions have added a bunch of new trails in the last five years. The basic rating systems follows skiing designations of green for easy, blue for moderate, black for difficult and double-black diamond for insane-experts-only-need-apply. It's important to protect the surrounding desert. Avoid all off-trail riding, and pack out everything you pack in. The busiest seasons are spring and fall. In summer, start riding by 7am at the latest - after that, it's too hot. In winter, snow might cover trails, but you can bike the roads. Check at local bike shops for guided trips, trail maps (\$2 per map), route info, rentals and shuttles.

**★ The Whole Enchilada** MOUNTAIN BIKING  
Accessed from the top of Geyser Pass at 10,600ft, this masterpiece combines the Burro Pass, Hazzard County, Jimmy Keen, UPS, LPS and Porcupine Rim Trails, offering everything from high-mountain descents to slickrock. It's a full-day affair for advanced riders with 7000ft of vertical drop and 26.5 miles of trails.

**Bar-M Loop** MOUNTAIN BIKING  
Bring the kids on this easy, 8-mile loop skirting the boundary of Arches, with great views and short slickrock stretches. Connect from here to more advanced **Moab Brands** trails.

**Klonzo** MOUNTAIN BIKING  
Accessed from Willow Springs Rd, this area offers a mix of flowing beginner, intermediate and advanced terrain.

### MOAB FAST FACTS

- Population: 5130
- Elevation: 4026ft
- Average high/low temperature in July: 100°F/87°F (37°C/30°C)