

Colorado National Monument

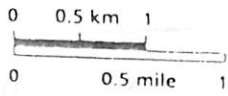
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Colorado National Monument
Fruita, CO 81521



Hiking in the Monument

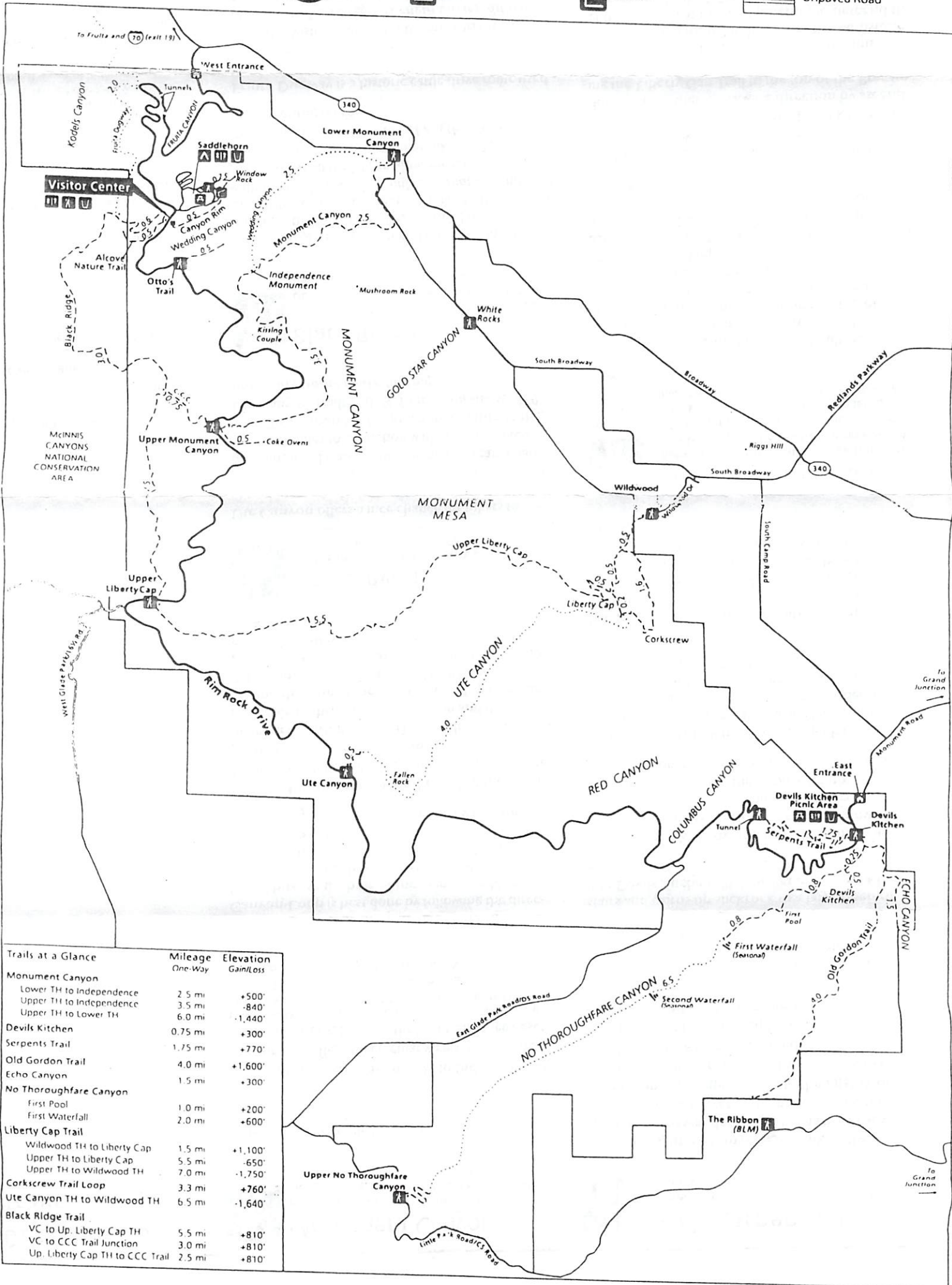
Some land outside the park boundary is privately owned.
Please respect the owners' rights and do not trespass.



- Ranger Station
- Hiking trailhead
- Campground

- Drinking Water
- Picnic Area
- Shelter

- Hiking Trail
- Unmaintained Trail
- Unpaved Road



Backcountry Trails



Monument Canyon

Lower Trailhead: Located off of Hwy 340. Drive 2.1 miles east of the West Entrance and turn right onto a dirt driveway leading to the trailhead parking area.

Upper Trailhead: Located on Rim Rock Drive 3.8 miles east of the Visitor Center.

Lower Monument Canyon TH to Independence Monument offers spectacular views of towering rock formations. It is also the best trail to see desert bighorn sheep during the fall. For visitors looking to do only one hike in the Monument, look no further. The 2.5 mile trail follows the base of sandstone cliffs to the massive Independence Monument. *(2.5 miles one-way, +500'; moderate)*

Lower Monument Canyon and Wedding Canyon Loop is best done by following the directions above to the base of Independence Monument. Once at the base turn right and follow the unmaintained trail through Wedding Canyon for 2.5 miles back to the trailhead. *(5 mile loop, +500'; moderate, rocky terrain)*

Upper Monument Canyon TH to Independence Monument takes hikers through the more remote portions of Monument Canyon on the way to Independence Monument. The trail descends steeply for 1 mile to the floor of the canyon and then winds around the base of the sandstone cliffs passing under Kissing Couple and several unnamed monoliths (rock towers) on the way to Independence Monument. *(3.5 miles one-way, -840'; difficult, steep, rocky terrain)*



Ute Canyon

Trailhead: Located on Rim Rock Drive 9.4 miles east of the Visitor Center.

Ute Canyon offers a nice chance for hikers to experience a rather lush canyon bottom ecosystem. After a steep 0.5 mile descent into Ute Canyon, an unmaintained trail follows the main stream channel for 4 miles to a junction with the Corkscrew Trail. Turn around at the junction to return to the Ute Canyon Trailhead. *(4.5 miles one-way, -880'; moderate, some route-finding)*



Black Ridge

Trailheads: At the Visitor Center or the Upper Liberty Cap Trailhead located 6.3 miles east of the Visitor Center on Rim Rock Drive.

Black Ridge Trail goes in and out of BLM land as it traverses the hills west of Rim Rock Drive. Start at the Visitor Center and hike 3.5 miles to the junction with the CCC Trail *(0.75 mile trail that descends 460 ft. on its way to the Upper Monument Canyon TH)*. Turn around at the junction or hike for 2 miles to the Upper Liberty Cap TH. *(Length varies; moderate, rolling terrain)*

Fruita Dugway is a historic cattle drive route used by ranchers in the late 1800s. To access this unmaintained trail, follow the Black Ridge Trail from the Visitor Center for 0.6 miles to the signed junction and turn right. *(Length varies; difficult, rocky terrain, extensive route-finding)*



Devils Kitchen Trailheads

Trailhead: Located on Rim Rock Drive near the East Entrance.

No Thoroughfare Canyon gives hikers the opportunity to wander through a narrow canyon in the oldest rock layer in the park. Follow the wash for approximately 1 mile to the First Pool and turn around, or continue for 0.8 miles to the First Waterfall. An unmaintained route continues past the waterfall for 6.5 miles to the upper trailhead. *(1-2 miles one-way; moderate, rocky terrain)*

Devils Kitchen, a large sandstone monolith, is reached by following the No Thoroughfare Canyon Trail for 0.25 miles to a signed junction directing hikers to turn left. The trail follows rock stairs and cairns up slickrock to a large opening into Devils Kitchen. *(0.75 miles one-way, +300'; easy, rocky terrain)*

Echo Canyon's shady, interior offers an escape from the relentless midsummer heat. Follow the Old Gordon Trail for 0.5 miles to a signed junction directing hikers down the slickrock into Echo Canyon. *(1.5 miles one-way, +300'; easy)*

Old Gordon Trail winds up through large slickrock expanses and sandstone ledges for 4 miles. Along the way, hikers are rewarded with lovely views of No Thoroughfare Canyon. *(4 miles one-way, +1600'; moderate, rocky, some route-finding)*

Named for its numerous switchbacks, **Serpents Trail** was built as the first road into the park. It offers pleasant views of No Thoroughfare Canyon as it snakes its way to the Upper Trailhead on Rim Rock Drive. *(1.75 miles one-way, +770'; moderate)*



Wildwood Trailhead

Trailhead: From the West Entrance turn right at the stop sign and proceed east on Hwy 340 for 6.5 miles. Turn right at the light onto South Broadway/Redlands Parkway. Go 1.2 miles and turn left onto Wildwood Drive. The gravel parking lot will be 0.5 miles down the road on the right side.

Liberty Cap is one of the most difficult trails in the park and climbs steeply for 1.5 miles on the way to the Liberty Cap, a sandstone dome on top of the north wall of Ute Canyon. Those wanting a longer hike may wish to continue past Liberty Cap for 5.5 miles to the Upper Liberty Cap Trailhead on Rim Rock Drive. Once past the cap, the trail winds over rolling hills through the pinyon-juniper woodland. *(1.5 miles one-way, +1,100'; difficult, steep, rocky terrain)*

Corkscrew Trail Loop follows an historic route built by the park's first ranger, John Otto, and offers great views of Ute Canyon. The hike is best done in a counter-clockwise direction by ascending the Liberty Cap Trail to the top of the Precambrian "Bench", the oldest rock layer in the park. Once on top, turn left at the signed junction and follow the trail for 0.2 miles under the sandstone cliffs. Turn left at the next junction to descend the Corkscrew Trail. *(3.3 mile loop, +760', moderate)*

SHORT HIKES

Several short, easy trails offer views of Monument Canyon.

Canyon Rim Trail (0.5 mi)
Start at the Visitor Center and follow the rim of Wedding Canyon to the Book Cliffs View.

Alcove Nature Trail (0.5 mi)
Self-guided nature trail with a pleasant surprise at the end. Start across the road from the Visitor Center.

Window Rock Trail (0.25 mi)
Nice canyon views on the way to a fenced overlook.

Otto's Trail (0.5 mi)
Start from parking area on Rim Rock Drive 1 mile east of the Visitor Center. Trail leads to a fenced overlook with great views of Independence Monument.

Coke Ovens Trail (0.75 mi)
Start at the Upper Monument Canyon TH. Leads to a fenced overlook of the Coke Ovens.

Backcountry Travel

For More Information
Colorado National Monument
1750 Rim Rock Drive
Fruita, CO 81521
(970)858-3617 x 360
www.nps.gov/colm

Hiking Safety

- Be prepared. Always carry a topo map, extra clothing, plenty of water, and a flashlight.
- Desert trails can be hard to follow. If you become lost, stay in one place and call for help.
- Protect your skin. Wear a hat and sunscreen.
- Pay attention to rapidly changing weather. If lightning is in the area, be sure to stay in low-lying areas and return to your vehicle if possible.
- In case of emergency call 911.

Hiking Regulations

- Pets are only allowed on paved surfaces in the Monument. Pets are not allowed on hiking trails.
- Vehicles and bicycles must stay on roads.
- Leave No Trace. Please leave all natural and cultural objects where you find them. Please pack out all trash.
- Please view wildlife from a distance. Do not approach or feed any animals.
- Backcountry campers must obtain a free permit at the Visitor Center prior to camping.