



Rock Climbing



While not the most popular activity at Capitol Reef, opportunities for rock climbing exist in some areas of the park. Only certain layers of rock are suitable for climbing, and can vary widely in their hardness and reliability. Follow minimum impact climbing and camping practices. Please use care during all climbs, particularly on approach and exit routes, as delicate plants, fragile biological soil crusts, and other sensitive park resources exist in many off-trail areas.

Rock Type

The rock at Capitol Reef is comprised predominantly of sandstone. It varies in hardness from the soft, crumbly Entrada to the relatively hard Wingate. The Wingate cliff walls are the most popular for climbing, as natural fracturing has created many climbable

crack systems. In addition, the hardness of the Wingate lends itself more readily to the successful use of chocks, nuts, and camming devices. However, it can flake off easily and be very unpredictable.

Permits

Permits are not required for climbing. However, if you plan to camp overnight as part of a climb,

you are required to obtain a free backcountry use permit, available at the visitor center.

Restrictions and Concerns

Capitol Reef is a clean climbing area. Minimum impact techniques that don't destroy the rock or leave a visual trail are **required**:

- The use of white chalk is prohibited. Climbers using chalk must use chalk that closely matches the color of the surrounding rock.
- The use of power drills is prohibited.
- No new climbing hardware may be installed and/or left in a fixed location. Bolts may only be used to replace existing unsafe bolts.
- If an existing software item (slings, runners, etc.) is unsafe, it may be replaced.
- Where it is necessary to leave or replace existing webbing, the webbing should closely match the color of the surrounding rock.
- Protection may not be placed with the use of a hammer except to replace existing belay and rappel anchors and bolts on existing routes, or for emergency self-rescue.
- Physical alteration of rock faces is prohibited,

such as chiseling, glue reinforcement of existing holds, trundling rocks, and gluing of new holds.

- The intentional removal of lichen or plants from rock is prohibited.
- Ropes may not be left in place unattended for more than 24 hours, and these ropes must be out of reach from the ground or other points accessible without technical climbing.

These areas are **closed to climbing**:

- The section of cliffs north of Highway 24 between the Fruita Schoolhouse and the east end of the petroglyph boardwalk
- Temple of the Sun and Temple of the Moon
- Chimney Rock
- Any arch or natural bridge
- Within 300 feet (91 m) of an archeological site
- Within ¼ mile (402 m) of nesting eagles, hawks, owls, or falcons

Route Descriptions and Additional Information

Two published guides that cover climbs at Capitol Reef:

- *Desert Rock* by Eric Bjornstad (Chockstone Press, 1996)
- *Rock Climbing Utah* by Stewart M. Green (Falcon Guides, 2012)

Additional information on Capitol Reef climbing routes can be found on various websites. Search the internet for details.