

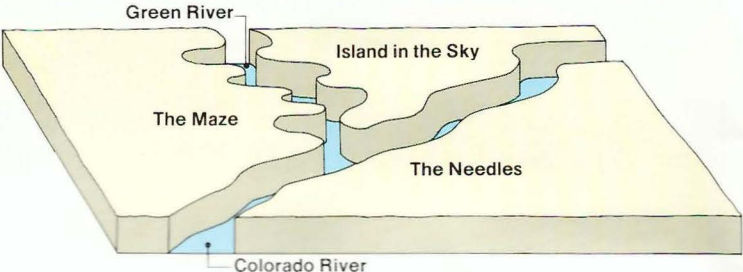
Canyonlands

Official Map and Guide

Canyonlands National Park
Utah

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Canyonlands preserves an immense wilderness of rock at the heart of the Colorado Plateau. Wind and water have been the prime architects of this land, cutting flat layers of sedimentary rock into hundreds of colorful canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches, and spires. At center stage are two great canyons, those carved by the Green and Colorado rivers. Surrounding the rivers are vast,



and very different, regions of the park: to the north, Island in the Sky; to the west, the Maze; and to the east, the Needles. The areas share a common primitive spirit and wild desert atmosphere. Each also offers its own special rewards. Few people were familiar with these remote lands and rivers when the park was established in 1964. Prehistoric Indians, cowboys, river explorers, and

uranium prospectors had dared to enter this rugged corner of southeastern Utah, but few others did. To a large degree, Canyonlands remains untrammeled today. Its roads are mostly unpaved, its trails primitive, its rivers free-flowing. Throughout its 527 square miles roam desert bighorn sheep, coyotes, and other animals native to this land. Canyonlands is wild America.

A Wilderness of Rock

Island in the Sky

Views from Island in the Sky reach from the depths of the Green and Colorado rivers to the heights of distant mountaintops and above. They stretch across canyon after canyon to the horizon 100 miles distant. A broad, level mesa wedged between the Green and Colorado, Island in the Sky serves as Canyonlands' observation tower. From its many overlooks sightseers absorb overwhelming vistas of almost incomprehensible dimensions. Closest to the mesa's edge is the White Rim, a nearly continuous sandstone bench 1,200 feet below the Island. Another 1,000 feet beneath the White Rim are the rivers, shadowed by sheer canyon cliffs, and beyond them lies the country of the Maze and the Needles. Outside the park's boundary three jagged mountain ranges abruptly break the pattern of the flat-topped canyon landscape. To the east rise the La Sal's; to the south, the Abajos; to the southwest, the Henrys. Rain that

counter wildlife, especially at dawn, at dusk, or during cooler months. Trails also lead to striking vistas, arches, and other outstanding geological features. Geologists would probably single out Upheaval Dome as the oddest geologic feature on Island in the Sky. Measuring 1,500 feet deep, the Dome does not look like a dome at all, but rather like a meteor crater or volcanic caldera. How was Upheaval Dome created? One popular theory suggests that slow-moving underground salt deposits pushed layers of sandstone upward and then later erosion created the jagged-edged crater seen today. Another popular and more recent theory suggests that the Dome was created when a meteor hit. If this theory becomes generally accepted by geologists, Upheaval Dome would become the only meteor-impact site preserved within a United States national park.

The Maze

The Maze country west of the Colorado and Green Rivers is Canyonlands at its wildest. It ranks as one of the most remote and inaccessible regions in the United States. There is the Maze itself, a perplexing jumble of canyons that has been described as a "30 square mile puzzle in sandstone." Beyond are the weirdly shaped towers, walls, buttes, and mesas of the Land of Standing Rocks, Ernie's Country, The Doll House, and the Fins. People come to this wilderness of broken rock, little water, and stunted junipers and finds intangible resources hard to find elsewhere: solitude, silence, and challenges demanding self-reliance. The 600-foot descent to the bottom of the Maze is a plunge into the heart of this country. Until the park was created, only a smattering of individuals had explored these canyons. Even today there are few visitors each year. Many come to see the ghostly figures painted on the walls of Horseshoe Canyon, which

The Needles

The contrasting names in the Needles country reflects the diversity of the land itself. Devils Kitchen and Angel Arch, Elephant Hill and Cathedral Arch, Gothic Arch and Paul Bunyans Pottery. The Needles is a startling landscape of sculptured rock spires, arches, canyons, grabens, and potholes. The dominant landforms are the Needles themselves—naked rock pinnacles banded in orange and white. Earth movements fractured the rock, and water, wind, and freezing and thawing eroded it into the jumbled terrain of today. Grassy meadows such as the 960-acre Chesler Park offer a striking contrast to the Needles' bare rock. And arches add a touch of the unusual to the region. Like Arches National Park to the north, the Needles country boasts a fascinating collection of natural rock spans. Angel Arch, located in a side canyon of Salt Creek Canyon, stands 150 feet high. The Wooden Shoe Arch, on the other hand, has just a small tunnel-

ing deer and bighorn, and gathering native seeds, fruits, and roots. This advanced culture was part of the same group of people that built the great stone pueblos of Mesa Verde in Colorado and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. Traces of the Anasazi can be found in almost every canyon in the Needles. Many of their stone and mud dwellings and storehouses are remarkably well-preserved. Tower Ruin, built high on a cliff ledge in a side canyon of Horse Canyon, is an outstanding example of the Anasazi's rock architecture. The Anasazi also left a record in the petroglyphs they etched and the pictographs they painted on cliff walls, as did the archaic hunters and gatherers who were here centuries before them. The meaning of the many figures, faces, handprints, and other images remains largely a mystery. Unfortunately, many pots, tools, and other items crafted and used by these prehistoric peoples are gone, stolen by pot hunters.

The Rivers

Explorer John Wesley Powell recorded the first impressions of the Canyonlands region as seen from the Green and Colorado Rivers on his pioneering 1869 boat trip. "We glide along through a strange, weird, grand region. The landscape everywhere, away from the river, is of rock," he wrote. More than a century later the rivers still run wild here. Above the confluence, the Green and Colorado meander slowly through deep, sheer-walled canyons. Below the confluence, the combined waters begin a 14-mile rush and tumble through the rapids of Cataract Canyon. It is one of the country's most treacherous white water stretches, rivaling any in the Grand Canyon. The Jekyll-and-Hyde personality of the rivers satisfies those looking forward to a quiet float, those eager for a helter-skelter river run, and those who want both. A lazy pace is best suited for investigating river life. As the only major water sources in the midst of a dry expanse,



Reptiles like the collared lizard are among the more colorful of the Island's creatures.



Bob McKeever

Small bands of desert bighorn sheep scramble expertly up and down terrain few people travel.



The claret cup cactus and other desert plants are well-adapted to the arid environment of the Maze.



Thea Nordling

Tower Ruin is one of hundreds of sites in the Needles where signs of ancient Indians exist.



F.A. Barnes

Like other Needles' arches, Angel Arch is a creation of weathering by wind and water.



Walter Meyers Edwards

Once in Cataract Canyon boats must plunge through one rapid after another; there is no turning back.



David Muench

It was "... the splendor of the landscape, the perfection of the silence ..." that writer Edward Abbey remembered after visiting the Island.



David Muench

First a cattle trail, then a road for uranium hunters, Shafer Trail today is a well-traveled 4-wheel-drive route that winds down the Island's edge.



Stephen Trimble

From one point of view the Maze's confusion of canyons is inhospitable; from another, it is an inviting refuge from civilization.



David Muench

The Needles, massive sandstone spires created by erosion and fracturing, form a giant crazy quilt pattern over a large area of Canyonlands.



Stephen Trimble

Born high in the mountains of Wyoming and Colorado, the Green and Colorado Rivers converge deep in the heart of Canyonlands.

passes by the arid soil of Canyonlands keeps these mountains mantled in forests of pine and fir. On the Island, vegetation is much sparser. Open fields of Indian rice grass and other grasses and pinyon-juniper pygmy forests survive on less than 10 inches of rain a year. Coyotes, foxes, squirrels, ravens, hawks, and smaller birds share the food of these lands. Herds of cattle and horses once grazed these desert pastures, too; abandoned water troughs and fences are reminders of those bygone days. Rocky ledges that lead down to and below the White Rim are a favorite habitat for many of Canyonlands' desert bighorn sheep. From the Island mesa the sheep look like tan fly-sized specks; only the sharpest observers will detect them. The many trails around the Island are good places to en-

Explorations From U.S. 191 take Utah 313 south to the Island. A paved road continues across the Island. Facilities include: 4-wheel-drive routes; self-guiding and primitive trails; developed campground; primitive campsites (backcountry permit required); picnic areas; overlooks; roadside and trailside exhibits; ranger guided walks and evening campfire programs (seasonal); commercial tours from nearby towns. Reservations for White Rim primitive campsites are recommended and can be requested in writing; address inquiries to the White Rim Reservations Office in care of Canyonlands National Park; backcountry permits required. No water is available on the Island. Entrance fee is charged.

were left by Indians at least 2,000 years ago. The haunting lifeseize forms, known together as the Great Gallery, are considered among the finest examples of prehistoric rock art in the country. They are a fitting reminder of the otherworldly spirit of this region, where people come and go, but never stay.

Explorations From Utah 24 or 95 take 2- and 4-wheel-drive routes east to the Maze. Facilities include: 4-wheel-drive routes; primitive trails; primitive campsites (backcountry permit required); overlooks; commercial tours from nearby towns. No water is available.

like opening. Other arches are shaped like a catpillar, a wedding ring, a horse's hoof. Most of the arches lie hidden in backcountry canyons and are well-deserved rewards for those who make the long 4-wheel-drive trips or hikes to see them. The Grabens lie at the end of another long 4-wheel-drive journey. To reach these vertical-walled, grass-carpeted valleys requires negotiating infamous Elephant Hill. With steep, rocky inclines and sharp switchbacks, Elephant Hill tests the skills of the most accomplished driver. Continuing past the Grabens, roads and trails lead to the Confluence Overlook, a point 1,000 feet above the meeting place of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Throughout this country the Anasazi Indians—the Ancient Ones—once ranged, growing corn, squash, and beans, hunt-

Explorations From U.S. 191 take Utah 211 west to the Needles. The paved road continues into the park. Facilities include 4-wheel-drive routes; self-guiding and primitive trails; developed campground; primitive campsites (backcountry permit required); overlooks; evening campground programs (seasonal); commercial tours from nearby towns. Water is available spring through fall. Entrance and camping fees are charged.

the rivers attract a variety of wildlife. Deer, fox, beaver, bobcats, and migratory birds find shelter in the riverside cottonwoods, tamarisks, and willows. Hanging gardens of lush maidenhair fern, monkeyflower, and columbine cling to the 1,200-foot high cliffs along water seepage lines. As in other corners of the park, cliffside stone houses and pictographs of ancient Fremont and Anasazi Indians are scattered along the rivers.

Explorations Boating is popular above and below the confluence. Permits are required for all river trips. River access is in and near Green River and Moab. Guided float trips are offered in nearby towns.

General Travel Information

Canyonlands' first superintendent, Bates Wilson, invited visitors to "Come to our wilderness, but be ready to rough it." Today, many years later, that advice still holds true for much of the park. Park rangers strongly recommend that you stop for information at park headquarters in Moab, at any park visitor center or ranger station, or at the Monticello Information Center. Brochures, hiking and driving guides, books, topographic maps, and up-to-date reports on park conditions are available at all park offices. Park activity schedules are posted. You also can receive information by writing: Superintendent, Canyonlands National Park, 125 West 200 South, Moab, UT 84532; or calling (801) 259-7164.

Climate The park's desert climate is characterized by hot summers, pleasant spring and fall months, and cool winters. Low humidity partially offsets the heat of summer. Precipitation is scarce; most falls in late summer and early fall thunderstorms. Light snowfalls occur in the winter.

Seasonal temperatures are:

Summer day, 80 to 100°F; night, 50 to 60°F
Spring, fall day, 60 to 80°F; night, 20 to 50°F
Winter day, 30 to 50°F; night, 0 to 20°F

Exploring on Your Own

By Road Driving in the park can mean a comfortable ride on a paved road or a tortuous 4-wheel-drive climb up a steep, rocky road. Paved and 2-wheel-drive dirt roads on Island in the Sky and in the Needles lead to interesting natural features, overlooks, trailheads, picnic areas, and developed campgrounds. Four-wheel-drive roads wind throughout the park, offering trips as short as a day or longer than a week. One of the most popular, the 100-mile White Rim Trail, can be driven in two days or leisurely explored over many days. Primitive campsites are located along many of these roads. A backcountry permit is required for overnight trips. Always carry food, water, and tools for emergencies. In remote areas, travel in the company of a second vehicle.

By Trail Both short walks and long hikes lead to some of Canyonlands' outstanding features. Short trails (less than 1 mile) on the Island and in the Needles will take you to overlooks, to arches and other geologic features, and to Indian ruins. Some trails have wayside exhibits or brochures, which can be picked up at trailheads or visitor centers. Longer trails penetrate wilder regions. Trails are generally primitive, marked only with rock cairns. They are rugged and require strenuous exertion. Do not hike alone. Stay on trails. Carry a map and water. Obtain a backcountry permit if you plan to camp.

By River Motorboats, rafts, and canoes can navigate the quiet upper waters of the Green and Colorado. Persons boating above the confluence are required to pick up a backcountry permit. Anyone planning a trip below the confluence through Cataract Canyon in a raft or specialized whitewater boat must obtain a permit at park headquarters. A limited number of individuals are allowed to run this dangerous whitewater stretch each year. Boat launch sites are

at locations north of the park, including Moab and Green River. There are no services along the rivers. The best times for trips are spring through fall.

Guided Tours

Four-wheel-drive tours, hiking trips, horseback rides, and river float trips are operated by commercial tour guides. The tours vary widely in the territory covered, length, cost, and amenities provided. Tours operate out of Moab and Green River year-round. Reservations are usually required. A list of Park Service concessioners is available from the park.

Campgrounds and Picnic Areas

Two modestly developed campgrounds are open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis. Willow Flat, on Island in the Sky, and Squaw Flat, in the Needles, have picnic tables, grills, and toilets. Squaw Flat has water spring through fall; Willow Flat has no water. A fee is charged at Squaw Flat spring through fall. Group campsites

can be reserved in the Needles by contacting the park.

Primitive campsites are located along 4-wheel-drive roads and in other remote areas. None have water. Backcountry permits, which are required for primitive camping as well as some other backcountry activities, are available at visitor centers and park headquarters.

Private campgrounds with utility hookups are located in nearby towns. State parks, Bureau of Land Management areas, and the Manti-LaSal National Forest also have campgrounds; the closest are shown on the map.

Picnic areas on the Island and in the Needles have tables, grills, and toilets, but no water.

Safety and Regulations

Be prepared for the heat. Carry at least one gallon of water per person per day. Rest occasionally to avoid overexerting yourself. Watch your step at overlooks and other cliff edges. Walk

carefully on slickrock surfaces; it is easy to get stranded, and both adults and unsupervised children have been killed and injured in falls. Stay with companions in the backcountry; separation can mean getting lost. If you do become lost, stay where you are. Wandering will endanger your life and make finding you difficult. Dogs must be kept under constant physical restraint. They are not permitted on park trails. Help preserve Indian ruins, pictographs, and other artifacts. Leave them undisturbed; simply entering a ruin or touching a pictograph can cause damage. Flashfloods can occur without warning. Never camp in a dry wash or drive across a flooded area. Stay off fragile microbiotic crust. This black, crunchy soil is actually a delicate, living community of lichens and algae that plays a vital ecological role. Avoid overexposure to cold, wet conditions—especially on the rivers—that can lead to hypothermia.

Canyonlands

Canyonlands National Park
Utah

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Travel Advisory This map shows the main features of the park—its prominent natural features and its main roads, trails, and visitor services. Services are very limited; there is no drinking water (except seasonally in Squaw Flat Campground in the Needles), food, gasoline, stores, or lodging. Full services are available in Moab, Green River, Monticello, Hanksville, and other nearby towns. Needles Outpost (seasonal), just east of the Needles, has gasoline, food, and limited supplies. Stop at a visitor center and check on park road and trail conditions; storms can leave areas impassable. Detailed maps and guides of 4-wheel-drive routes and hiking trails are available. For longer trips topographic maps are essential. They are sold at visitor centers. Unpaved 2-wheel-drive roads can be negotiated by regular passenger vehicles. Four-wheel-drive roads are generally too steep, too rocky, too rough, too sandy—simply too hazardous—for 2-wheel-drive vehicles. High clearance 2-wheel-drives can travel some of these roads under good conditions. Check with a ranger for more information. Bicycles and motor vehicles must remain on roads.

- Unpaved 2-wheel-drive road

Unpaved 4-wheel-drive road

Paved roads shown in red

Overlook

Trail

Rapids

Spring
- Water available seasonally

Ranger station

Picnic area
- Self-guiding trail

Boat launch

Campground
- Primitive campsite

