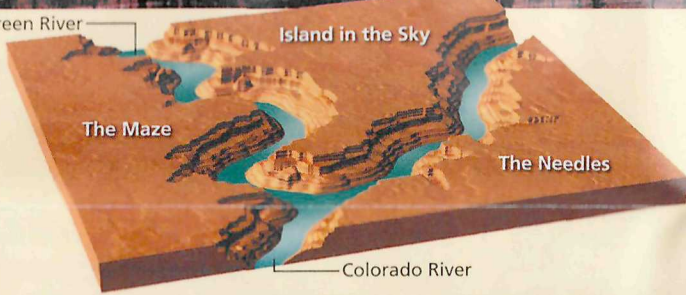




Canyonlands preserves a wilderness of rock at the heart of the Colorado Plateau. Water and gravity, this land’s prime architects, cut flat layers of sedimentary rock into hundreds of canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches, and spires. At center stage are two canyons carved by the Green and Colorado rivers. Surrounding



the rivers are vast, very different regions: Island in the Sky on the north, The Maze on the west, and The Needles on the east. They share a common primitive spirit and wild West atmosphere. Few people knew these remote lands and rivers well when the national park was established in 1964. Only American Indians, cowboys, river explorers, and uranium prospectors had dared

enter this rugged corner of southeastern Utah. Canyonlands remains largely untrammelled—its roads mostly unpaved, trails primitive, and rivers free-flowing. Bighorn sheep, coyotes, and other native animals roam its 527 square miles. Canyonlands is wild America.

A Wilderness of Rock

Island in the Sky



Shafer Canyon from the Neck, Island in the Sky

Views from Island in the Sky reach from the depths of the Green and Colorado rivers to the mountaintops and above. Across canyon after canyon they stretch to the horizon 100 miles distant. Island in the Sky—a broad mesa wedged between the Green and Colorado—is Canyonlands’ observation tower. From it you see vistas of dimensions hard to comprehend. 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 White Rim are the rivers, shadowed by sheer canyon cliffs. Beyond them lie The Maze and The Needles.

Outside the park three mountain ranges break the land’s flat-topped pattern. To the east rise the La Sal’s; to the south the Abajos; to the southwest the Henrys. Rain that skips Canyonlands’ arid soil keeps these mountains mantled in forests of pine and fir. On the Island, vegetation is more sparse. Fields of Indian ricegrass and other grasses and pinyon-juniper forests survive on fewer than 10 inches of rain a year. Coyotes, squirrels, and ravens, hawks, and smaller birds share these lands’ food. Cattle and horses once grazed here; abandoned water troughs and fences recall those bygone days.

Rocky ledges leading down to and below White Rim are favored habitat for desert bighorn sheep. From the Island mesa these sheep look

like tan, fly-sized specks. Only the most sharp observers spy them. Trails around the Island are good places to see wildlife, especially at dawn or dusk and in cooler months. Trails lead to striking vistas, to arches and other remarkable geological features. Geologists might single out Upheaval Dome as the oddest geologic feature on Island in the Sky. At 1,500 feet deep it looks not like a dome but like a crater. How was it formed? A recent theory does indeed suggest the cause was a meteor hit. Whatever its origin, today’s landform of a jagged-edged crater is the result of erosion.

Explorations From US 191 take UT 313 south to Island in the Sky. A paved road continues across the Island. *Facilities:* visitor center, 4-wheel-drive roads, self-guiding and primitive trails, developed camping, primitive campsites (backcountry permit required), picnic areas, overlooks, roadside and trailside exhibits, ranger talks and programs (seasonal), and commercial tours from nearby towns. Water is available March to October at Island in the Sky Visitor Center; entrance fee and camping fees are charged. Open year-round.

The Maze



Horseshoe Canyon pictographs

The Maze District is Canyonlands at its wildest. One of the nation’s most remote areas, The Maze itself is a 30-square-mile puzzle in sandstone. Nearby are the Land of Standing Rocks, Ernie’s Country, the Doll House, and the Fins, which offer assorted oddly shaped towers, buttes, and mesas. Travelers to this wilderness of broken rock, scant water, and stunted junipers find solitude, silence, and challenges that call for self-reliance.

The 600-foot descent into the canyons of The Maze plunges you into this country’s heart. To the northwest, Horseshoe Canyon Unit contains some of North America’s most significant rock art. The Great Gallery, the best known panel in Horseshoe Canyon, includes life-sized figures left by hunter-gatherers over 2,000 years ago. Also impressive are spring wildflowers, sheer sandstone walls, and the mature cottonwood groves along the intermittent stream in the canyon bottom.

Explorations From UT 24 or 95 take the 2- and 4-wheel-drive routes east to The Maze. *Facilities:* 4-wheel-drive roads, primitive hiking routes, primitive campsites (backcountry permit and fee required), overlooks, commercial tours from nearby towns. No water is available.

The Needles



Desert four o’clocks

Contrasting names in The Needles District reflect how diverse this land is: Devils Kitchen and Angel Arch, Elephant Hill and Caterpillar Arch, Gothic Arch and Paul Bunyans Potty. Its landforms of sculptured rock spires, arches, canyons, grabens, and potholes startle you. The Needles—rock pinnacles banded in red and white—are dominant. Earth movements fractured the rock, and water and freezing and thawing eroded it as today’s jumbled terrain.

Grassy meadows, like the 960-acre Chesler Park, contrast with The Needles’ bare rock, and arches lend the region an unusual touch. Like Arches National Park, The Needles District boasts a fascinating collection of natural rock spans. Druid Arch, in upper Elephant Canyon, stands over 100 feet high. On the other hand, Wooden Shoe Arch has only a small tunnel-like opening. Other arches have caterpillar and wedding ring shapes.

Most arches lie hidden in backcountry canyons as the well-deserved rewards of the long 4-wheel-drive trips or hikes to see them. The Grabens can also be reached by 4-wheel drive. To reach these vertical-walled, grass-carpeted valleys you must negotiate Elephant Hill—its steep inclines and sharp switchbacks test the skills of even the most accomplished 4-wheel driver. Past the Grabens, roads and trails lead to Confluence Overlook, 1,000 feet above where the Green and Colorado rivers meet.



Tower Ruin, Horse Canyon

Throughout this country Ancestral Puebloans grew corn, squash, and beans, hunted deer and bighorn, and gathered native seeds, fruits, and roots. Their advanced culture was part of those peoples who built the great stone pueblos of Mesa Verde in Colorado and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. You see traces of the Ancestral Puebloans in all but a few canyons in The Needles. Many stone and mud dwellings and storehouses are remarkably well-preserved.

Tower Ruin, built on a ledge in a side canyon of Horse Canyon, superbly exemplifies Ancestral Puebloan architecture. These people, like the Archaic hunters and gatherers here centuries before them, also left records as petroglyphs etched into and pictographs painted on cliff walls. What the figures, faces, handprints, and other images may mean is largely a mystery. Unfortunately many pots, tools, and other items the prehistoric peoples crafted are gone, stolen by looters. Please leave artifacts in place.

Explorations From US 191 take UT 211 west to The Needles. The paved road continues into the park. *Facilities:* visitor center, 4-wheel-drive roads, self-guiding and primitive trails, developed campground, primitive campsites (backcountry permit and fee required), overlooks, campground programs (seasonal), and commercial tours from nearby towns. Water is available year-round. Entrance and camping fees are charged. Open year-round.

Above: Green River Overlook at sunset. ©TOM TELL

The Rivers



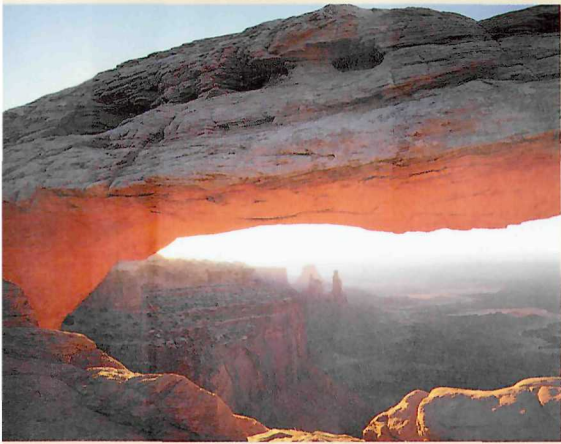
Rapid Ten in Cataract Canyon

John Wesley Powell wrote his impressions of this region on his pioneering boat trip down the Green and Colorado rivers in 1869: “We glide along through a strange, weird, grand region. The landscape everywhere, away from the river, is of rock.” Remarkably, over 100 years later these rivers still run wild.

Above their confluence, the Green and Colorado meander through sheer-walled canyons. Below it the combined waters start on a 14-mile rush through Cataract Canyon rapids—one of the nation’s most treacherous whitewater stretches. It rivals any in the Grand Canyon. The rivers’ dual personalities satisfies both those content with a quiet float and those eager for a challenging river run.

The rivers attract varied wildlife. Deer, beavers, bobcats, and migratory birds find shelter in the riverside cottonwoods and willows. Hanging gardens of maidenhair fern, monkeyflower, and columbine cling to 1,200-foot cliffs along water seepage lines. A lazy pace best serves watching life along the rivers. Cliffside stone structures and rock art are scattered along the rivers. Enjoy but don’t destroy this cultural heritage.

Explorations Boating is popular above and below the confluence. Permits and fees are required for all river trips. River access is near the towns of Green River and Moab. Guided white-water trips are available. Self-guiding flatwater canoe trips on the river are also popular.



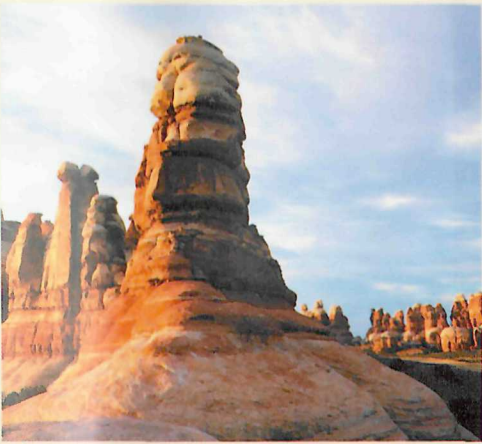
Mesa Arch, Island in the Sky



Exploring Shafer Trail, Island in the Sky



Prickly pear cactus



Chesler Park, The Needles District



Bighorn sheep



Green River at Fort Bottom

Travel Information for Your Enjoyment and Safety

“Come to our wilderness but be ready to rough it,” advised Canyonlands’ first superintendent Bates Wilson. That’s still good advice. Be sure to stop at the Moab or Monticello information centers or any park visitor center or ranger station. All park offices offer brochures, hiking and driving guides, books, topographic maps, and park conditions reports and post the activity schedule. Service animals are welcome. For firearms regulations see the park website.

Climate The region has hot summers, pleasant spring and fall months, and cool winters. Low humidity offsets summer heat. Precipitation is scant; mostly late summer to early fall thunderstorms. Snow falls in winter. Temperatures are:	
Summer daytime: 80 to 100°F	night: 50 to 60°F
Spring, Fall daytime: 60 to 80°F	night: 20 to 50°F
Winter daytime: 30 to 50°F	night: 0 to 20°F

To Explore on Your Own *By Road* Paved and 2-wheel-drive dirt roads at Island in the Sky and in The Needles lead to natural features, overlooks, trailheads, picnic areas, and developed campgrounds. The 4-wheel-drive roads offer day trips to trips longer than a week. You can drive White Rim Road’s 100 miles in two days or explore for many days. Primitive campsites are along many roads. A backcountry permit and fee are required for overnight trips. Always carry food, water, and tools for emergencies. In remote areas, travel with a second vehicle. Vehicles and bicycles must stay on designated roads.

By Trail Short walks and long hikes lead to some outstanding features. Short trails (under one mile) at Island in the Sky and in The Needles lead to overlooks, arches, geologic features, and archeological sites. Some offer wayside exhibits, or brochures at trailheads or visitor centers. Longer trails penetrate wilder regions. Trails are generally primitive, rugged, strenuous, and marked only by rock cairns. Do not hike alone.

Stay on trails. Carry a map and plenty of water. Camping requires a backcountry permit.

By River Motorboats, rafts, and canoes can navigate either the Colorado and Green rivers’ quiet upper waters or Cataract Canyon’s tumultuous rapids. Boat launch sites are north of the park near the towns of Moab and Green River. Take-out is generally by jet boat shuttle from the Confluence (for flatwater trips) or Hite Marina on Lake Powell. There are no services along the river. Permits are required for all trips through Cataract Canyon and overnight flatwater trips.

Guided Tours Commercial tour guides in the nearby towns offer 4-wheel-drive and mountain bike tours, hiking trips, and river float trips year-round. Tours vary widely for the area covered, length, cost, and amenities. Reservations are usually required. Contact the park for a list of National Park Service concessioners.

Campgrounds and Picnic Areas Two modestly developed campgrounds are open year-round, first-come, first-served. Willow Flat at Island in the Sky and Squaw Flat in The Needles have picnic tables, grills, and toilets. Squaw Flat has water year-round; Willow Flat has no water. Fees charged. Reserve group campsites online.

Primitive campsites (no water) are along the 4-wheel-drive roads and other remote areas. Backcountry permits and fees are required for primitive camping. Picnic areas at Island in the Sky have tables, grills, and toilets but no water. Picnic areas in The Needles have tables only.

Fees, Permits, and Reservations Entrance fees are charged at Island in the Sky and The Needles. All overnight backcountry stays require permits, including 4-wheel-drive or mountain-bike camping, and river trips (fees charged). Day-use permits are required for vehicles, bikes, and horses in Horse/Salt Creek and Lavender canyons in The Needles District. District visitor

centers issue permits (fees charged). Reservations are recommended and can be made online at canypermits.nps.gov. Reservation staff answers questions and assist with trip planning Monday–Friday, 8 am to noon (mountain time), at 435-259-4351. For more information see the park website.

Safety and Regulations Be prepared for heat! Take one gallon of drinking water per person per day. Avoid overexertion. Use extreme caution at overlooks and all cliff edges. Be careful on slickrock surfaces which can be icy in winter. It’s easy to get stranded. Stay with companions in the backcountry; separation can mean getting lost. If you are lost, stay where you are. Wandering endangers your life and makes finding you difficult. Pets must be leashed at all times and are prohibited on trails, at overlooks, or in the backcountry. Flash floods can occur without warning. Never camp in a dry wash or drive across a flooded area. Stay on trails to protect fragile desert soil. Avoid overexposure

to cold, wet conditions that can lead to hypothermia. Lightning is a serious threat. If a thunderstorm is near, avoid overlooks; get back in your vehicle and close the windows. Park trails are primitive and generally unmaintained. All natural and cultural features are protected. Do not pick flowers, collect rocks, or disturb wildlife. Help preserve American Indian structures, rock art, historic sites, and other artifacts. Leave them undisturbed. Report suspicious behavior to a ranger.

Emergencies call 911.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

Exploring the Wild Canyonlands

Travel Advisory This map shows the park's prominent features, main roads, trails, and visitor services. Services are limited.

Drinking water is not available in The Maze or at Willow Flat. It is available at Island in the Sky Visitor Center from March to October only.

Food, gasoline, stores, and lodging are not available in any of the districts in the park. **Full services** are found in Moab, Green River, Monticello, Hanksville, and nearby towns.

Stop at a visitor center to check on park road and trail conditions; weather events can make an area impassable. Detailed maps and guides of the 4-wheel-drive routes and hiking trails are available. For longer trips topographic maps sold at the park visitor centers are essential.

A regular passenger vehicle can negotiate unpaved 2-wheel-drive roads. Roads for 4-wheel-drive vehicles are too steep, rocky, rough, sandy, or hazardous for 2-wheel-drive vehicles. High-clearance 2-wheel-drive vehicles can travel some of these roads under good conditions.

Unpaved roads may become impassable due to weather.

Ask a ranger for more information about park road conditions.

Bicycles and all motor vehicles must stay on roads.

More Information
Canyonlands National Park
2282 S. West Resource Blvd.
Moab, UT 84532-3298
435-719-2313
www.nps.gov/cany

Canyonlands is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. Visit www.nps.gov.

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- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Unpaved 2-wheel-drive road | Trail |
| Unpaved 4-wheel-drive road | Rapids |
| Overlook/Paved road | Locked gate |

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Boat launch | Ranger station |
| Picnic area | Self-guiding trail |
| Campground | |

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Primitive campsite | Drinking water |
| Drink one gallon of water per person per day in this semi-desert environment. | |

