

LIFE
UTAH
ELEVATED®



TRAIL OF THE ANCIENTS SCENIC BYWAY

through Bears Ears Country

One wow after another!

Explore from your car the timeless landscapes on the Trail of the Ancients National Scenic Byway through Bears Ears country. This 120-mile drive begins in Bluff and connects a dozen of the most amazing sites in southeastern Utah.

These lands are wild and ancient showcasing some of Mother Nature's best. This is also a living, cultural landscape. Indigenous people once inhabited these lands and today Tribes and Pueblos consider this landscape sacred.

Please Visit with Respect. Keep these lands Forever Mighty®.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

DRIVING

- ✓ This is backcountry. Check the weather. If a recent, heavy rain has occurred, or if rain is expected, consider another day.
- ✓ Some sections are unpaved but are drivable by passenger cars. High clearance cars are recommended.
- ✓ The Moki Dugway is an unpaved road with a series of steep inclines and tight turns.
- ✓ Some sites on the drive do not have parking areas. If you stop, pull all the way off the road for your safety and to let others pass.

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Fill your tank. There are no gas stations on the drive.
- ✓ Bring lunch and/or snacks. And, in the desert, it's always a good idea to bring water with you.
- ✓ Not all sites have restrooms/toilets. Note those that do.
- ✓ You may not have cell phone service.
- ✓ Charge your phone and camera. Check storage space for photos as you'll want to take lots of pictures.



Visit with Respect

Familiarize yourself with the Visit with Respect tips below to keep these lands Forever Mighty.

Learn more.



Stay on Designated Roads



Don't Bust the Crust



Don't Touch Rock Imagery or Make Your Own



Guide Children Through Site



Know Where Pets Are Allowed



Steer Clear of Walls










Avoid Cairns (stacking rocks)



Pack Out Trash and Waste

NOTE: Federal law protects archeological sites and artifacts on federal lands. Do not collect artifacts or deface rock images. Violations may result in jail time or fines.



-  UNPAVED ROAD
-  STEEP INCLINE
-  VAULT TOILET/BATHROOM
-  ADMISSION FEE
-  SHORT HIKE TO SITE
-  PARKING NOT AVAILABLE AT ATTRACTION; ROADSIDE VIEW ONLY
-  WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE



NAVAJO TWIN ROCKS

Majestically towering over the town of Bluff, Utah, are the Navajo Twin Rocks named for Hero Twins with extraordinary powers in Navajo creation stories. The formations also symbolize two prayer sticks and remind that the Hero Twins still bless and protect the Navajo. In the A.D. 800's, Ancestral Puebloans lived at the base of the Twin Rocks in blocks of rooms and pithouses.



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SAND ISLAND PETROGLYPH PANEL

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

On the banks of the San Juan River, this petroglyph panel displays rock imagery (pecked and carved) dating from 800 to over 2500 years ago. Archeologists believe this was once a gathering place and held special significance for ancient peoples by the amount (over 100 yards) and the time span of the rock imagery. The panel is a place of ancestral importance to Indigenous peoples. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places. *Learn more.*



3

COMB RIDGE

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

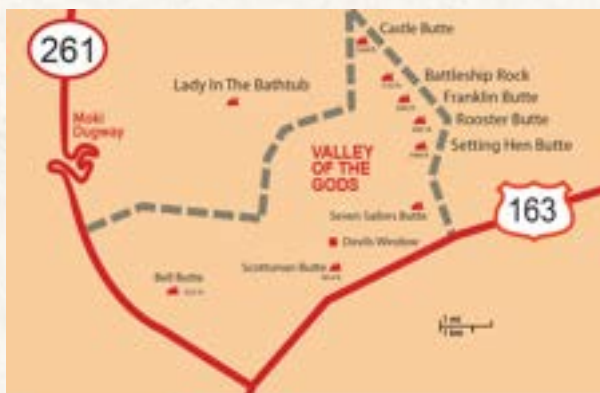
Tilted upward almost 20 degrees and over one mile wide, Comb Ridge is a sandstone spine running north and south for over 80 miles. The name comes from the ridge's jagged appearance which is similar to a rooster's comb. Geologists call this natural marvel a monocline, or a step-like bend of the earth's rock layers in one direction. Nearly 65 million years ago, deeply buried tectonic plates shifted, pushing the earth upward in this area. Nearby San Juan Hill was the last obstacle for Mormon pioneers who settled Bluff. *Learn more.*



VALLEY OF THE GODS

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

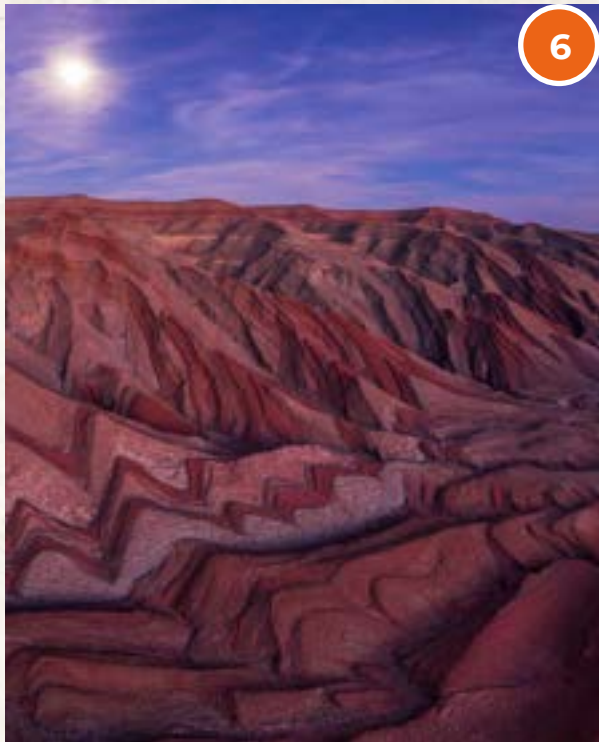
The spectacular buttes, pinnacles, and spires of Valley of the Gods rival that of nearby Monument Valley. About 240 million years ago, a shallow sea covered this area depositing rock. After the water receded, iron in the rock mixed with oxygen to form rust resulting in rich red and purple colors. Over millions of years, erosion from water, wind, and ice carved the formations seen today. Optional: For amazing views, take the 17-mile loop through the Valley of the Gods to view formations such as Seven Sailors Butte and Lady in the Bathtub. *Learn more.*



GOOSENECKS STATE PARK

An easily accessible viewpoint offers spectacular views of tight loops, or “goosenecks” of the San Juan River 1,000 foot (300 m) below. Over a distance of 1.5 miles “as the crow flies”, the river flows 6 miles through the goosenecks. In geology, these are a textbook example of entrenched meanders. The Goosenecks State Park is also an International Dark Sky Park with pristine night skies and spectacular stargazing. *Learn more.*





NAVAJO TAPESTRY

As you exit the Goosenecks State Park, look east (to your right) to see colorful zigzag patterns known as the Navajo Tapestry or Navajo Blanket. This formation is the result of a monumental shift upward in the earth, followed by slow erosion over time. It is also known as Raplee Incline, named for a miner who staked claims in this area.



MOKI DUGWAY

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Breathtaking views of Valley of the Gods and distant Monument Valley open at every turn of the Moki Dugway. Passenger cars can access the 3-mile, unpaved dugway. The State of Utah recommends it only for vehicles less than 28 ft. and 10,000 lbs. The word “moki” comes from the Spanish word “moqui”, a term used by explorers to describe the Ancestral Puebloan culture. Dugway describes a roadway carved from a hillside. The dugway was constructed in the 1950’s to haul uranium ore from the Happy Jack Mine on Cedar Mesa to a mill in Halchita, Utah, near Mexican Hat. *Learn more.*





MULEY POINT

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Enjoy a quiet moment at Muley Point with magnificent panoramas of Valley of the Gods, Goosenecks, State Park, and iconic Monument Valley in the distance. After reaching the top of Moki Dugway, turn left at the first unpaved road (no sign). Drive 3.8 miles to Muley Point East. Continue for just over a mile to the most distant viewpoint for outstanding views. Not to be missed.



BEARS EARS BUTTES

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Visible for miles in every direction, the Bears Ears National Monument takes its name from these two, tall buttes standing at over 8,700 feet in elevation. Bears Ears is an important, sacred, ancestral home for the region's Indigenous peoples. Many Tribes and Pueblos have deep connections to these lands and feature stories and legends about Bears Ears in their oral traditions. NOTE: This scenic drive does not take you to the top of Bears Ears Buttes.

Learn more.



NATURAL BRIDGES NATIONAL MONUMENT

Designated in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt, the Monument preserves three, splendid, naturally occurring, stone bridges. Stop at the Visitor's Center for information before driving the 9-mile paved loop. The bridges bear the Hopi names of Sipapu, Kachina, and Owachomo. The Hopi are descendants of the Ancestral Puebloans who once lived in these canyons.

Owachomo, meaning rock mound, is the smallest, offers easy access, and is the most photographed. The bridge viewpoint is a 10-minute hike along a paved sidewalk. Natural Bridges was the first International Dark Sky Park and offers amazing celestial views at night.

Learn more.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

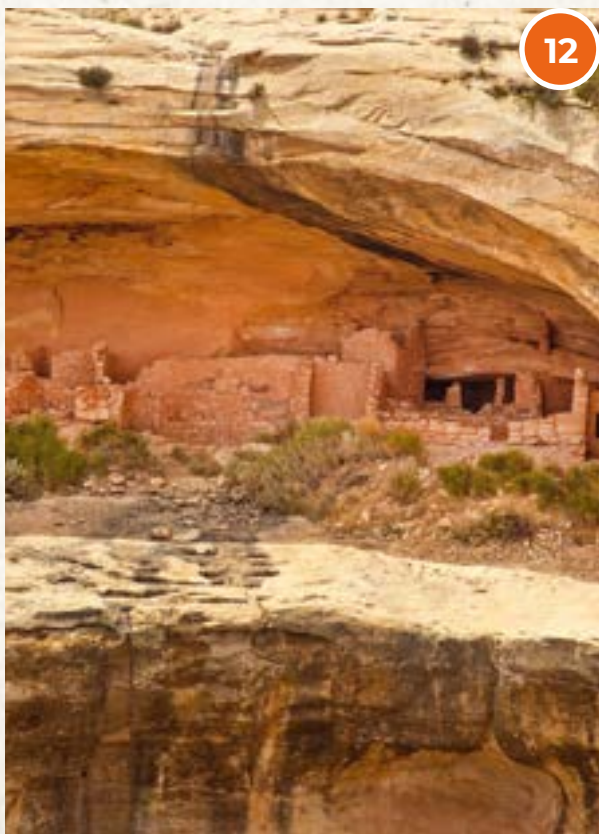
- San Juan County Sheriff, Monticello, Utah. 435-587-2237.
- Blue Mountain Hospital, Blanding, Utah. 435-678-3993.
- Kane Gulch Ranger Station, Highway 261, 4 miles south of Highway 95. 435-587-1500.
- Montella's Towing and Repair, Blanding, Utah. 435-678-2419.



MULE CANYON INTERPRETIVE SITE

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Mule Canyon Interpretive Site is a compound of Ancestral Puebloan structures primarily occupied from 1000 – 1150 AD. The site features the remains of a 12-room block thought to have been home to two to three family units, a 2-story tower, and an underground kiva. The kiva was likely used for religious and social purposes and has been excavated and stabilized. A paved walkway connects the structures and interpretive signs.



BUTLER WASH OVERLOOK AND TRAIL

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

See a fine example of an Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwelling tucked in an alcove built high above the canyon floor at the Butler Wash Overlook. A short, half-mile hike on an unpaved trail leads to a fenced viewpoint with interpretive signage that overlooks the dwellings. These dwellings were built in the 1200's and the people who lived here likely farmed the wash below and lands above. Cliff dwellings such as these were quite secure with easily defended approaches.



UNPAVED ROAD



STEEP INCLINE



VAULT TOILET/BATHROOM



ADMISSION FEE



SHORT HIKE TO SITE



PARKING NOT AVAILABLE AT ATTRACTION; ROADSIDE VIEW ONLY



WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

AFTER THE SCENIC DRIVE

Continue to drive along Highway 95 to the intersection of Highway 191.

- To travel to Blanding, Monticello and Moab, turn left (North).
- To travel back to Bluff, turn right (South).