



KANAB, UTAH

Three Days From One Basecamp

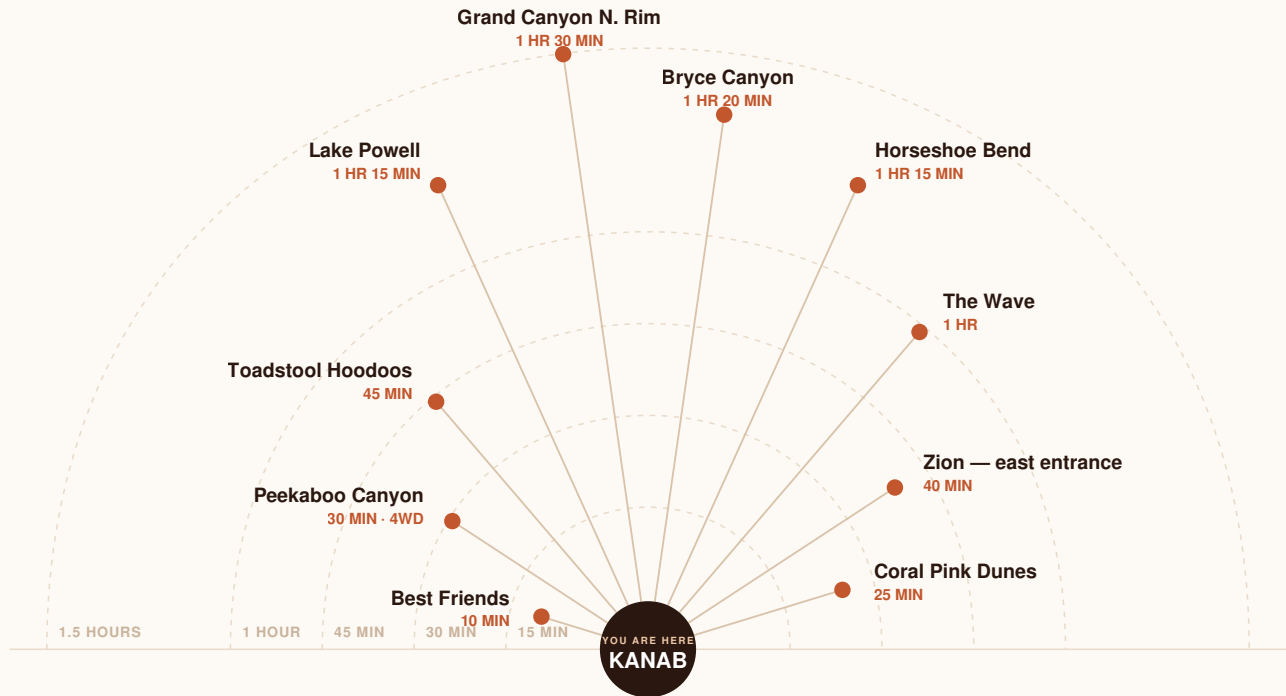
Zion, Bryce and twenty other places within ninety minutes — without repacking a single bag. Written by people who live here.

KANAB BASECAMP · STAYINKANAB.COM

START HERE

Everything, from one front door

Most Southern Utah trips are built around moving, and you spend the best light driving and checking in. Kanab sits in the middle of it — unpack once, and the region becomes day trips.



THE EAST ENTRANCE ADVANTAGE

Forty minutes puts you at Zion's *east* entrance — the quiet side of the park. You arrive over the Mt Carmel Highway, reach Canyon Overlook before the crowds, and never need the shuttle.



Kanab from the Hog Canyon rim — almost everything in this guide is inside that horizon.

THE FULL LIST

How far is everything?

Every destination in this guide, sorted by drive time from the front door.

UNDER 15 MIN

Squaw Trail 5 K-Hill 5 Best Friends Animal Sanctuary 10 Moqui Sand Caves 10
Hog Canyon OHV 10

15 – 30 MIN

Tilted Mesa MTB 15 Belly of the Dragon 20 Coral Pink Sand Dunes 25
Peekaboo Slot Canyon 30 4WD

30 – 60 MIN

The Great Chamber 35 4WD Zion — east entrance 40 Toadstool Hoodoos 45 Catstair Canyon 45
Applecross MTB 50 Wire Pass / The Wave 60

1 – 2 HOURS

Horseshoe Bend 1 hr 15 Lake Powell 1 hr 15 Bryce Canyon 1 hr 20
Grand Canyon North Rim 1 hr 30

2 HOURS +

White Pocket 2:00 – 2:30 4WD ONLY

A NOTE ON THE SAND ROADS

Anything marked 4WD sits at the end of deep sand that regularly strands two-wheel-drive rental cars. Take a guided trip or bring real clearance and proper tyres.

DAY

1

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Come in the back way

40 MIN EACH WAY

6:45 AM — LEAVE KANAB

North on US-89 to Mt Carmel Junction, then west on SR-9. Leaving before seven isn't about beating traffic — it's about being on the Mt Carmel Highway while the light is still low on the slickrock.

7:30 AM — CANYON OVERLOOK TRAIL

One mile round trip just east of the tunnel, and it delivers a view most people drive another hour to get a worse version of. The small lot fills by mid-morning; at this hour you may have it to yourself.

9:00 AM — INTO THE MAIN CANYON

Through the Zion–Mt Carmel Tunnel and down the switchbacks. Park at the Visitor Center and pick up the shuttle, required in the main canyon most of the year.

10:00 AM — PICK ONE BIG THING

The Narrows if the flow rate is low and you've rented boots. Emerald Pools or the Pa'rus Trail if you're with people who'd rather amble. Angels Landing needs a permit won in advance — don't build the day around it unless you already have one.

4:00 PM — BACK OVER THE PASS

The drive east in late afternoon is the best hour of the day on that road, and you're going against the traffic leaving through Springdale.

6:00 PM — HOME

Dinner in your own kitchen and the hot tub while it's still light.



Angels Landing — permit-only, won by lottery in advance.



The east side, reached over the Mt Carmel Highway.

BEFORE YOU GO

Check the Virgin River flow rate the night before if the Narrows is the plan — the hike closes above 150 cfs and the decision gets made for you. Large vehicles and most RVs need a tunnel escort, which costs extra and runs limited hours.

DAY

2

BRYCE CANYON & HIGHWAY 12

Bryce at sunrise, then the long way home

1 HR 20 MIN EACH WAY

6:00 AM — LEAVE FOR SUNRISE

Bryce sits at 8,000 feet. It is genuinely cold at dawn even in July, and every summer somebody arrives in shorts and lasts nine minutes. Bring a layer you think you won't need.

7:20 AM — SUNRISE AT BRYCE POINT

Bryce's amphitheatre fills with light from the rim down. These are the hoodoos people picture when they hear the word — thousands of them, packed into one bowl, and completely different from the Toadstools out on the Grand Staircase. Bryce Point looks across the whole amphitheatre; Sunrise Point is closer to the lodge and busier.

8:30 AM — QUEEN'S GARDEN TO NAVAJO LOOP

Three miles combined and the best short hike in the park — you descend through the hoodoos instead of looking down at them. Down Queen's Garden, up Navajo; the reverse is a harder climb.

11:30 AM — SCENIC DRIVE TO RAINBOW POINT

Eighteen miles to the end of the road with pullouts the whole way. Drive to the far end first and work back — the overlooks are all on the right heading north.

2:00 PM — RED CANYON ON THE WAY BACK

The stretch of SR-12 just west of Bryce runs through arches cut straight into the red rock. Most people blow through it on the way to somewhere else.

5:30 PM — HOME

Long day. This is the night to not cook.

LOCAL NOTE

If the forecast is poor for sunrise, flip this day with Day 3. Bryce in flat grey light is a long drive for a mediocre photograph, and the Kanab-side plans hold up better under cloud.

DAY

3

IN AND AROUND TOWN

The day people remember

NOTHING OVER 45 MIN

7:30 AM — CORAL PINK SAND DUNES

Twenty-five minutes south-west. Go early: by eleven the sand is too hot to walk barefoot and the wind has usually picked up. Rent a sandboard in town and wax the base properly — unwaxed boards mostly just sit there.

10:00 AM — BELLY OF THE DRAGON

Twenty minutes north on US-89, then a short walk down a wash into a drainage tunnel weathered into something that looks carved. Five minutes from the car. Kids love it. Bring a torch.

12:00 PM — LUNCH IN TOWN

Walk in from the house — Center Street is four blocks of actual local businesses. Coffee and pastries at Station 89, wood-fired pizza at Peekaboo Kitchen.

1:30 PM — LITTLE HOLLYWOOD

Kanab was a film set for forty years. The Parry Lodge housed the casts of dozens of Westerns and the old cabins still stand behind it — walk through and read the names on the doors.

3:00 PM — BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SANCTUARY

The largest no-kill sanctuary in the country, ten minutes from town, set in a canyon. Tours are free but book ahead. People stop in for an hour and stay until closing.

EVENING — WALK INTO TOWN

Center Street is a short walk from the house, so dinner doesn't need the car and nobody has to draw the short straw on driving.



Belly of the Dragon — five minutes from the car.



The Moqui Sand Caves, ten minutes north of town.

BONUS

4

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE

The day for the strange stuff

NOTHING OVER 45 MIN

If you have a fourth day, spend it east on US-89. This is the quietest area in the guide, and the least like anywhere else you'll have been.

7:00 AM — TOADSTOOL HOODOOS

Forty-five minutes east, then a mile and a half round trip over slickrock to balanced rocks that look structurally impossible — red caprock perched on white pedestals. Nothing like Bryce's hoodoos despite the shared name. Early light is best and you'll likely have it to yourselves.

9:30 AM — CATSTAIR CANYON CAR WALL

Thirty seconds off the highway on the way back. Two dozen junked 1960s cars stacked into the canyon wall as erosion control, slowly being buried by the wash. Strange, a little post-apocalyptic, and completely unmarked.

11:00 AM — PARIA VIEWPOINTS

Pullouts along US-89 look north into the badlands — banded grey, purple and white hills that change colour through the day. Five minutes each, no hiking.

1:30 PM — THE GREAT CHAMBER

Back west, then out to Cutler Point on a sand road. An enormous sandstone alcove with a dune pouring into it. Guided UTV or genuine high clearance — see the off-road page.

SUNSET — K-HILL OR SQUAW TRAIL

Five minutes from the house. Both look west over the valley and both are short enough to do on tired legs.



The Toadstools — red caprock on white pedestals.



Catstair Canyon, unmarked and unmistakable.

UNDER 30 MINUTES

Close enough for a half day

Arrival afternoons, weather days, the gap before dinner. None of these need a plan.



10 MIN NORTH · 30 MIN WALK

Moqui Sand Caves

Hand-cut chambers above the highway with soft white sand underfoot and windows looking back across the valley. A short scramble up slickrock gets you in — worth doing early, before the floor fills with footprints.



5 MIN · 2 MILES ROUND TRIP

Squaw Trail

The trail up the bluff behind town. Steep enough to feel like exercise, short enough before breakfast, and the bench at the top looks out over the whole valley. Locals do it on repeat; most visitors never notice it exists.



10 MIN · OHV & 4WD

Hog Canyon

The off-road area right on the edge of town — sand, slickrock and a rim track with Kanab laid out below. Ranges from mellow to genuinely technical. Rent a machine in town if you didn't bring one.



45 MIN EAST · ROADSIDE

Catstair Canyon car wall

Two dozen junked 1960s cars stacked into the canyon wall as erosion control, slowly being buried. Strange, a little post-apocalyptic, and about thirty seconds off the highway. Nobody expects it.

The ones people fly in for

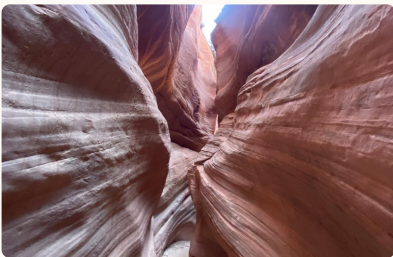
These take more permits, more clearance or more luck than the first three days — which is exactly why they stay quiet.



1 HR TO TRAILHEAD · PERMIT REQUIRED

The Wave — Coyote Buttes North

Twenty permits a day. Some release four months ahead; the rest go through a daily lottery you can only enter while physically inside a geofenced area near Kanab, with results emailed the evening before. Staying in town is a real advantage — you're inside the zone without driving anywhere.



30 MIN · 4WD OR GUIDED

Peekaboo Slot Canyon

Constantly mistaken for Antelope Canyon in photographs. It sits at the end of a deep sand road that eats two-wheel-drive rental cars most weeks. Go with a local guide or don't go — recovery out there is expensive.



1 HR 15 · 1.5 MILES ROUND TRIP

Horseshoe Bend

The Colorado River's 270-degree turn outside Page. Short walk from the car park, no shade, and it faces west — late afternoon lights the canyon wall while morning leaves it flat. Pair it with Lake Powell to make the drive worth it.



1 HR 15 MIN · BOAT OR KAYAK

Lake Powell

Nearly two thousand miles of shoreline threaded into drowned canyon country. Rent a boat at Wahweap, or put a kayak in and paddle straight into a slot canyon off the water — one of the strangest half-days in the region. Pairs naturally with Horseshoe Bend, since they're twenty minutes apart.



35 MIN · 4WD OR GUIDED

The Great Chamber

An enormous sandstone alcove at Cutler Point with a dune pouring into it. The destination is easy; the road is not. High clearance and real tyres, or a guided UTV from town.

Trails and tracks

Two different sports, two different networks. The singletrack rides empty compared with Moab, and the off-road area starts at the edge of town.

MOUNTAIN BIKING — PEDAL ONLY



Applecross, above the North Fork Road east of Zion.

1

Tilted Mesa 15 MIN EAST

Roughly 13 miles of purpose-built singletrack across three linked mesas on BLM land. Stacked loops from easy to hard, so a mixed group can split and still finish together. Mountain bikes, Class 1 e-bikes and hikers — no motors.

2

Applecross 50 MIN WEST

On the North Fork Road a mile east of Zion's east entrance, then four miles uphill. Tops out near 6,800 feet, so it rides cool when town is baking. Season runs roughly late May to October.

OFF-ROAD — SIDE-BY-SIDES, DIRT BIKES, 4WD

3

Hog Canyon 10 MIN

The OHV area on the edge of town — sand, slickrock and a rim track with Kanab laid out below. Open to side-by-sides, ATVs, dirt bikes and 4WD, ranging from mellow two-track to genuinely technical. Not a mountain bike trail.

4

The guided sand routes

Peekaboo, the Great Chamber and White Pocket all sit at the end of deep sand roads. Take a guided UTV unless you're running real clearance. Outfitters abound in town — UTV, canyon, photography and horseback trips run daily.

RENTING, GUIDING — AND A GUEST DISCOUNT

Mountain bikes, e-bikes, side-by-sides and sandboards are all available in town; book UTVs a day or two ahead in spring and autumn. **Our guests get a discount with Expedition Kanab**, who run the Peekaboo and Great Chamber trips — details come with your booking confirmation.

Things worth knowing

1 Start earlier than feels reasonable

Every trailhead lot in this region fills between nine and ten. An hour earlier is the difference between parking at the trailhead and parking a mile down the road.

2 Fill up in Kanab

The stretches toward the North Rim and east along US-89 are long and thin on services. Leave town full.

3 Download offline maps

Coverage disappears past the edge of town and stays gone for most of Grand Staircase. Download the area before you leave the driveway.

4 Take more water than you think

A gallon per person per day in summer is standard advice and it is not conservative. The dry air hides how much you're losing.

5 Respect the sand roads

Most of the memorable places near Kanab sit at the end of one. A standard rental car will bury itself, and a recovery out here runs into the hundreds.

6 Watch the sky in monsoon season

July through September, afternoon storms build fast. Slot canyons flood from rain falling miles away under blue sky overhead. If rain is forecast anywhere upstream, pick a different hike.

7 Book the guided trips early

Peekaboo, the Great Chamber and White Pocket all run on limited UTV fleets. In spring and autumn they sell out days ahead.

8 Pack lunches

Food inside the parks is limited, expensive and queued. A full kitchen the night before solves the whole problem.

EVENINGS

Coming back to the same bed

The argument for a basecamp isn't square footage. It's that at the end of a fourteen-hour day you're forty minutes from a kitchen, a hot tub and your own things — not checking into somewhere new with a cooler full of melted ice. And when nobody wants to cook, Center Street is a walk away, not a drive.



Private hot tub — no schedule, no sharing, and dark enough for stars.



Full kitchen, opening onto the living room. Pack lunches and skip park food entirely.



Somewhere to collapse when nobody wants to see another canyon.

FOR THE DAY THE WEATHER TURNS

There's a shelf of board games and a wall of oversized ones in the garage — darts, Connect Four, tic-tac-toe. Southern Utah gets exactly enough rainy afternoons for this to matter.

Unpack once.

Three national parks, the dunes, the slot canyons, the trail network and The Wave lottery zone — all inside ninety minutes of the front door.



SLEEPS

Multiple bedrooms, king beds, blackout curtains for early starts

HAS

Private hot tub, full kitchen, laundry, balcony with red rock views

DRIVE TO

Zion 40 min · Bryce 1 hr 20 · North Rim 1 hr 30 · Dunes 25 min

WALK TO

Center Street restaurants, coffee, shops and the trailhead up the bluff — no car needed

Book direct — and skip the platform fees

stayinkanab.com

Booking with us directly avoids the service fees the platforms add at checkout, and you're messaging the owners rather than a call centre. Questions about trail conditions, permits or timing? We live here — ask us anything before you book.

Prefer to book on a platform? We're listed on Airbnb too. The fees are higher, but if that's where you're comfortable, book here:

airbnb.com/rooms/923340869976725117

Drive times are approximate. Permit systems, hours and seasonal road closures change — check nps.gov and blm.gov before you travel. Several destinations require high-clearance 4WD.