

# ARCHES & CANYONLANDS TRIP PLANNER





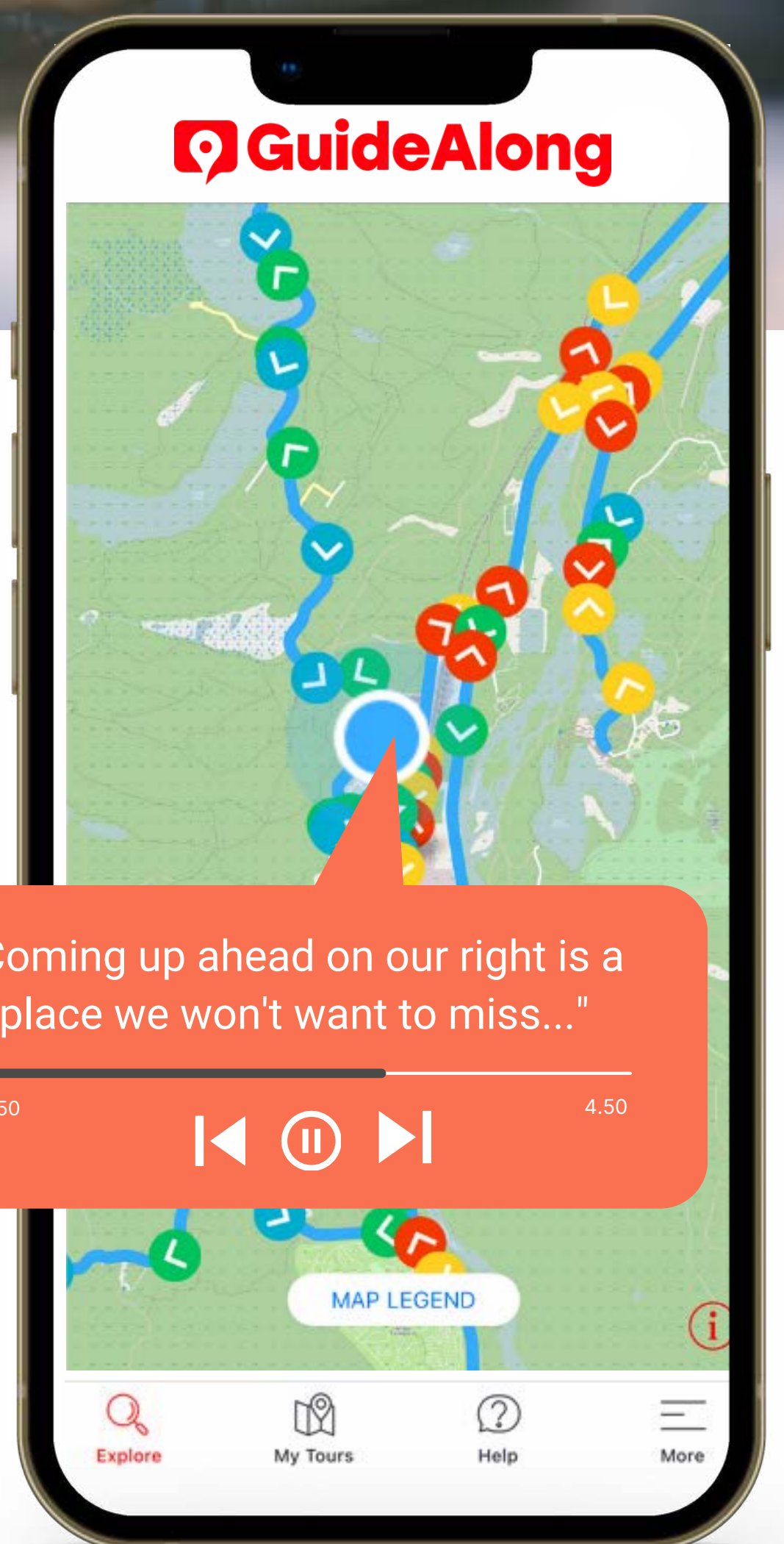
# It's like a tour guide along for the drive

## LOCATION-BASED AUDIO TOURS

Don't miss a thing as stories, local tips & directions guide you to the best things to see and do.

Commentary autoplays as you drive, based on your location.

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# ARCHES & CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARKS

Arches and Canyonlands are two of America's most stunning national parks. Neighbors on the Colorado Plateau, Arches and Canyonlands both feature incredible red rock landscapes yet each are strikingly different.

Natural stone arches, towering monoliths, and other unique rock formations define Arches National Park. In Canyonlands National Park, dramatic cliffs and vast panoramas dominate the view in the Island in the Sky District and the Needles District is famous for its colorful, spire-like sandstone pillars, many other weirdly interesting rock formations and some terrific hiking.

These remarkable geological features were carved by the erosive forces of wind and water over millions of years and visitors will be fascinated by how their colors are constantly changing depending on the angle of the sun and the time of the day.

Both parks are a hiker's wonderland but there's also plenty to see from the comfort of your car or a short walk from the parking lot.



# HOW TO GET HERE



## BY PLANE

Arches and Canyonlands National Parks are located in southeastern Utah, just outside the city of Moab. Most people arrive by car and fly into Salt Lake City or Grand Junction, although some visitors fly directly into Moab. Many people also arrive at Arches and Canyonlands as part of a greater American west auto tour.

Arches National Park is located just five miles (eight kilometers) north of Moab, along Highway 191. Canyonlands National Park is divided into three districts called the Island in the Sky, the Needles, and the Maze. Island in the Sky is the most visited and easily accessible district to visit. Driving time is about 40 minutes from Moab.

## MOAB

The Canyonlands Regional Airport is just 18 miles north of Moab. United Airlines offers daily flights between Moab and Denver and Delta Airlines offers a daily flight to and from Salt Lake City. Car rentals, shuttles, and taxi service is available at the Moab airport.



# HOW TO GET HERE

## GRAND JUNCTION

Grand Junction Regional Airport is the closest major airport to Moab. It's located in Grand Junction, Colorado, about 125 miles east of Moab. There's plenty of spots to view the Colorado River along the way and you can also drop by the Colorado National Monument, a stunning land of sheer-walled cliffs and interesting rock formations on the edge of the Colorado Plateau.



## SALT LAKE CITY

The Salt Lake City International Airport is 237 miles northwest of Moab and is serviced by many domestic and international destinations. Flying into Salt Lake City is a great option if you're also interested in visiting Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Capitol Reef National Parks.





## BY CAR

Most people arrive at Arches and Canyonlands National Parks by car. There is no public transportation inside Arches and Canyonlands so you most likely need a car to reach the trailheads and scenic viewpoints within the parks. You may also rent a bike or book a commercial tour to get around the park.

Campervans and RVs are also popular ways to visit Utah's National Parks. Some visitors choose to fly into Las Vegas, where campervan rentals are readily available, and also visit Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, or the other Utah National Parks along the way. You can also find several campervan and RV rental providers in Salt Lake City and Denver.



# ENTRANCE FEES

An entrance fee is required at both Arches and Canyonlands National Parks and admission is good for seven days. If you plan to visit both Arches and Canyonlands you can save by purchasing the Southeast Utah Parks Pass which is good for a year and also includes admission to Natural Bridges National Monument.

Depending on the length of your stay and how many National Parks you plan to visit in a year, it may be more beneficial to purchase the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. This pass covers entrance fees into all U.S. National Parks as well as over 2,000 National Monuments, National Wildlife Refuges, National Historic Sites, and other federally managed lands.

Passes are free for current U.S. military members and reduced for Seniors aged 62 years or older. Senior passes also provide a 50 percent discount at select campgrounds.

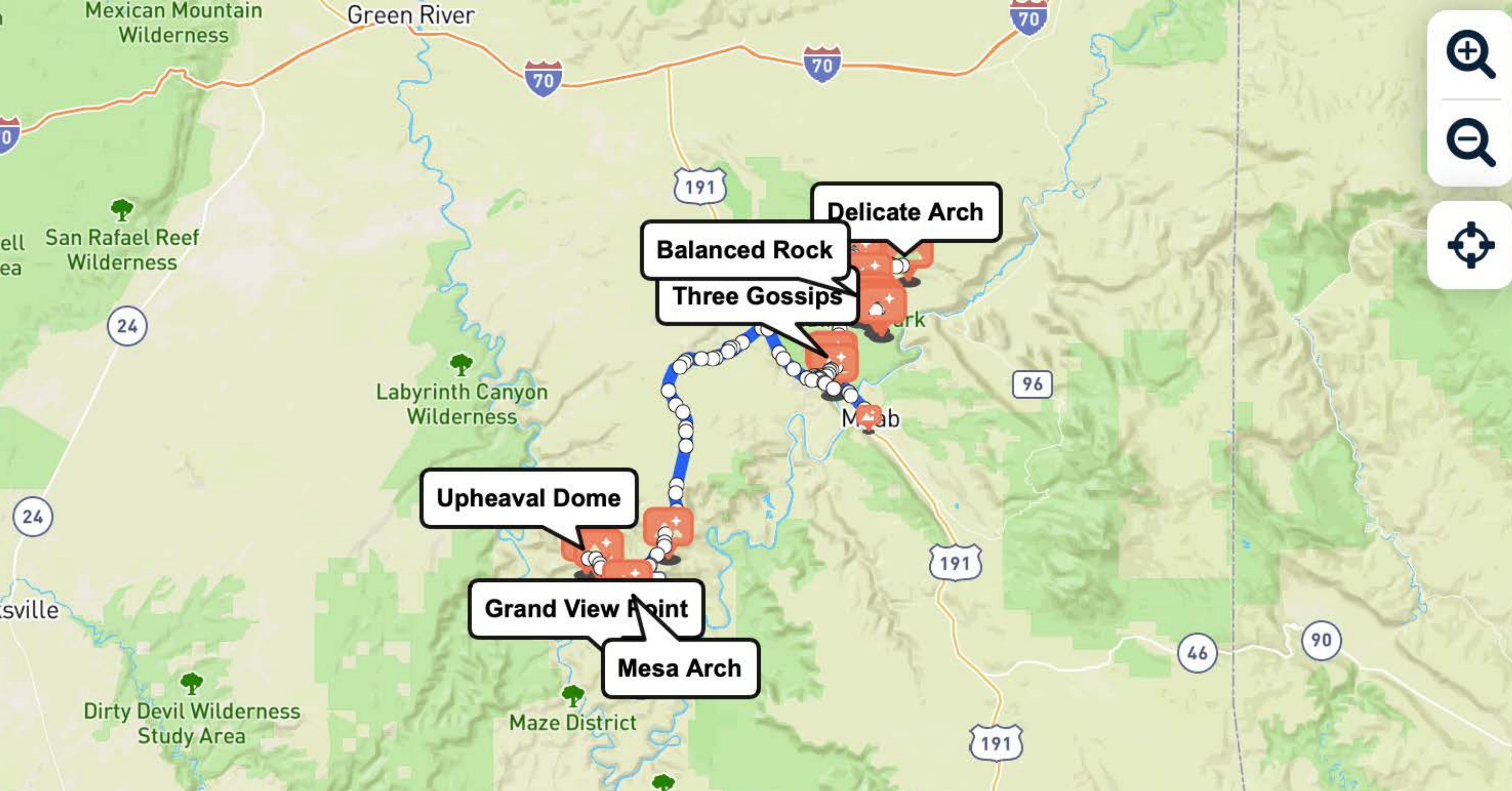
Have kids in the 4th grade? You and your family can get free access to hundreds of parks, lands, and waters for an entire year!

## RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Arches National Park implemented a ticketed entry system for peak season dates – for details visit [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov).







# ARCHES & CANYONLANDS ROAD TRIPS

 *interactive map*





# WHERE TO STAY

From rustic camp spots and amenity-packed RV resorts to luxury lodges and glamping resorts, the Arches and Canyonlands area has a huge variety of lodging options to choose from.





# WHERE TO STAY

## MOAB

Dozens of hotels line Moab's Main Street and an abundance of vacation rentals are available both in and just outside the city. The Red Cliffs Lodge and Sorrel River Ranch offer luxurious accommodations right along the Colorado River and Moab's handful of Bed and Breakfasts offer visitors a quaint place to stay.

## ARCHES NATIONAL PARK CAMPING

The Devils Garden Campground is located in the heart of Arches National Park. It's the only campground in Arches National Park and campsites are extremely limited. Reservations are almost always needed from March through October and can be made up to six months in advance online. All sites are first-come, first-served between November 1 and February 28, and chances are good you'll find a spot if you arrive early in the morning.

## CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK CAMPING

Camping is even more limited at the Island in the Sky District of Canyonlands. The Willow Flat Campground only has 12 campsites and all are available on a first-come, first-served basis only. Sites fill fast April through October and campground amenities are limited to vault toilets, picnic tables, and fire rings. Water is only available outside the visitor center.







# WHERE TO STAY

## BLM, STATE PARK, AND PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS

There are several Bureau of Land Management (BLM) campgrounds located on the public lands surrounding Arches and Canyonlands national parks. These campgrounds are only available on a first-come, first-served basis and also fill quickly during peak season.

Dead Horse Point State Park is located just outside of Canyonlands National Park and has a campground with several tent sites, RV sites with hook-ups, and yurt rentals which can be reserved in advance. There are also many privately operated campgrounds in the Moab area that take reservations.





## WHEN TO VISIT

Arches and Canyonlands National Parks are open year-round, 24-hours a day. The best times to visit weatherwise are April through May and September through October. For that reason, spring and fall also tend to be the busiest times to visit.

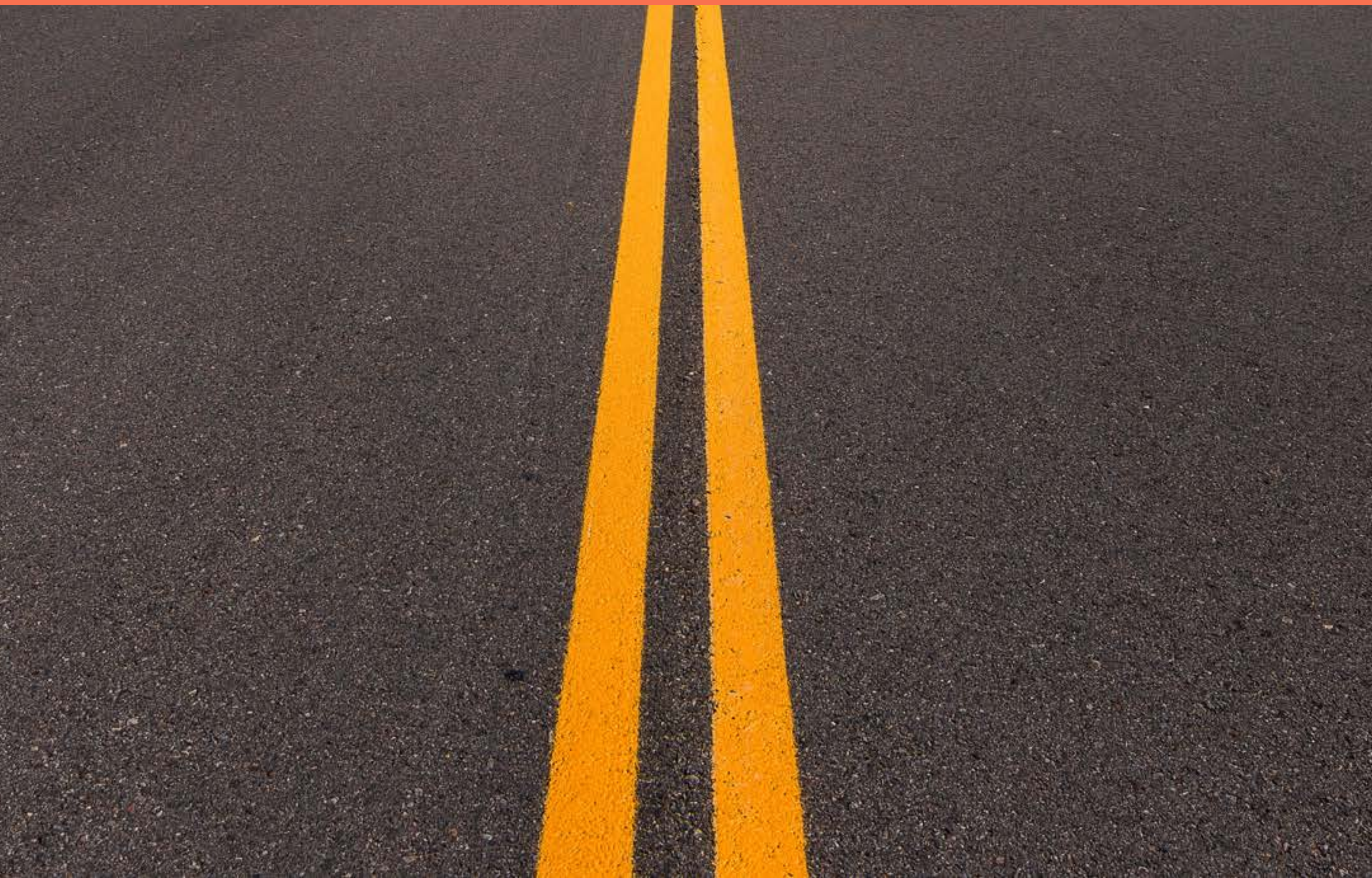
In summer, temperatures regularly reach 100 degrees and there are few places to find shade inside the park. Despite the scorching temperatures, summer is still high season in the park. Winter is becoming an increasingly popular time to visit the parks thanks to mild mid-day temperatures and fewer tourists.

Although visitation to Arches National Park tends to be extremely high from March through October, Easter weekend, Memorial Day weekend, Labor Day weekend, and Utah Education Association Week (typically the third week in October when most Utah schools take their fall break) are particularly busy. Some trails and roads may close periodically in winter due to snow and ice.





**HOW MUCH TIME  
DO YOU NEED?**







# HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU NEED?

## ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Arches National Park is one of the easiest national parks to see in a day, if that's all the time you have. The scenic drive offers countless views of natural arches and other interesting rock formations and most of the hikes in the park are short making it easy to squeeze in one or two. Two days in Arches is ideal though and would give you enough time to explore the Fiery Furnace on the ranger-led hike and do a few more of the longer hikes.

## CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

One day is really all you need to visit Canyonlands, just bear in mind that there are two separate areas that you will want to spend at least a half day (and ideally a full day) exploring. The popular Island in the Sky District of Canyonlands National Park is easy to do in a day if you're sticking to the overlooks and shorter trails. But if you're aiming to do some of the longer trails or explore the off road trails below the rim, you'll want at least two days in this area. The Needles District of Canyonlands is accessible from the south side of the park, and famous for its colorful, spire-like sandstone pillars, many other weirdly interesting rock formations and some terrific hiking. You'll want to dedicate a half-day to visiting the Needles District, and it's a great day-trip from Moab or as a stop on your way between Moab and destinations south.





# HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU NEED?

## VISITING BOTH PARKS IN ONE DAY

If you're short on time and want to see both parks in one day, it is doable. Head to Arches National Park first thing in the morning to avoid any delays at the entrance gate. Spend the first half of the day taking in some of the scenic viewpoints along the Arches Scenic Road, hiking to Delicate Arch and then enjoying a picnic lunch at the Devils Garden. Then head on over to the Island in the Sky to take in the views from Grand View Point, do the quick hike to Mesa Arch, and catch the sunset at the Green River Overlook. This doesn't allow time to visit the Needles District of Canyonlands in the same day but if you are on your way between Moab and destinations south, then visiting the Needles is highly recommended. Even the approach road is spectacular!





# HOW TO AVOID THE CROWDS

Arches is an incredibly popular national park. It's not uncommon to experience long entrance lines, full parking areas, and packed viewpoints. To beat the crowds, enter the park before 9 am in the morning or after 2 pm. If the park fills, staff may temporarily delay entries into the park.

Crowds tend to congregate around the most popular trailheads and viewpoints such as Delicate Arch, Devils Garden, and the Windows. To avoid the crowds, head to the more remote northwest end of the park and take the trail to Tower Arch or try to score a spot on a ranger-led Fiery Furnace hike.

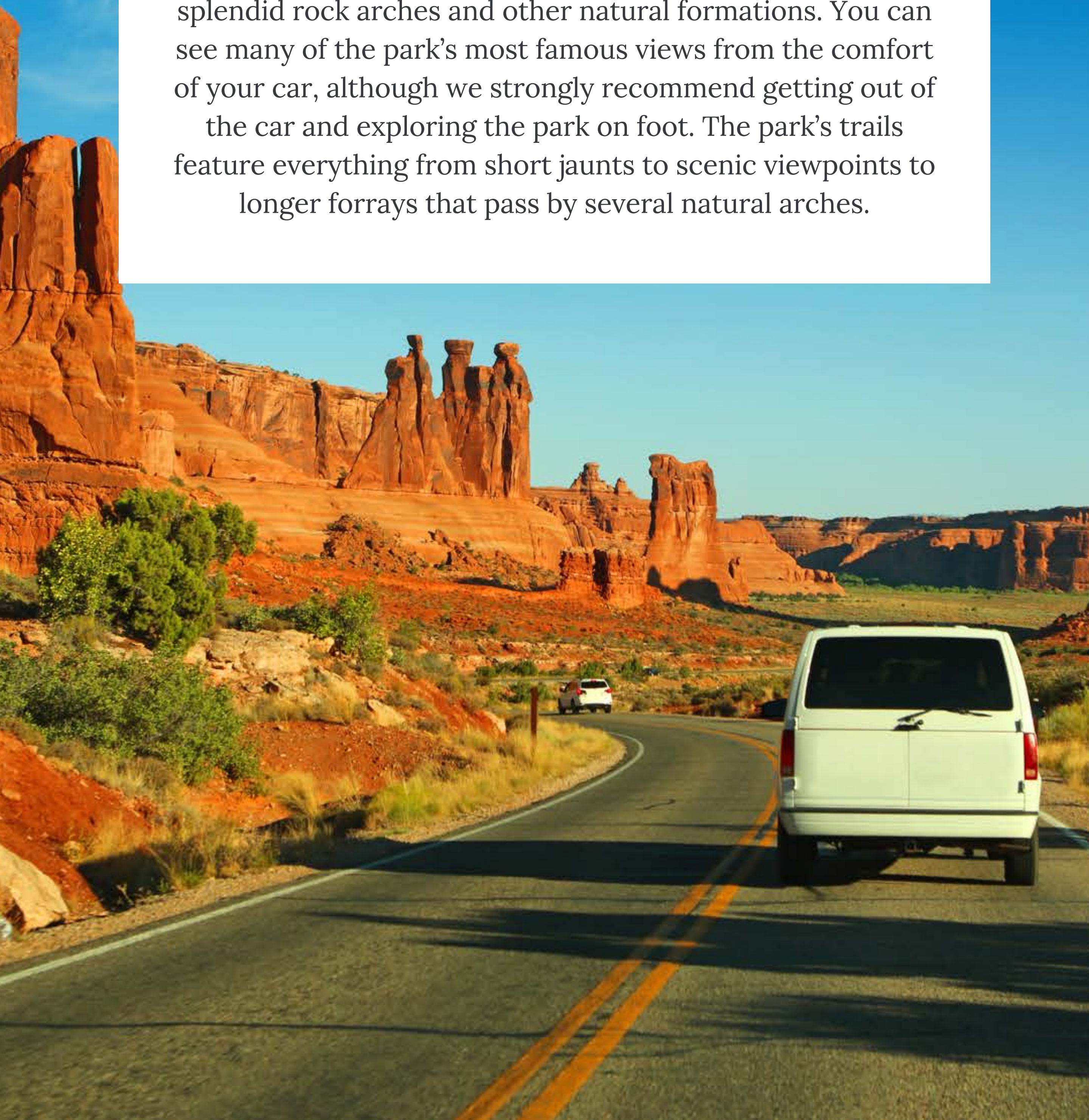
Although Canyonlands does not get as crowded as Arches, it does still see its fair share of visitors March through October. Visit early in the day to avoid lines at the entrance station and traffic along the park road. Canyonlands has a greater selection of longer trails than Arches so it is a bit easier to avoid the crowds here.



# WHAT TO SEE AND DO

## ARCHES SCENIC DRIVE

The Arches Scenic Drive passes many of the park's most splendid rock arches and other natural formations. You can see many of the park's most famous views from the comfort of your car, although we strongly recommend getting out of the car and exploring the park on foot. The park's trails feature everything from short jaunts to scenic viewpoints to longer forays that pass by several natural arches.





# WHAT TO SEE AND DO

## DELICATE ARCH VIEWPOINT

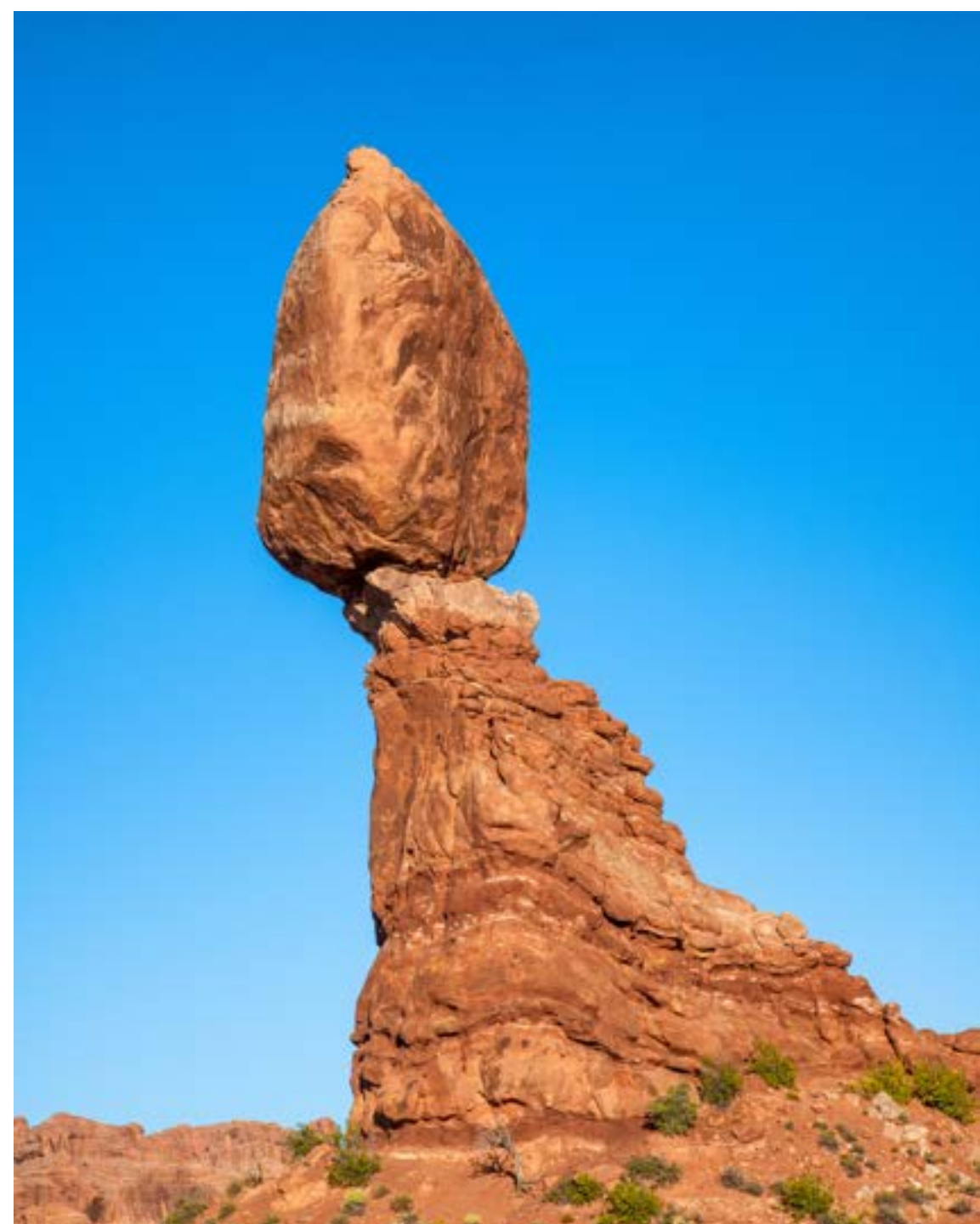
Delicate Arch is by far the most famous arch in the park. It's become something of a symbol for the state of Utah and is featured on the state license plate and state welcome signs. The Lower Delicate Arch Viewpoint is adjacent to the parking area and is accessible to people using wheelchairs.

The Upper Delicate Arch Viewpoint requires a 0.5-mile (0.8-kilometer) hike and gets you a bit closer to the arch. Neither trail gets you to the arch itself, for that you'll want to take the Delicate Arch Trail which begins at Wolfe Ranch.

## BALANCED ROCK

This precariously perched rock looks like it could topple over at any moment. Balanced Rock stands an astonishing 128 feet (39 meters) tall. It's actually not balanced at all, rather it's made up of two different rock layers that have been eroded over time and carved into this unique formation.

Balanced Rock is easily viewed from the park road and you can take the short 0.3-mile (0.5-kilometer) loop around the base of the rock for an up-close view.

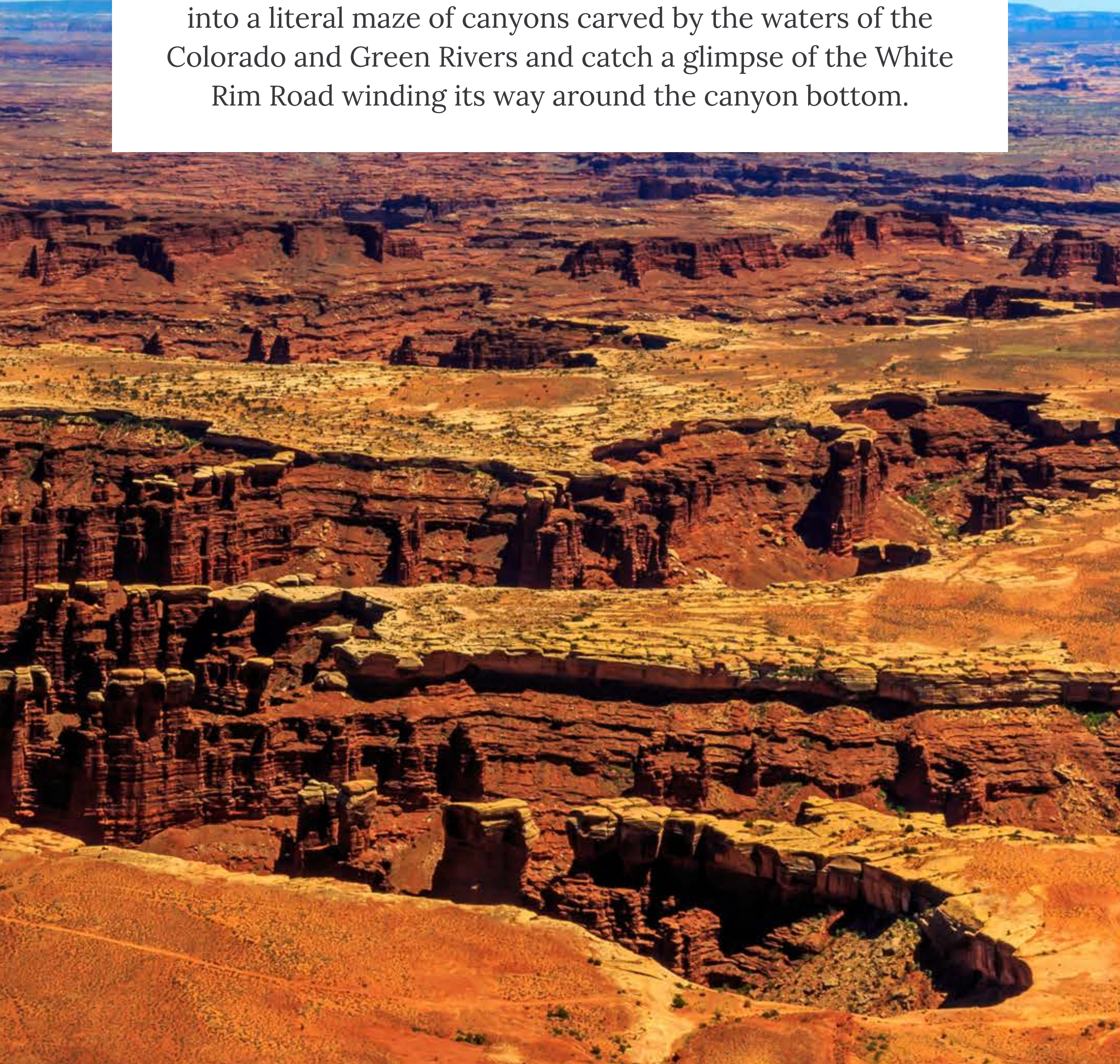




# WHAT TO SEE AND DO

## GRAND VIEW POINT

Grand View Point is the highlight of Island in the Sky and by far the best viewpoint in the park. It's here that you'll understand why this place is called Canyonlands. Located at the end of the main park road, from Grand View Point, you can gaze down into a literal maze of canyons carved by the waters of the Colorado and Green Rivers and catch a glimpse of the White Rim Road winding its way around the canyon bottom.





# WHAT TO SEE AND DO

## LA SAL MOUNTAINS VIEWPOINT

Rising nearly 8,500 feet (2,590 meters) from the surrounding desert, the La Sal Mountains provide a dramatic background for Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. These often snow-capped peaks stand in stark contrast to the red rock landscape below and the La Sal Mountains Viewpoint, located just three miles from the visitors center, is the first viewpoint you'll come across in the park.

## THE NECK

The Island in the Sky district of Canyonlands National Park sits atop a huge mesa with thousand foot drop-offs on all sides. From the Colorado River down below, the mesa literally looks like an island floating in the sky and it's connected to the rest of the Colorado Plateau by a narrow strip of land called "The Neck." You can pull off the park road and view "the neck" before it erodes further and no longer connects the island to the rest of the plateau.

## SHAFER TRAIL VIEWPOINT

The Shafer Trail is an unpaved road that descends steeply from the rim of the Island in the Sky to the canyon floor down below. Just gazing down at the winding switchbacks at the Shafer Trail Viewpoint is an exhilarating experience in itself. No permit is needed to drive the Shafer Trail but you do need a high-clearance 4WD vehicle and some serious tolerance for heights.





# WHAT TO SEE AND DO

## NEEDLES DISTRICT

Located about a 90 minute drive south of Moab, Needles is a District of Canyonlands National Park that is known for its colorful spires of Cedar Mesa Sandstone. Though it receives far less visitors than the more popular Island in the Sky District closer to Moab and Arches National Park, those who venture there are wowed by the unique rock formations and enjoyable slickrock hiking. Even the approach to Needles on Highway 211 is beautifully scenic – you'll love the petroglyphs at Newspaper Rock. If you have a spare day available from Moab, or if you are traveling between Moab and Mesa Verde, or even the Grand Canyon, Needle's is a side trip that you won't want to miss. The drive takes approximately 40 minutes from the turn off from 191.



# BEST HIKES

## DELICATE ARCH TRAIL

It is hard to grasp the immensity of Delicate Arch without taking the 3-mile (5-kilometer) round-trip hike to the base of the arch. The arch is much bigger than it looks from the viewpoints and visitors are often surprised by its size.

This is the most popular hike in the park so expect to share the trail with many others. Be prepared for little shade, steep drop-offs, and some slippery slickrock travel. Your efforts will definitely be rewarded though when standing underneath this 60 foot (18 meter) perfectly carved arch.

## THE WINDOWS

Also known as the Spectacles, these giant two side by side arches are almost perfectly round and look just like a pair of glasses sitting on a large sandstone nose. This fairly easy 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) round-trip trail leads to the North Window, South Window, and Turret Arch.

## DEVILS GARDEN

The whole Devils Garden Loop is eight miles (13 kilometers) long and passes by numerous arches including Landscape Arch, the longest arch in North America, and Double O Arch, an unusual arch atop another arch. You don't have to hike the entire trail to see some of the formations. You can easily do an out-and-back hike to Landscape Arch or take an easy stroll to Pine Tree Arch.





# BEST HIKES

## PARK AVENUE

From the Park Avenue parking area, this trail descends into a magnificent canyon framed by towering monoliths and massive rock formations. The Courthouse Towers, Three Gossips, Tower of Babel, and more can all be seen from the park road, but they're much more impressive when walking amongst them.

The trail is only 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) one-way if you have someone pick you up at the Courthouse Towers trailhead. If you don't have a shuttle driver, you'll have to return the way you came.

## MESA ARCH

This relatively flat and easy trail leads to an arch fantastically perched on the edge of the cliff. Mesa Arch perfectly frames the distant La Sal Mountains and is a wonderful place to photograph. It's only a 0.5 mile (0.8 kilometer) round-trip to the arch from the parking area and the trail winds through pinyon and juniper forest.

## GRAND VIEW POINT OVERLOOK TRAIL

For an even more impressive view of Grand View Point, hike an additional mile to the Grand View Point Overlook. Along the trail, you'll enjoy numerous panoramic views as you hug the edge of the cliff from the parking area until you arrive at the viewpoint on the southernmost edge of the Island in the Sky plateau.





# BEST HIKES

## UPHEAVAL DOME

A short but steep trail leads to an overlook of an unusual dome-like structure. Unlike the predictable geological order of much of the rest of the park, Upheaval Dome's strange structure has puzzled geologists for years. Once believed to be created by a hidden volcano, many experts now believe Upheaval Dome was created by a large explosion created by the impact of a meteorite.





# REVIEWS



Excellent and informative  
Well worth the money! Everyone in the car ages 19-82 found the narrative informative and entertaining. Highly recommend this download.



**ZarZarL**



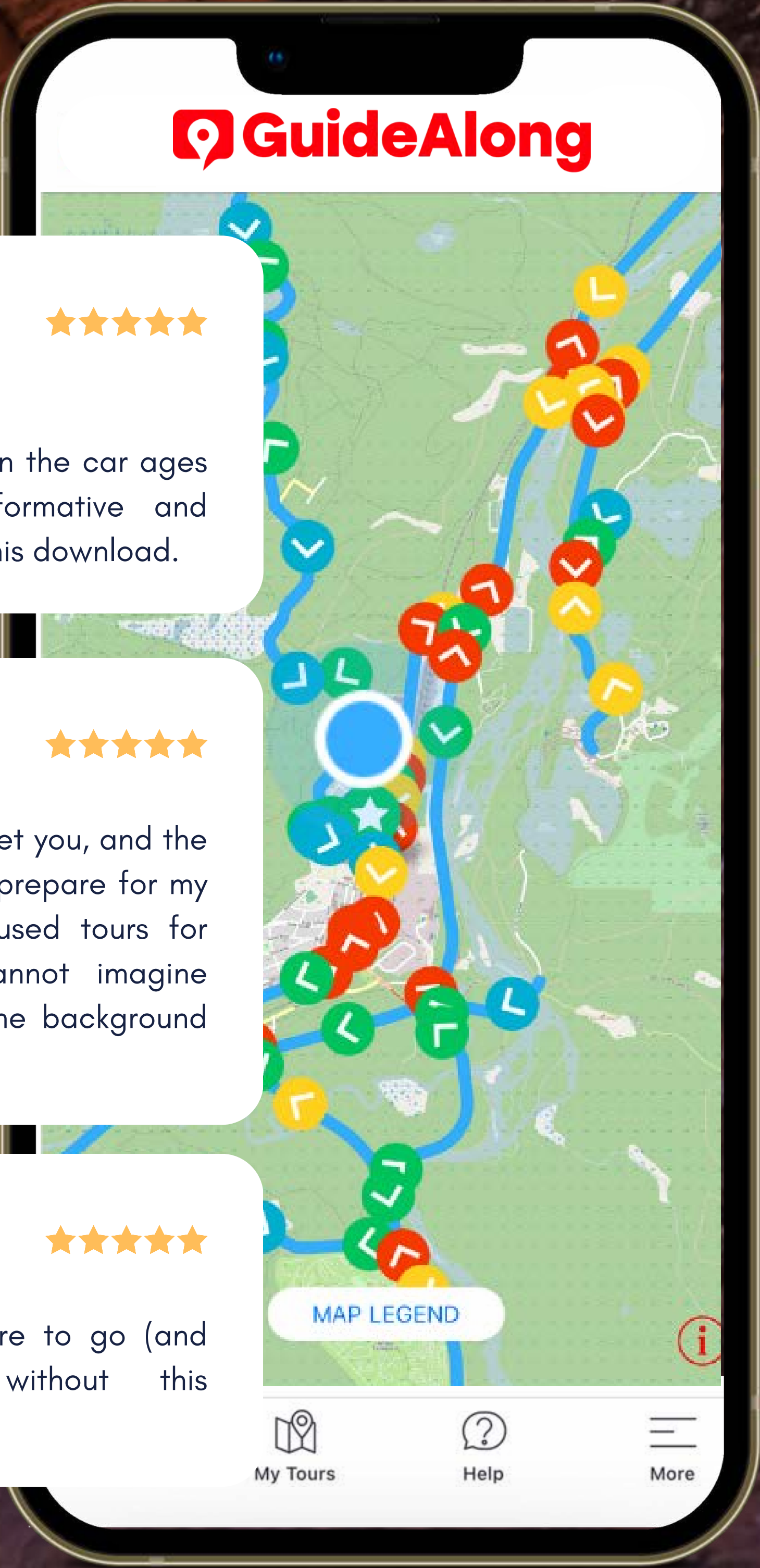
I never paid for any apps until I met you, and the best purchase I've ever made to prepare for my trips! I've already bought and used tours for Hawaii and US west, and cannot imagine traveling without your voice in the background anymore



**17484 Apple**

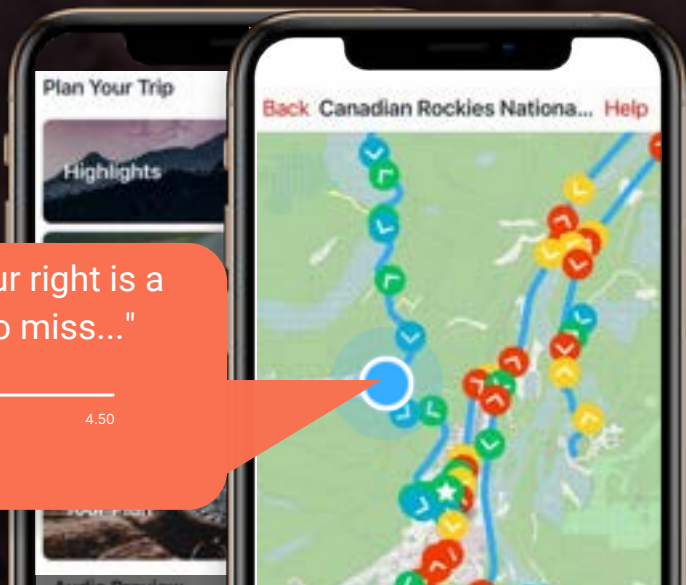
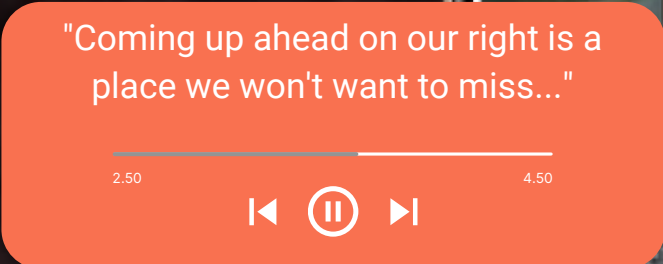
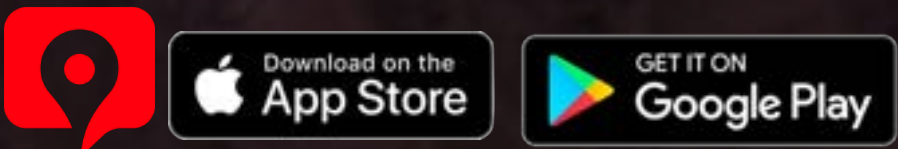


We would not have known where to go (and when to beat crowds) without this audio...Ridiculously great value



# AUDIO TOUR GUIDES

Stories, local tips & directions that autoplay, based on your location





# AWESOME EXPERIENCES

WATCH THE SUNRISE THROUGH MESA ARCH,  
CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Mesa Arch is stunning any time of day but it's especially magical at sunrise. In the early morning light, the top of the arch glows a fiery red and you can watch the sun come up right through the opening in the arch. Catching the sunrise at Mesa Arch is incredibly popular with photographers so you'll want to arrive well before sunrise to stake out a spot.





# AWESOME EXPERIENCES

## TAKE A RANGER-GUIDED HIKE THROUGH THE FIERY FURNACE, ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

The Fiery Furnace is a maze-like labyrinth of narrow passageways among towering canyon walls near the center of Arches National Park. There are no marked trails in the Fiery Furnace and although it is possible to explore the Fiery Furnace on your own (you'll need a Self-Guided Fiery Furnace Exploration Permit), most visitors sign up for the guided tour.

Fiery Furnace tours are in high demand so you must reserve your spot in advance. Before you commit, know that the hike requires a reasonable level of fitness and agility. The hike requires navigating uneven terrain, squeezing through narrow spaces, and jumping across gaps in the rocks.

### RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

The only way to enter the Fiery Furnace is on a ranger guided hike or with an individual permit. Both options must be booked in advance, visit [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) for more details.





# AWESOME EXPERIENCES

## MOUNTAIN BIKE THE 100 MILE WHITE RIM ROAD, CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

The White Rim Road is a narrow 100-mile dirt road through some of the most spectacular scenery in Canyonlands National Park. Most people take 2-4 days to complete the White Rim Trail on bike, although some challenge themselves to complete the route in less than 24 hours. A permit is required for all trips on the White Rim and reservations are often needed in advance. Local outfitters offer guided mountain bike trips on the White Rim Trail.

## ATTEND A RANGER-LED STARGAZING PROGRAM, ARCHES & CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARKS

Both Arches and Canyonlands National Parks are certified as official International Dark Sky Parks meaning the parks have some of the darkest skies in the country. These are areas virtually untouched with light pollution and the opportunity for stargazing is incredible. Rangers lead stargazing events at Arches and Canyonlands throughout the summer months or you can download a night sky app and stargaze on your own.





# BEST SUNSET SPOTS

## DELICATE ARCH, ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Undoubtedly, the best spot to watch the sunset in Arches National Park, Delicate Arch simply glows in the late evening sun.

## FIERY FURNACE OVERLOOK, ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Named after the reddish hue this maze of rocks takes on at sunset, the Fiery Furnace Overlook is typically less crowded than Delicate Arch at sunset.

## MESA ARCH, CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Although more popular as a sunrise spot, sunsets at Mesa Arch can be fantastic when the sun reflects off the snow-capped peaks of the La Sal Mountains.





## BEST SUNSET SPOTS

### CANDLESTICK TOWER OVERLOOK, CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

This dark red pinnacle juts up from the bottom of the canyon and resembles a group of candlesticks. This is one of the few overlooks that face west in the park making it one of the best sunset spots on the Island in the Sky.

### GREEN RIVER OVERLOOK, CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK

This southwest facing viewpoint overlooking the Green River is one of the best spots to watch the sunset in Canyonlands National Park.



# PACKING LIST

**Clothing Layers:** The southern Utah desert is known for its searing midday sun and chilly nights regardless of what time of year you visit. It's not uncommon to see a 40 degree temperature difference between day and night. Pack plenty of layers to be best prepared. Avoid heavy clothing or any materials that do not wick away moisture.

**Footwear:** Sturdy hiking shoes are very important. Depending on what kind of hiker you are, it's likely you'll be spending lots of time crossing rocky and uneven terrain. Slickrock is called slickrock for a good reason and you'll want to make sure your hiking shoes have plenty of traction. This doesn't necessarily mean wearing bulky hiking boots, rather a good pair of trail runners or hiking sandals may do.

**Hiking Daypack:** Even if you're planning on only doing a few short hikes, a hiking daypack can come in handy for carrying a water bottle, a few snacks, a camera, and any maps. A comfortable pack is a must since you'll be wearing it a lot.

**Headlamp:** If you linger too long over the sunset, you'll want to make sure you can get back to civilization safely. Toss a headlamp in your daypack any time you're hiking close to sundown just in case.

**Sun Protection:** The desert sun can be brutal. Make sure you're prepared with sunscreen, chapstick with SPF, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat.

**Hydration:** Always pack more water than you think you'll need in the desert. For shorter hikes and in the car, you'll want to keep a refillable water bottle handy. For longer hikes, you may want to use a large hydration bladder. Always keep a few extra gallons in the car when traveling through the desert just in case you run into car trouble or find yourself lost.

**Snacks:** Pack a few trail-friendly snacks such as nuts, dried fruits, and energy bars. Choose items that won't melt in the sun and gooey up your pack.

**Plastic Bag:** We always like to take along a plastic bag to pick up any garbage we find along the trail.

#leaveitbetterthanyoufoundit



# TOP TIPS

**Reserve Your Timed Entry Ticket:**

Arches National Park implemented a ticketed entry system for peak season dates, for details visit [nps.gov](https://nps.gov).

**Gas Up:** Ensure you have a full tank of gas, there are no opportunities for gas inside the parks.

**Water & Food:** Bring plenty of both. Good to keep hydrated and as there are no services inside the park, bring lunch and snacks.

**Bring a Refillable Water Bottle:** Water is available year-round at the visitor center, campground, and seasonally at the Devils Garden Trailhead at Arches National Park and year-round at the visitor center at Canyonlands National Park Island in the Sky district.

**Open 24-7:** Arches and Canyonlands Parks are open 24 hours a day, year round.

**Stargazing:** Certified as an official International Dark Sky Park, return at night to see the night sky full of stars. Bring your binoculars and see if you can join a Stargazer Program with a Ranger.

**Buy Your Pass Online:** Pre-purchase your annual National Park Pass online to save time at the park entrance.

**Expect Spotty Cell Service:** There are no cell towers in Arches or Canyonlands national parks, all cell service comes from outside the park boundaries. Cell service varies between carriers but service is generally available when you can see the La Sal Mountains. Don't rely on cell service and keep your phone in airplane mode to save on battery power.

**Check the Park Entrance Webcam:**

Check out the Arches Entrance Station webcam for current traffic conditions. Also, check the Arches National Park Twitter and Canyonlands National Park Twitter for current conditions and travel alerts.

**Check the Park Calendar for Ranger-Led Programs:**

Rangers often lead guided hikes, evening ranger programs, and special events such as stargazing and kids activities. Check the park calendar in advance or stop by the visitor center to inquire about daily events.

**Pack a DC Charger:** You'll want to make sure your phone stays charged throughout the day since you'll most likely be taking dozens of photographs. Location services can drain your battery fast so bring a back-up battery charger to keep your phone charged.



# 4 EASY STEPS TO GETTING AN AUDIO TOUR FOR THE DRIVE



1.

## DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP

Download the free app from the Apple App or Google Play Store.

2.

## SIGN IN

Sign in with your existing Apple or Google Play account ID.

3.

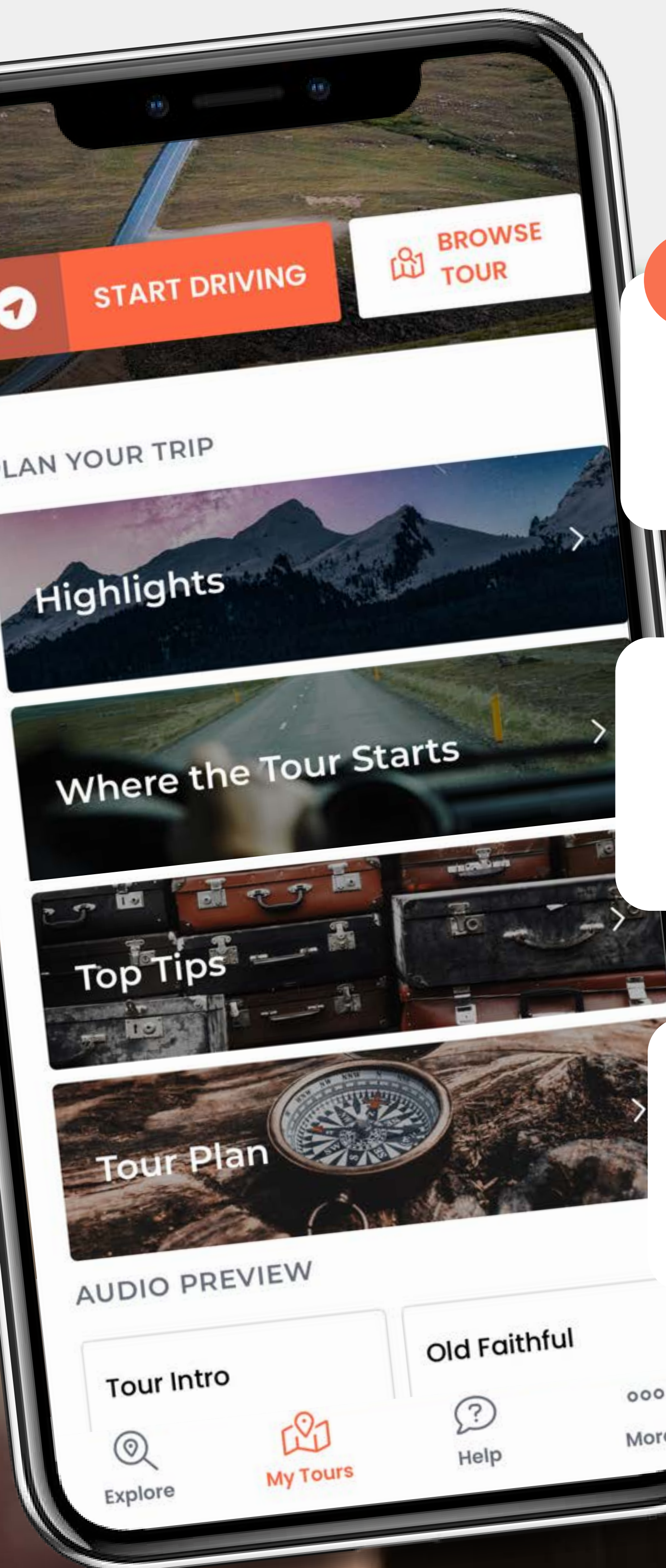
## BUY A TOUR, SAVE A BUNDLE

Buy direct from our website and save. Tours never expire, so you can buy now and travel anytime.

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## HIT THE ROAD

Just one tap will get you touring, or if you're a planner, check out our trip guides and travel tips.



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