




Many of the Scenic Backways have historical significance. The Hole-in-the-Rock Road played a major role in the settlement of the San Juan area east of the Colorado River. The Burr Trail, linking Boulder with Lake Powell, was used by cattlemen during the early 1900s.

*Part of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

9 Posey Lake

At the east end of Escalante, Posey Lake Scenic Backway heads north from Highway 12 and climbs the timbered high country of the Dixie National Forest. The backway provides access to the Griffin Top and Hell's Backbone, and provides excellent opportunities to fish or simply explore. It ends at Highway 24 near Loa.

Posey Lake is a picturesque mountain lake located 13 miles northwest of Escalante. The lake is popular for trout fishing and has a U.S. Forest Service campground. Dirt roads that connect with other lakes, reservoirs and campgrounds in the surrounding Dixie National Forest make excellent mountain bike rides. Closest services from Posey Lake are in Escalante.

 Fish, hike, boat, mountain bike, camp, hunt, view wildlife, backpack


 Snowmobile, cross country ski, fish, view wildlife


Public campgrounds are available.

10 Hell's Backbone / Box Death Hollow Wilderness Area

Hell's Backbone Road is one of the most dramatic stretches of road in the country as it travels along a ridge with a sheer drop on both sides. Hell's Backbone Bridge spans a crevasse on a narrow ridge no wider than the bridge itself. Plenty of dramatic photos of the area's breathtaking scenery can be taken along the route.

Hell's Backbone Road starts at the Posey Lake Scenic Backway and circles around the rugged Box Death Hollow Wilderness Area, ending three miles west of Boulder. Backpacking, camping, hiking, mountain biking, and 4-wheeling are among the top activities in this area. **High clearance vehicles are recommended. Check with the local visitor center or businesses for weather conditions before traveling this route.** Escalante and Boulder are the closest towns that offer services.

 Hike, backpack, camp, mountain bike, hunt, fish, 4-wheel

 Cross country ski, snowmobile, snowshoe

Public campgrounds are available.


11 Hole-in-the-Rock / Devil's Rock Garden*

For a historic drive, explore the Hole-in-the-Rock Scenic Backway which starts five miles east of Escalante on Highway 12. The dirt road travels 57 miles to the Hole-in-the-Rock, where in 1880, Mormon settlers cut a passage and lowered their wagons over the 1200 foot cliff to the canyon floor and the Colorado River.

Several side roads along the backway lead to scenic canyons, gorges, natural arches, and attractions like Dance Hall Rock. Views of the Straight Cliffs of the Fifty Mile Mountain and the Escalante River slickrock country can be seen throughout the drive. Hikers and backpackers will find excellent treks through the slickrock and convoluted sandstone canyons of the Escalante. Stop in the town of Escalante for maps and information.

Devil's Rock Garden, one of the highlights along the Hole-in-the-Rock Scenic Backway, is located 18 miles south of Escalante. Plan a picnic in the "garden" of unique rock formations and arches managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Closest services are in Escalante.

 Hike, mountain bike, camp, 4-wheel, backpack, OHV, photography, rock hound, picnic

 Hike, mountain bike, rock hound, picnic

Campgrounds are available in Escalante.

12 Calf Creek Recreation Area / Escalante Canyons*

Leaving the Escalante area and driving east takes travelers on the "The Million Dollar Road to Boulder". This section of Highway 12 was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and completed in 1935, providing the first year round access for automobiles to this isolated pocket in southwestern Utah. Before then, mail and supplies were carried to Boulder by mules and pack horses over Hell's Backbone or the Boulder Mail Trail, both hazardous routes.

Highway 12 winds through vast expanses of slickrock country including the Escalante Canyons and other popular desert hiking areas. Pullouts along the route provide opportunities to appreciate the awesome scenery.

About 15 miles east of Escalante, Byway 12 descends to the Calf Creek Recreation Area. This Bureau of Land Management (BLM) facility is a perfect place to wade in the creek, have a picnic, or take the 5.5 mile round-trip nature hike to Lower Calf Creek Falls. The sandy trail ends with water cascading 126 feet from the rock walls above into a pool surrounded by shade trees.



The view from Hell's Backbone is always spectacular. Lower Calf Creek Falls is a beautiful and refreshing oasis in the Escalante area.

