CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK AREA ITINERARIES

INCLUDING HENRY MOUNTAINS AND GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Adventure off the beaten path and revel in the beauty of Utah's scenic backways. Enjoy the remote Henry Mountains, visit the most famous “wrinkle” on the earth located among the hidden treasures of Capitol Reef National Park, and view majesty that makes up the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument.

Located in south-central Utah, just north of Lake Powell, the Henry Mountains and surrounding deserts make up almost two million acres of public land. This arid landscape of America's backyard offers travelers a variety of hiking, sightseeing, hunting, nature study and majestic photo opportunities. This is one desert secret you won’t want to pass up.
TRAVEL, CHECK-IN AND EAT

Just getting to Bryce Canyon Country is a scenic drive in itself, so allow a day to travel to the area and check-in to the lodging of your choice. Take time to enjoy the local communities that offer diverse lodging options which you can base as you explore the backcountry of this magnificent scenery.

Visitors can access the backways on this itinerary from Interstate 15 or via Highway 89 to National Scenic Byway 12 or from Scenic Byway 24 from Interstate 70. Explore the maps on website to gain an overview of the best route for you.
Spend day two basking in the south-central desert oasis of Capitol Reef’s shimmering sandstone cliffs, soaring monoliths and domes. Once called the “land of the sleeping rainbow”, this multi colored rock formation is surrounded by abundant riverbanks and canopied in a colossal vista of the desert sky.

Highway 24 which passes through the park (east/west) and the park's scenic drive (north/south) are two roads that will reward visually but also offer opportunities to experience Native American and pioneer history, along with some excellent hiking or biking opportunities. Captiol Reef is Utah’s lesser-known Mighty Five National park and a treasure you won’t want to miss.
NOTOM ROAD SCENIC BACKWAY

Leading from highway 24, the Notom Road Scenic Backway leads from highway 24 on the eastern edge of the Waterpocket Fold (the earth’s wrinkle). Narrow canyons carve their way and either side of this astonishing geological wonder, making for a breathtaking journey through Utah’s timeless formations. The Waterpocket Fold runs the length of the road and provides plenty of attractive images for your viewing pleasure. This road can be experienced down and back or by connecting to the Burr Trail and doing a loop. This is 34-miles one way to the Burr Trail, plan close to two hours for drive time one way.
BURR TRAIL SCENIC BACKWAY

Starting in the town of Boulder, or other nearby communities journey through steep slickrock towering cliffs of Long Canyon. One of the most iconic part of the road is the switchbacks with views of jagged sandstone reefs. The Burr Trail weaves through the eastern access of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the northern section of Glen Canyon, and the southern half of Capitol Reef Park, eventually connecting with the Notom Road and north of Bullfrog Marina near Ticaboo. Add an additional day by overnighting in Ticaboo and experiencing the remote scenery, canyoneering and night skies.
BULL MOUNTAIN SCENIC BACKWAY

The Bull Mountain route offers travelers a staggering view inside the heart of the Colorado Plateau country. The landscape is abundant with red cliffs, stark badlands and a rainbow of rock-colored hues. The road climbs up to 10,500 feet rising to the crowning glory of the Henry Mountains lush meadows and mesmerizing desert forests. Also unique to the Bull Mountain scenic backway is an opportunity to view the area’s free roaming bison herd, hunt for petroglyphs and view ancient remnants of the prehistoric Fremont Culture. A one way trip is 68 miles, make a day of it and plan for six or seven hours of scenic exploration.
DEPARTURE

Depending on your schedule and point of origin, you can again experience Scenic Byways as you depart Bryce Canyon Country. After relishing in the remote pleasure of the Henry Mountains, take a day to have a late breakfast, gather up your belonging and begin your journey home. Scenic Byway 12 and Scenic Byway 24 are two of the more scenic roads in Utah, and you’ll want to allow yourself time to experience the wonders of either of these two roads.

Scenic Byway 24 (East): Don’t miss out on Goblin Valley State Park as you move north on Byway 24 toward Interstate 70. Going west on 24 you’ll have options to take in Fish Lake and other scenic drives.