

CAPITOL REEF



Capitol Reef National Park is located at the junction of two very different environments: sprawling red rock desert and lush green valleys. The park stretches across 100 kilometres and, of its three areas, **Fruita is the most accessible and the most visited**. The other two areas, **Cathedral Valley** and the **Waterpocket District (Strike Valley)**, are more remote and difficult to access. Capitol Reef was named a national monument by President Roosevelt in 1937, and a national park in 1971. The area was first inhabited by the Fremont people before being settled by Mormons in 1875.



CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

WHAT TO DO

The Fruita Historic District could be considered the heart of Capitol Reef National Park. Mormons settled the **Fremont River valley** in the 1880s and established Junction, later renamed **Fruita**. From the turn of the century until 1937, the little settlement was home to a Mormon community that never exceeded ten families at a time. The pioneer families planted thousands of fruit trees in this fertile valley, which became known for the quality of its fruit. Today the historic orchards contain about 2,000 trees and visitors can pick fruit for a small contribution. Fruita is home to the park's only Visitor Center, along Utah Highway 24, which cuts across the Fruita Area from east to west, winding its way through brightly coloured mountains and cliffs. Here are the sights in Fruita that you won't want to miss:

TWIN ROCKS★

Along Highway 24, after entering the park from Torrey, you will see two massive mushroom-shaped rocks standing side by side. These are the Twin Rocks,

one of the many curiosities you will find in the park.

CHIMNEY ROCK★★★

This **chimney-shaped rock** certainly lives up to its name!

CHIMNEY ROCK LOOP TRAIL

Distance (round-trip): 5.9 km

Time (round-trip): About 5 hours

Level: Intermediate to difficult

Elevation gain: 180 metres

Chimney Rock Trail leads to spectacular views of the valley. This 5.9-kilometre trail is ranked intermediate to difficult and climbs quite steeply with an

CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK ★

Season: Open year-round, 24 hours a day.

Visitor center: Open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in high season (summer) and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in low season. Closed on federal holidays (Christmas, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving).

Entry fee: 20/vehicle including occupants. Valid 7 days. Purchase the America the Beautiful Pass for \$80 if you plan to visit more than 2-3 parks.

Shuttle service in the park? No

www.nps.gov/care/index.htm

elevation gain of more than 180 metres. It will take about 5 hours to complete the loop.

PANORAMA POINT★ AND GOOSENECKS OVERLOOK★★★

Panorama Point offers interesting views of the

distant **Henry Mountains**, **Capitol Dome**, a 1820-metre white sandstone dome, and **The Castle**, a huge castle-shaped rock formation. From **Panorama Point**, a short walk leads to **Goose necks Overlook** and a dramatic view of **Sulphur Creek** and its canyon.



GOOSENECKS OVERLOOK

© shutterstock_1523009606, Jason Kolenda



FALLS IN CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

© iStockPhoto Ben Blankenburg



CHIMNEY ROCK

© iStock-187185049, biglanphoto

THE CASTLE ★

A massive sandstone peak can be seen from Highway 24 near the Visitor Center. It towers over the Sulphur and Fremont Rivers, and is shaped like a castle.

PETROGLYPHES ★★

These images were carved into stone more than 1,000 years ago by the Fremont people, who settled the area during the fourth century. They were hunter-gatherers who also grew corn and beans. The Fremont disappeared in the 1250s, possibly due to a long drought, leaving behind many pictographs and petroglyphs. Those along Utah Highway 24 are accessible by two wooden boardwalks.

HICKMAN BRIDGE ★★

Distance (round-trip): 2.8 km
Time (round-trip): About 1 hour
Level: Easy

Hickman Bridge is a natural arch carved by water out of the Kayenta formation. The impressive 38-metre tall natural bridge with a span of 40 metres was named in honour of Joseph Hickman, who advocated for the preservation of the park. An easy looped trail leads to Hickman Bridge. The trail is 2.8 kilometres long and will take about one hour.



HICKMAN BRIDGE, CAPITOL REEF

© iStockPhoto Maciej Biedowski



THE CASTLE

© iStockPhoto Matthias Ledwinka



Hiking

★ Noteworthy

★★ Worth the detour

★★★ Must see

SCENIC DRIVE★

This scenic route winds along the western side of the **Waterpocket Fold**, a geologic monocline (wrinkle) extending almost 100 miles, which contains the oldest rocks in the park. It is not a loop, so you must return by the same road. A must-see when visiting Capitol Reef, Scenic Drive traverses magnificent landscapes dominated by immense multicoloured sandstone cliffs in bright shades of yellow, orange, red, brown and grey. There is an **entrance fee of about \$20 per vehicle** to travel the park's Scenic Drive beyond the Fruita Campground. The road is suitable for passenger cars and RVs up to 27 feet long. The pay station is on Scenic Drive just south of the Fruita Campground. If you have an America The Beautiful pass, you have nothing to pay. Scenic Drive leads to two dirt roads that enter narrow canyons, **Grand Wash★** and **Capitol Gorge★★**.

GRAND WASH★

The first road on the left along Scenic Drive leads to Grand Wash, a narrow, steep-walled canyon in the heart of Waterpocket Fold, and the trailhead for two hiking trails:

GRAND WASH TRAIL

Distance (round-trip): 7.2 km
Time (round-trip): About 2 hours
Level: Easy

Grand Wash Trail is an easy trail that leads into the narrowest part of the canyon. It is 7.2 km long and will take about 2 hours.

CASSIDY ARCH TRAIL

Distance (round-trip): 5.6 km
Time (round-trip): 3-4 hours
Level: Difficult

Cassidy Arch Trail is a difficult 5.5-km trail (2 hours round-trip). But it is well worth the effort, as it leads up to **Cassidy Arch**, a magnificent natural arch on

the canyon's north wall. The arch was named for turn of the century outlaw Butch Cassidy, who is thought to have hidden occasionally in Grand Wash.

CAPITOL GORGE★★

The Capitol Gorge spur road is longer and more winding than Grand Wash. It twists dramatically between the sheer white sandstone walls of Capitol Gorge. There are two trailheads at the end of the road:

CAPITOL GORGE TRAIL

Distance (round-trip): 3.2 km
Time (round-trip): About 1 hour
Level: Easy

Capitol Gorge Trail, an easy 3.2 km round-trip (1 hour) trail, leads to a set of **waterpockets**, natural cavities in the sandstone that fill up with rainwater.

GOLDEN THRONE TRAIL

Distance (round-trip): 6.4 km
Time (round-trip): 2 hours
Level: Difficult

Golden Throne Trail is a difficult trail, 6.4 km round-trip (2 hours). It leads to the top of the north wall of Capitol Gorge, where you will enjoy impressive views of **Golden Throne**, a 2,146-metre-high sandstone dome that shines a deep yellow in the sun.



CAPITOL GORGE TRAIL



SCENIC DRIVE

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GILFORD HOMESTEAD FARMHOUSE

WHERE TO EAT

1 GILFORD HOMESTEAD (\$)

This farmhouse is located inside the national park and is an integral part of its history. Built in 1908 by Mormon pioneer Calvin Pendleton, its last owner was Dewey Gifford, who acquired it in 1928 and lived there for 41 years until the creation of the park. The farmhouse has been renovated and refurnished, and depicts the typical spartan nature of rural Utah farm homes of the

early 1900s and early Mormon settlement of the Fruita Valley. Today Gifford House has been converted into a store that sells many local and handmade items, along with amazing fruit pies that can be enjoyed on site. It is 1.6 km south of the Visitor Center on Scenic Drive. *Daily from mid-March to late October: 8 am to 4:30 pm (regular hours).*

SCENIC DRIVE, CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK
435-425-3791

WWW.NPS.GOV/CARE/LEARN/HISTORYCULTURE/GIFFORDHOMESTEAD.HTM

2 THE RIM ROCK RESTAURANT (\$\$-\$\$\$)

At the Rim Rock Restaurant, the chef carefully prepares homemade, locally-grown western cuisine such as pan-fried trout, smoked ribs and hand-cut steaks with a choice of homemade sauces such as cranberry sauce. In addition to enjoying a delicious

meal, you will have a beautiful view of the Boulder Mountain Plateau and Capitol Reef Park through the huge picture windows. *Daily from 5 pm to 9 pm.*
2523, HIGHWAY 24 E, TORREY
435-425-3398
WWW.THERIMROCK.NET

*** Hours may vary ***

