

THE NATIONAL PARKS CROWDING CRISIS

Eat Bravely

Outside

**Gear Up
for the
Apocalypse**

Jackets
from the
Future

**+
The Call
of the
Candy-Ass**

By Nick Offerman

HOW TO

Gourmet Wild

IN THE

A CAN'T-MISS GUIDE TO
Outdoor Cooking

The Woks of Life
founders Sarah and
Kaitlin Leung

"I AM THE GREATEST!"

Does Positive
Self-Talk Make
You Faster?

Cheryl Strayed
and the *Wild*
Hike That
Changed
Everything





The Between Lands

Seven national parks, 1,270 miles, and six new base camps: we've come up with the ultimate western road-trip itinerary—but not for the reasons you might think. Yes, these parks are among our most iconic, but it's the journeys linking them that provide the greatest opportunity for adventure. From our favorite quick-hop detours to the best spots to après, here's how to make the most of this summer and avoid the crowds.

By Graham Averill

ROUTE:
**Big Sky, Montana,
to Jackson, Wyoming**
[179 MILES]

PARK: Yellowstone

Yellowstone is best known for its valley-level sights—roaming wildlife and hydrothermal features—but the park's mountains, which rise to 11,000 feet, are just as astounding. Many of the tallest lack established trails to the top, but 10,574-foot Avalanche Peak, on the quieter

eastern border, is an exception.

A 2.1-mile trail affords views of the Absaroka Range, Yellowstone Lake, and even the Grand Teton. You will likely have those views to yourself, but you'll have to work for them, as the route ascends more than 2,000 feet. **Need to know:** You can climb Avalanche Peak without a permit.

ADVENTURE: Teton Pass

Highway 22 connects the towns of Jackson and Victor, Idaho, and tops out at Teton Pass, where

crews built a world-class mountain-bike trail system that traverses the roadway into Bridger-Teton National Forest. It's a 12-mile pedal from either town, or you can hire a shuttle, then connect Fuzzy Bunny, Powerline, and Parallel for a downhill route that promises tight, rocky singletrack, epic scenery, and too many jumps to count.

STAY: Montage Big Sky

The Spanish Peaks provide the backdrop for this new alpine lodge, which opened in December with 139 rooms and suites, a worthy addition to Big Sky Resort's 5,850-acre property. In winter that means ski-in, ski-out access; in summer you get lift-assisted hiking and mountain biking. Bonus: the resort is within striking distance of five blue-ribbon trout streams. *From \$1,399*

EAT AND DRINK:

The Riverhouse

The food at this homey joint in Gallatin, Montana, is exactly what you need after a big day in the mountains: authentic Texas barbecue, with a menu full of brisket, smoked sausage, and mac

and cheese (which you can load with fried chicken, bacon, and broccoli, if you're into that).

DETOUR: St. Anthony Sand Dunes

Dip into eastern Idaho to check out this otherworldly landscape: 10,600 acres of fine white quartz ridges, some of which are 400 feet high. Rent a dirt bike or an off-road vehicle in the town of St. Anthony to explore the site, most of it accessible from April to January.

ROUTE:
**Jackson, Wyoming,
to Moab, Utah**
[480 MILES]

PARK: Grand Teton

This park is all about the skyline—dominated by 13,000-foot peaks—but there are also a hundred stunning bodies of water within its boundaries, ten of which are open

for boating. Bring a fly rod and an inflatable paddleboard and hike 2.5 miles to Taggart and Bradley Lakes, a pair of small, glacier-fed ponds that offer some of the most incredible views of the Tetons. **Need to know:** A \$17 permit lets you take a boat onto any of the park's waters, and with a Wyoming fishing license you can keep up to six lake trout per day.

ADVENTURE: Evo's Campus in Salt Lake

Outfitter, hotel, climbing gym, bike shop, art gallery—the gear retailer's new Salt Lake City complex is all these things, which makes it the perfect base for exploring the nearby outdoor scene. Stock up on road-trip supplies, get your bike tuned, send lines in the 26,000-square-foot climbing area, and wind down in one of 50 artsy rooms (from \$175).

STAY: The Virginian Lodge

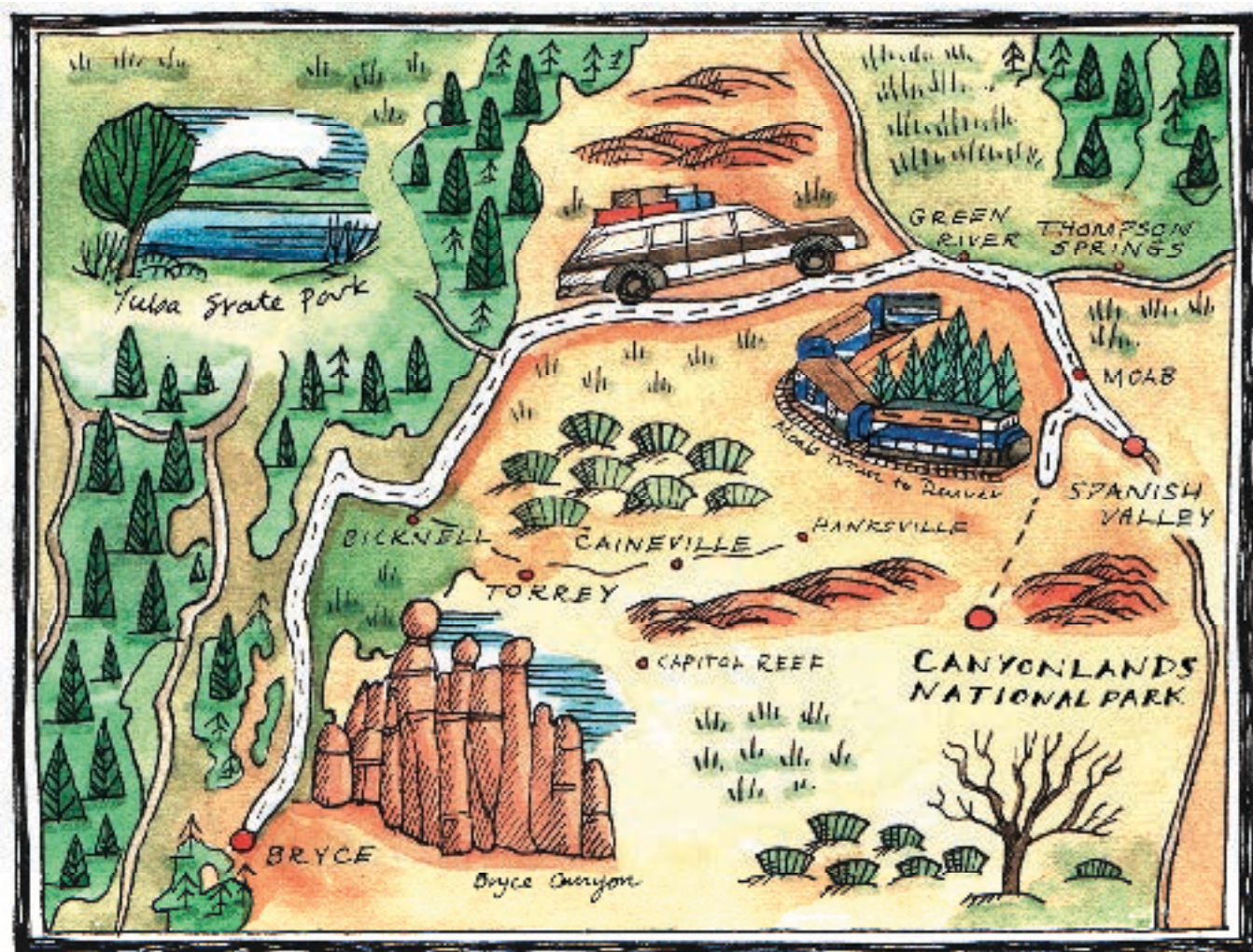
The motor lodge is back in all the best ways, and they're on full display at this renovated sixties-era hotel. Most rooms surround a heated pool, but there are also eight-person bunk rooms and an RV resort. The property revived Billy's Burgers, an old-school Jackson staple, and boasts its own saloon—so you can stumble in after a packed day and never leave. *From \$139*

EAT AND DRINK: The Bistro

At this yummy spot in Jackson, located within the new Cloudveil Hotel facing the town square, you'll find elevated French fare without the pretension. There's a great war bar, but save room for hearty entrées like the bison tenderloin with huckleberry sauce.

DETOUR: The Plunge

Moab has long been the epicenter of desert mountain biking, but the newly built Palisades Plunge is drawing riders some 120 miles east to shred 32 miles' worth of epic technical singletrack. The route, reached by shuttle, begins at the edge of 10,700-foot Grand Mesa and unravels in an undulating ribbon interspersed with plenty of slickrock, hairpin switchbacks, and the occasional stretch of nerve-racking exposure, and ends in downtown Palisade, where breweries and dispensaries abound.



ROUTE:
**Moab, Utah,
to Bryce, Utah**
[247 MILES]

PARK: Canyonlands

Want to get deeper into this backcountry paradise and ditch the crowds? You'll need a boat. The 52-mile Stillwater Canyon section of the Green River is mellow, breathtaking, and canoe-friendly. Plan for at least four days, during which you'll be flanked by red sandstone cliffs and camp on sandy beaches or slickrock ledges, depending on the water level. Organize a jet-boat shuttle with Tex's Waterways to bring you from the take-out at Spanish Bottom back to Moab (from \$60). **Need to know:** Book a flatwater overnight permit (\$36), sold on a first-come, first-served basis, at least two days in advance.

PARK: Arches

This park has gotten so packed in recent years that it adopted timed entry to spread visitors out. You can help by heading to the northern section, home to the Tower Arch. To get to the 92-foot-long formation, drive the gravel Salt Valley Road, then hike the Tower Arch Trail (2.5 miles out and back). Along the way, admire views of the Klondike Cliffs, a collection of towers known as the Marching Men, and the smaller Parallel Arch, all seldom-seen treasures. **Need to know:** Reserve a time slot at least three months before your trip.

ADVENTURE: Capitol Reef National Park

It would be silly to drive past Capitol Reef and not drop in. The park protects the bizarre Waterpocket Fold, a 100-mile-long wrinkle in the

earth's crust. Unless you're toting technical climbing gear, focus on slot-canyon hikes like Sheets Gulch. This remote, nine-mile out-and-back trek winds through narrow Navajo sandstone walls before opening up at a wide wash surrounded by Douglas fir.

STAY: The Moab Resort

It's hard to beat the location of this new property, which is only a few miles south of Arches National Park. But the digs are just as scenic: adobe buildings that blend in perfectly with the surrounding red-rock canyon. You have your choice of a standard hotel room or a three-bedroom condominium with a kitchen. *From \$368*

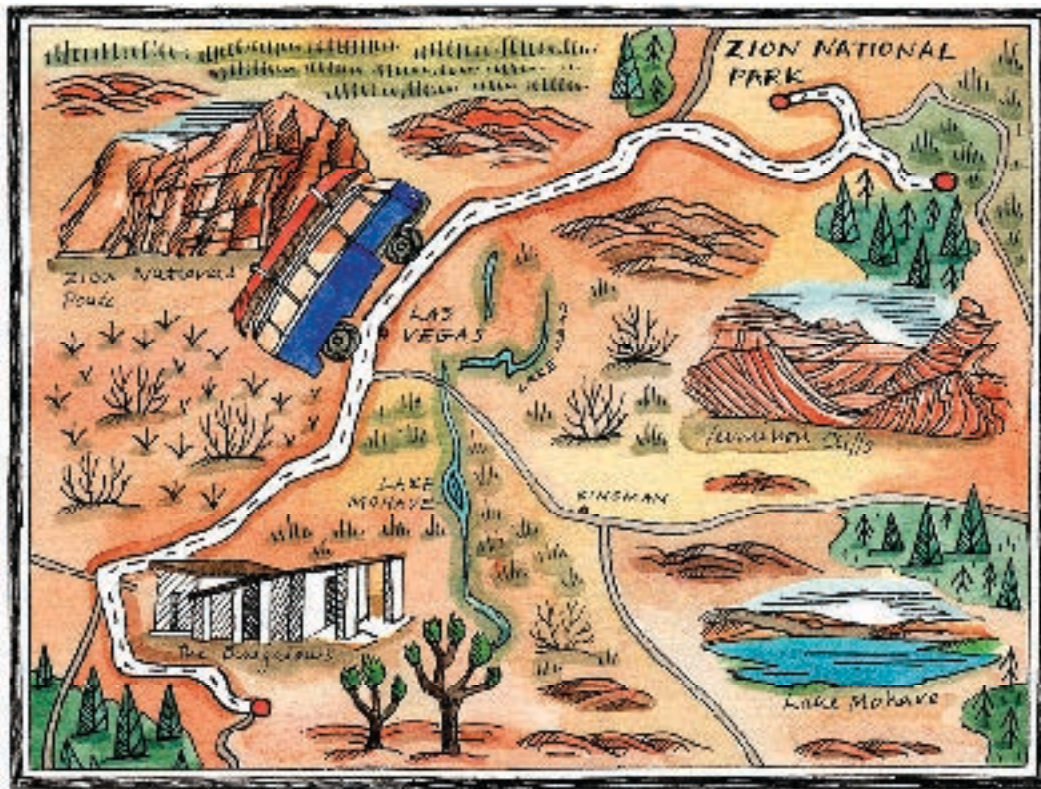
EAT AND DRINK: 98 Center

The happy side effect of Moab becoming an adventure epicenter?

The food just keeps getting better. Case in point: this hot spot of Vietnamese fusion serves inventive dishes like kimchi deviled eggs and banh mi nachos.

DETOUR: The Rocky Mountaineer

This luxury train company, which got its start running multiday routes in the Canadian Rockies, recently debuted its first U.S. itinerary: the Rockies to Red Rocks. The two-day journey, which connects Moab with Denver, has you overnighting in Glenwood Springs. You'll take in dramatic panoramas of canyons that carve up the Continental Divide (some of which can only be seen from a train car or a boat) and enjoy three-course meals and sweeping views from glass-domed coach cars. *From \$1,375 for two people*



ROUTE:
Bryce, Utah, to
Joshua Tree, California
[364 MILES]

PARK: Bryce Canyon

Bryce is known for its high-desert landscape, with towering hoodoos that rise like exclamation points from the amphitheater-like canyon. The park is blessed with a relative abundance of water and a rain-catchment system, which yields an interior full of fir, spruce, and aspen forests. Backpack the 23-mile (one-way) Under the Rim Trail through surprisingly lush meadows, which burst into blue from columbine flowers in late summer. **Need to know:** Secure a \$10 backcountry permit at the visitor center, camp in one of seven designated sites, and arrange a shuttle. There are springs along the trail, but check with the ranger station about water availability before you set out.

STAY: Under Canvas

Perched on 750 acres of high plains, the newest property from this glamping operator is just 15 minutes from the park and located

at 7,600 feet of elevation (which means summer temperatures in the seventies and eighties). Each tent has a bathroom, a king-size bed, a wood-burning stove, and views of John's Valley. *From \$329*

DETOUR: Vermilion Cliffs
National Monument

This underappreciated preserve on the Arizona-Utah border features Zion-quality slot canyons without the throngs. The site's signature adventure—backpacking Paria Canyon—guarantees solitude: only 20 permits are granted each day. The 38-mile, nontechnical hike follows a riverbed deep into the canyon, delivering you to narrows where rock walls rise 200 feet. You'll need a four-wheel-drive rig with high clearance to really explore.

PARK: Zion

This sandstone stunner is a road cyclist's dream, starting with the main thoroughfare, Zion Scenic Drive, which is closed to all vehicles except shuttle buses. The real gem is Kolob Terrace Road, a remote two-lane blacktop that traverses the park's western edge for 25 miles,

gaining 5,000 feet of elevation. If you have a gravel bike, you can add on Smith Mesa Road, a hardpack dirt track that forms a 25-mile loop around Smith Mesa. **Need to know:** Reserve a spot on the park's free shuttle to explore Zion Scenic Drive.

ADVENTURE: Lake Mohave

You've been in the desert for a stretch, and you're heading into more of it, so a dip in a lake is mandatory. While Lake Mead is the busy backyard pool of Las Vegas, the lesser-known Lake Mohave, farther down the Colorado River, is ideally suited to paddlers. Launch at Willow Beach and head upriver along the Black Canyon National Water Trail to look for quiet coves that reveal hot springs, waterfalls, and caves. If you can, plan your trip for a Sunday or Monday, when motorboats aren't allowed in certain stretches.

STAY: Zion Spirit

This wilderness retreat, recently opened on 1,100 acres in the Clear Creek Mountains, is just a mile from Zion's eastern border. It's outfitted with 40 suites and small cabins, all of which focus on sustainability—

think solar-paneled roofs shaped like leaves—and each cabin has a wellness studio and wraparound terrace. Other amenities include a restaurant, a pool, and an aquaponics greenhouse. *From \$3,000*

EAT AND DRINK: River Rock
Roasting Company

This café in the tiny town of La Verkin might have the best coffee and most enviable views in southern Utah. Seek out a spot on the patio—it overlooks a basalt canyon carved by the Virgin River—and enjoy a morning breakfast burrito, then come back at night for a pint and a kale and sausage pizza.

PARK: Joshua Tree

There are plenty of remote stretches you can reach by foot in this nearly 800,000-acre park, but triple-digit temperatures in the summer make any big adventure foolish at best, deadly at worst. The solution? Go underground and check out a handful of small caves and rock shelters that few visitors know about. Most dramatic is a quarter-mile passageway called Chasm of Doom. Technical climbing gear isn't required, but you'll be scrambling into cathedral-like rooms and squeezing through narrow corridors, so come mentally prepared. **Need to know:** Even if you're hanging out in a cave, heat is no joke. Bring lots of water and, for the dark, a headlamp.

STAY: The Bungalows

Embrace the desert landscape at these new digs on the 152-acre campus of the Joshua Tree Retreat Center, designed by the late architect Lloyd Wright (who was almost as accomplished as his dad, Frank). The 14 rooms are decked out in mid-century modern furnishings, and the grounds feature hiking trails, a pool, and enough wellness activities to satisfy your inner yogi. It's all just three miles from Joshua Tree's entrance and village. *From \$250*

EAT AND DRINK: Sam's Indian
Food and Pizza

The gateway town of Joshua Tree buzzes with an eclectic dining and cocktail scene, thanks to its proximity to Los Angeles. A Sam's, you can get authentic chicken tikka masala and a curry pizza. After dinner, head to the Restaurant at 29 Palms Inn, where you can drink prickly pear margaritas by the pool.