

# Island in the Sky –Canyonlands National Park

## 1/2 Day 4x4 Backcountry Tour

**Meeting Place:** Adrift Adventures, 378 North Main St. Moab, Utah  
**Meeting Time:** 6:45 AM or 12:45 PM  
**Age Limit:** 4 years and up  
**Vehicle Type:** Jeep Wrangler

### Special Attractions:

- Island in the Sky region of Canyonlands National Park.
- Steep climb up tight switchbacks to mesa rim.
- Views of Colorado River and canyon country.

### Tour Description:

Our experienced and knowledgeable guides will show you a part of Canyonlands National Park seldom visited/seen by other visitors on their own. Our guides will show you how much of Canyonlands' beauty is tucked away beyond the main paved roads. You'll witness breathtaking views while learning about the ancient history of people who inhabited the area over 1000 years ago. There are ample photo opportunities, so be sure to bring your camera. Be amazed by the mazes of side washes and canyons formed after thousands of years of erosion. Witness the natural marvels hidden from the roads, when you experience Canyonlands National Park via a 4x4 tour.

### Vehicle Type:

We run our guided backcountry tours in our recent model Jeep Wranglers, which will comfortably seat 4 passengers plus our experienced guide. Also, equipped with air conditioning for your touring pleasure.

### Sample Itinerary:

Meet at our office located at 378 North Main Street in Moab, Utah, at your scheduled time. The tour will set out heading north from Moab to connect with the Potash Road, or Utah 279. This road parallels the Colorado River and will offer you views of such locations as Wall Street, petroglyph panels, and the Potash Plant, as well as other beautiful sights. This paved road will turn to dirt at the Potash River Ramp, which is used as the entry point for the infamous Cataract Canyon. The trail will gradually start to climb in elevation and away from the Colorado River. As we continue to traverse deeper into canyon country, we will visit viewpoints like Fossil Point – more recently dubbed Thelma and Louise Point, for its famous use in the similarly named 1991 movie. Continuing on our journey we will enter Canyonlands National Park and make the steep climb up the Shafer Trail switchbacks, which will take us from the bottom of the canyon up to the rim of the mesa. Enjoy stunning views as you look back down the canyon that we have just climbed. Our last stop along the trail will be the famous Island in the Sky region of Canyonlands National Park. Here we can gaze upon the vast red rock desert sprawled out in all directions. On a clear day, you should be able to see over 100 miles in every direction! From here we will leave the National Park and make our way back to Adrift Adventures via Utah 313, concluding your tour.

### History:

The Shafer Trail was named after Frank and John Shafer, ranchers in the area in 1914. Along with their family, they cut a steep stock trail into the cliffs of the canyon so they could drive their cattle down from the top

of the mesa to graze by the river in winter. In summer, cattle grazed on the mesa tops. In the 1950s during the uranium boom, the trail was widened to allow the ore trucks to drive to Moab, carrying ore from the uranium mines in Lathrop and Taylor Canyons.

Today, the Shafer Canyon area is often used by the movie industry. Many car commercials are filmed in the area, and the heroines in the movie *Thelma and Louis* took their famous final leap into Shafer Canyon from Fossil Point, now renamed Thelma and Louise Point.

At the base of the trail, there is an active potash mining operation. Utah is the nation's leading producer of phosphates, 95 percent of which are used in fertilizer. Solution mining replaced the more dangerous underground mining in 1972. The potash layer is leached out in a salt solution and the resultant sludge is pumped to the surface into settling ponds, which can be seen beside the trail. The combined surface area of the ponds is over 400 acres. The vivid blue color of the ponds is actually a dye that is added to speed evaporation. As the water evaporates the salt and potash remain. The by-product salt is not wasted; it is used for highway deicing and industrial purposes.

### **Included:**

- ✓ Experienced, knowledgeable guide service
- ✓ Ice water & snacks
- ✓ Parking available at the Adrift Adventures office
- ✓ Pick-up from your motel or campground, if needed (24 hr. notice)
- ✓ National Park Tour via Four Wheel Drive Vehicle

### **Not Included:**

- Park Entrance Fee
- Guide Gratuities
- Car Seat – required for children 8 years and younger or under 57 inches, Utah State Law
- Trip Insurance

### **What to bring:**

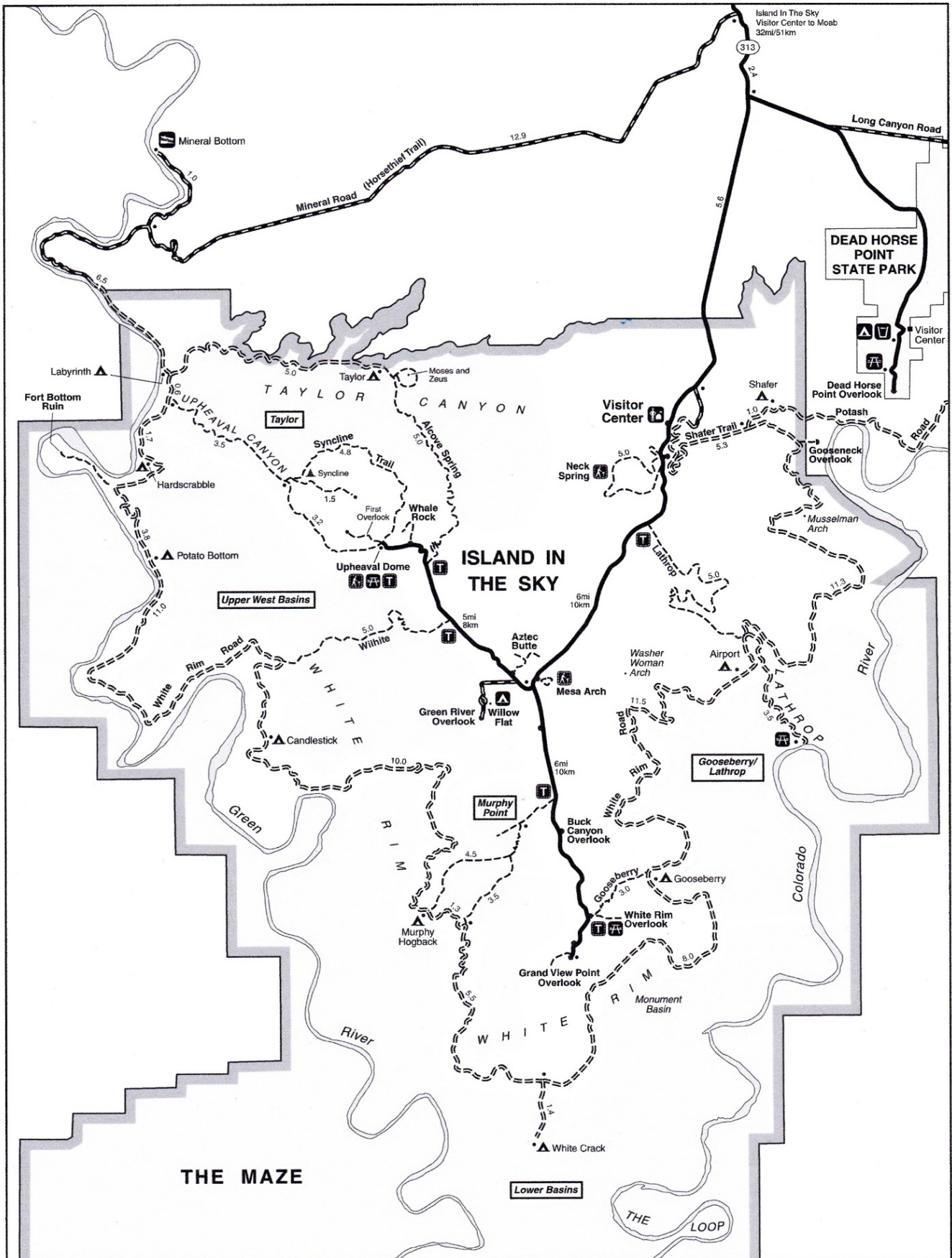
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, visor/hat – sun protection is very important!
- Water bottle – for your convenience
- Sturdy foot wear – for hiking
- Day Pack – comes in handy if you have one but not necessary
- Camcorders and cameras – bring at your own risk

### **To Be Aware Of:**

- To make sure that these locations are still available for future generations to enjoy please follow the Adrift Adventures motto of “See it as it is...Leave it as it was.”
- Do not touch, climb on, remove, or disturb, in any way, any of the Ancestral Puebloan ruins, pictographs, or petroglyphs that you may encounter on your adventure. Treat them just as you would treat an exhibit in a museum, because that is exactly what they are!
- Our desert ecosystem is very fragile, so when on one of our adventures be sure to stay on the marked trails, slickrock, or sandy wash bottoms. Even one carelessly placed footprint can we a scar on the landscape that can take many years to disappear.
- **The Jeep Wranglers we use have four passenger seats, and the guides/drivers have all guests rotate seats throughout the trip. This makes it so that one person isn't stuck in the same seat for the entire trip. So if you have motion sickness, vertigo, etc. this might not be the best trip for you as we do not allow any guests to “reserve” a specific seat. Out of all fairness to all our guests we are letting everyone know that everyone will be rotating seats throughout the adventure.**

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|---|---|---|--|--|---|
|  Paved road/<br>Pull out       |  High-clearance,<br>4-wheel-drive road |  At-large<br>Backpacking Zone        |  Boat launch    |  Developed Campground        |  Water available               |
|  Unpaved<br>2-wheel-drive road |  Hiking Trail                          |  Name<br>Name of<br>Backpacking Zone |  Ranger station |  Backcountry Vehicle Camp    |  Self-guiding trail            |
|   |   |   |  Picnic area    |  Designated Backpacking Site |  Backcountry Trailhead Parking |

NOTE: White shading within Canyonlands National Park indicates areas with designated site camping only.



- **Due to these tours being “backcountry” tours, which means the tour will be going off the paved roads and are elevated to have the clearance to do these off road trails.**
- “Pack it in, pack it out.” Be sure to pick up any trash that you may drop, we want to leave the area as pristine, if not more so, than the way we found it.

### **Cancellation Policy**

Since you are reserving space for which we have a limited number of seats, our non-refundable policy applies in every instance. We highly recommend that you purchase Travel Insurance to protect your vacation investment.

The number of people that you book for is the number of people that you will be charged for, unless you call and change that number before the 48 hour cancellation period. ***Groups please be extra aware of this and call our office the day before to reconfirm your numbers; as we will charge you for the number we have listed if you show up with less and we were not informed in advance.***

Adrift Adventures is not responsible for any cancellations or modifications of tours due to river levels, weather condition, road hazards, vehicle breakdowns, or other unforeseen conditions that may hinder the ability for the tour to take place as scheduled. We reserve the right to cancel or modify any trip due to circumstances beyond our control. In such cases, we cannot be responsible for paying any expenses you may have incurred other than to refund monies due to you for the tour itself. For these reasons we highly recommend you take out trip insurance.