

Elephant Hill

Canyonlands National Park Full Day 4x4 Tour

Meeting Place: Adrift Adventures, 378 North Main St. Moab, Utah
Meeting Time: 7:30 AM
Age Limit: 4 years and up
Vehicle Type: Jeep Wrangler

Special Attractions:

- Canyonlands National Park – Needles District
- Spectacular red rock scenery along Devil’s Lane

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 our recent model Jeep Wranglers, which will comfortably seat 4 people. The jeeps are all equipped with air conditioning for your touring pleasure.

Sample Itinerary:

Meet at our office located at 378 North Main Street in Moab, Utah. The tour will set out heading south from Moab on US 191. We will continue on US 191 until we reach the access road into the Needles district of Canyonlands National Park. Once in the national park we will make our way over the infamous Elephant Hill. After we have successfully navigated Elephant Hill, we will continue on through the Squeezplay. Like the name suggests, it might be a bit of a “tight squeeze.” Continuing on our journey we will pass by Devil’s Kitchen and make our way down Devil’s Lane. Our 4x4 journey will take us from the Devil’s Lane and over the Silver Stairs. We will then encounter SOB Hill, another impressive obstacle on this tour. In time we will find ourselves back at the foot of Elephant Hill. Picking our way back over this incredible obstacle, we will make our way back out of Canyonlands via the same road that brought us in, and back to Moab; which will conclude your tour.

History:

Elephant Hill was originally a cattle trail forged to gain grazing access to Chesler Park and the Grabens. In the 1940s Al Scorup of the Dugout Ranch contracted a bulldozer to improve the cattle trail over Elephant Hill. The trail passes along “graben,” which are down-dropped sections between elevated fault lines. The trail took its name from the rounded formations on the many sides of the hill, which reminded the stockmen of the tops of elephant heads. The Silver Stairs farther along the trail were named because of the silvery color of the ledges in certain light. The Moab Jeep Safari, held every Easter, has special permission from the National Park Service to include this trail in their program. Evidence of early Native Americans abounds on this trail. The handprint pictographs under the rock overhang near the start of the trail are from the Fremont Indians and are about two thousand years old. There are two sorts of prints, both dating from the same time period. In one, the hand was held against the rock and color was blown through a reed to make an outline of the hand. In the other, the hand was dipped in paint and pressed against the rock to make a solid print. The lack of year-round water and the difficult access has kept the human presence in the region low. Along with those on nearby Elephant Hill, today’s 4x4 access routes were once cow trails used by cattle ranchers as early as the mid1880s. Chesler Park, now within the national park, was used as winter pasture by settler Tom Trout, an ex-Texan then residing in nearby Indian Creek. Various other settlers came, improved, and sold out until the main name in the region was the S&S Co., the Somerville and Scorup Cattle Company. Under the direction of Al Scorup, the more difficult sections of the trails were bulldozed through in the 1940s. Chesler Park was apparently used as an airstrip for ease of access during the bulldozing operations.

*Please note that this itinerary is subject to change or be cancelled completely due to: weather conditions, road conditions, time of year, number of scheduled guests, and any other unforeseen factors that may affect the trip in any way.