

WESTERN SPIRIT

Cycling Adventures



Grand Staircase Escalante Gravel Trip

6 days/5 nights

Off the well worn path in southern Utah lie the Grand Staircase National Monument and Capitol Reef National Park. The geology alone is enough to draw people from around the world to this incredible expanse of open space. Add incredible gravel roads, fresh pavement, and a few incredible hikes and you have a week of stellar gravel bike riding. On this trip we spend 2 nights at the famous Boulder Mountain Lodge and then move into the backcountry for 3 nights of camping and night sky viewing. This is a great way to get off-the-grid and ride your bike!

DAY 1



Our tour will meet in Moab and begin with a shuttle through Utah's most spectacular and largely undiscovered territory.

The dynamics of the terrain include the San Rafael Swell and Capitol Reef National Park where we will stop for a short hike and enjoy a lunch near the sandstone domes of Fruita, Utah. We will land at the charming Boulder Mountain Lodge, in Boulder, Utah, where you can walk the grounds as the sun sets over the Escalante canyons. Dinner tonight is at Hell's Backbone Grill, the Lodge's intimate restaurant serving five-star cuisine, and anticipate the week's events.

trail to Lower Calf Creek Falls. This is a six mile hike which includes a great introduction to desert plants, incredible views of ancient Ancestral Puebloan granaries, some haunting petroglyphs and of course a visit to the falls. After our hike, we will shuttle or ride back to the Boulder Mountain Lodge for our second night.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 10-20 miles riding, 6 miles hiking

DAY 2



After spending a comfortable night at the Boulder Mountain Lodge in Boulder, Utah we'll begin our first ride. Today's route takes us along one of the most scenic drives in all of Utah. We'll head west towards the town of Escalante along the area known as the hogback, with incredible views in all directions. The unique geology and complicated canyons of the Escalante River are quite mind boggling. We will descend from the hogback to Calf Creek where we'll leave our bikes and embark on the

DAY 3



From the lodge, we'll begin a downhill ride on the Burr Trail through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. After years of controversy, the first 30 miles of this trail have been paved. The ride begins on a high plateau named Durffy Mesa, which is surrounded by interesting slickrock formations. As we drop into the narrows of Long Canyon, sheer sandstone walls rise for several hundred feet above us. Along the way we'll pass through The Gulch, the Circle Cliffs and Deer Creek Recreation Area. We will turn off the Burr Trail toward the Lamp Stand formation where we will spend the next two nights. Our 270 degree view includes the Henry Mountains, Boulder Mountain and Navajo

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Mountain, a sacred religious place for the Navajos.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 26 miles

DAY 4



Today we will do a loop from camp on the Wolverine Loop Road. The road provides some great swooping downhill sections interspersed with a few rolling climbs. We begin in the pinyon and juniper trees and drop down below the Wingate Sandstone. Views of the Henry Mountains, which rise 7,000 feet from the surrounding countryside, are spectacular. Lunch will be at the entrance to the Wolverine Petrified Wood Area where we can learn even more about the vast natural history of our surroundings. After lunch we'll pedal through Horse Canyon and Wolverine Canyon, where the road and the drainage become one. At the junction of the Burr

Trail, we'll load into the van for a quick shuttle back to camp. The hearty may opt to ride the 6 miles.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 28 - 35 miles

DAY 5



As we ride out of camp today, in the foreground lies the twisted rock formations of the Waterpocket Fold. As we enter Capitol Reef National Park, the contrast of the mountains and canyons creates a dramatic interface. After a quick five miles, we'll turn off the Burr Trail and ride out to the trailhead at Upper Muley Twist Canyon. At the beginning of our hike, we'll have a wonderful view looking right up the Fold. This canyon was named by the Mormons who arrived in their wagons. They said traveling through the canyon would "twist a mule." At this point, we will still be traveling in the shadow of the Henrys, the last mountain range to be mapped and explored in the lower 48 states. Free roaming buffalo herds are still part of the mountain ecosystem. After our hike we'll head back to the Burr Trail for lunch at the top of the Water Pocket Fold switchbacks. Descending the spectacular switchbacks places us at the base of the fold where we head south to our camp where we will be surrounded by

desert solitude.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 29 miles riding, 1 mile hiking

DAY 6



After leaving camp this morning, we will ride the most primitive section of the entire tour. Along this double track road, we will experience a few short, technical sections as we cross a series of drainages. Our route will parallel Muley Twist Canyon to the west and Bullfrog Creek to the east. Once we hit the pavement, our ride is all downhill to Bullfrog Bay, on the shores of Lake Powell. Lake Powell is a 200 mile long manmade lake formed by the controversial damming of the Colorado River. Despite the fact that so much fascinating country now lies underwater, the lake itself is quite beautiful. Along the shoreline, red rock cliffs drop sharply into its clear waters creating a stunning scene.

TOTAL MILEAGE: 16 miles

RIDE NOTES

Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions, rider safety and other factors which may affect the logistics of the adventure.

Road Surface: Variable, dirt roads, broken slickrock, clay, pavement.

Technical Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Physical Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Altitude: 4,000 - 8,000 feet

Travel Logistics

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

Moab, UT

This trip will meet at 9:00 AM MST at Western Spirit's headquarters, 478 Mill Creek Drive, Moab, Utah. After loading the van, we will drive to the Boulder Mountain Lodge for our first night. The drive is approximately 4-1/2 hours. Lunch will be provided. If it is more suitable for your travel plans, you may meet us in Hanksville, UT at 12:30 PM. Please call us for specific instructions.

ENDING TIME

We will return to Moab between 5:00-6:00 PM on the last day.

GETTING TO MOAB, UT

Driving

Moab is located 30 miles south of Interstate 70 on Highway 191. We have a roomy parking area.

Flying into Salt Lake City, UT

Airport Code: SLC

From Salt Lake City there are 2 options:

- 1) Rent a car and drive to Moab, it will take approximately 4 hours. You can park at our shop while you are on your tour.
- 2) Contact Red Rock Express at 435-260-0595 for door-to-door transportation.

Flying into Grand Junction, CO

Airport Code: GJT

From Grand Junction there are 2 options:

- 1) Rent a car and drive to Moab, it will take approximately 2 hours. You can park at our shop while you are on your tour.
- 2) Contact Red Rock Express at 435-260-0595 for door-to-door transportation.

Flying into Moab

Airport Code: CNY

The airline that offers service into Canyonlands Field Airport:

UNITED EXPRESS - Operated by SkyWest
www.united.com

Contact Moab Express at 435-260-9289 for shuttles to and from Canyonlands Field Airport.

LODGING BEFORE YOUR TRIP

It is a good idea to book your rooms in advance; here are a few recommendations:

Red Stone Inn

800-772-1972, 435-259-3500

Bike work station with stand, bikes allowed in room.

Best Western Canyonlands Inn

800-649-5191, 435-259-2300

Hotel Moab Downtown

435-259-7141

The Gonzo Inn

435-259-2515

Up the Creek Campground

435-260-1888

A fantastic, quiet, walk-in campground close to town.

TAXI SERVICE

Moab Taxi: 435-210-4297

435-259-Taxi: 435-259-8294

SHIPPING YOUR BIKE

If you are shipping your bike, send it to:

Western Spirit Cycling
478 Mill Creek Dr.
Moab, UT 84532

It is critical that you include your name and tour date on the outside of the box. If you choose this service, you must get this organized through our office.

It is imperative to have your bike finely tuned and

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cleaned before your tour so you know it is in top running condition.

Packing for your trip

Be sure to bring everything on this list. We have carefully developed this list to ensure your comfort on the tour regardless of the weather. If you are prepared for extreme weather, it is an adventure. If you are not prepared it can be a serious problem.

We recommend the layering system, including a wicking or long underwear layer, an insulating layer and a weather barrier for wind and rain. This list reflects that philosophy. Weather can be unpredictable so be sure to bring all the warm clothing and rain gear listed!

HOW TO PACK: The bulk of your gear and clothing will ride in the Western Spirit support vehicle (preferably in a large duffle bag) and will **not** be accessible during the day.

For this trip, you will need a riding pack and optional day bag:

- Your riding pack may be a hydration pack, but needs to carry 2-3 liters of water, rain gear, other warm clothing, and food for the day. You may be away from camp and the support vehicle all day and need to be self-sufficient.
- A small day bag is optional and may be used to store things you'd rather not ride with, but would like to have access to during the day. This day-pack will remain with the support vehicle and may not be accessible, depending on the day.

WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- ✓ meals, snacks, water, electrolyte drinks, non-alcoholic drinks
- ✓ camp mugs, all kitchen and dining ware
- ✓ 2 large cycling water bottles
- ✓ camp chairs
- ✓ solar showers
- ✓ sunscreen & bug spray
- ✓ bike stand and lube
- ✓ guides bring their own tools

- ✓ first aid kit with basic medications

BRINGING OR RENTING

- mountain bike (Our rentals come with flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.)
- helmet (gratis w/rental bike)
- tent
- sleeping bag
- sleeping pad

CYCLING CLOTHING

- cycling shoes
- 3 - 5 pair cycling shorts
- 3 - 5 cycling shirts
- long sleeve cycling shirt
- long sleeve cotton shirt or solar sleeves.
- knee & elbow pads - optional
- windbreaker
- tights or leg warmers
- 2 pair cycling gloves (1 pair full length for warmth)
- rain jacket (Gore-Tex or similar)
- rain pants (Gore-Tex or similar)
- warm layer (lightweight synthetic puffy jacket or long sleeve fleece shirt)
- sunglasses or other eye protection

CAMP CLOTHING

- camp shorts
- shirts
- warm socks
- long underwear, top and bottom (wicking layer, not cotton)
- 2 pair warm long pants
- long sleeve fleece or sweater
- pile or down jacket (insulating layer)
- warm gloves and hat
- brimmed hat or visor
- bathing suit (for solar showers on the trip and at the hotel before/after your trip)
- hiking shoes
- sandals
- cheap PVC rain gear (to wear in camp)

PERSONAL

- toiletries

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C y c l i n g A d v e n t u r e s

- medication (daily and emergency)
- towel
- biodegradable soap
- wet-wipes
- flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries)
- sunglasses
- riding pack: 10-15L gear capacity with 2-3L water storage (Camelbak Mule or Camelbak H.A.W.G. are good choices)
- optional day bag
- cash for tipping guides: your guides work as a team and share all of their gratuities. A tip of 10-20% of the price of your trip given to either one of your guides when you return to civilization is a great way to say thanks for a job well done.

OPTIONAL

- camera, extra batteries
- binoculars
- alcoholic or any of your favorite beverages (your guides will pack these)
- books or maps
- we encourage you to turn your devices off, but if you cannot, please bring a way to charge them. We recommend a portable USB charger with 1-2 charges. Also, putting your phone on airplane mode to save power is recommended.

