



Olinda Reynolds Drawing

Historic drawing of Hell's Backbone Bridge as it opened in 1935.

10 Posey Lake



At the east end of Escalante, Posey Lake Scenic Backway heads north from Scenic Byway 12 and climbs into the timbered high country of the Dixie National Forest. The backway provides access to Griffin Top and Hell's Backbone, and provides excellent opportunities to fish or explore. It ends at Highway 24 near Loa.

Posey Lake is a picturesque mountain lake located 15 miles northwest of Escalante. The lake is popular for trout fishing and has a Forest Service campground. Dirt roads that connect with other lakes, reservoirs and campgrounds in the surrounding Dixie National Forest make excellent mountain bike rides. Closest services from Posey Lake are in Escalante. The road to Posey Lake is closed in winter.

11 Hell's Backbone / Box-Death Hollow Wilderness Area



Hell's Backbone Road is one of the most dramatic stretches of road in Utah as it travels along a ridge with a sheer drop on both sides. Hell's Backbone Bridge spans a crevasse on a narrow ridge no wider than the bridge itself. Plenty of dramatic photos of the area's breathtaking scenery can be taken along the route.

Hell's Backbone Road starts at Posey Lake Scenic Backway and circles around the rugged Box-Death Hollow Wilderness Area, ending three miles west of Boulder. Backpacking, camping, hiking, mountain biking, and 4-wheeling are among the top activities in this area. **Check with the local visitor center or businesses for weather conditions before traveling this route.** Escalante and Boulder are the closest towns that offer services.

12 Hole-in-the-Rock Road* Devils Garden / Dance Hall Rock / Hole-in-the-Rock



For a historic drive, explore the Hole-in-the-Rock Scenic Backway which starts five miles east of Escalante on Scenic Byway 12. The dirt road travels 57 miles and dead-ends at Hole-in-the-Rock. Here, in 1880, Mormon settlers who were seeking a shortcut to the San Juan area in southeastern Utah, encountered a 1,200-foot cliff. They cut a passage and lowered their wagons over the cliff to the canyon floor and the Colorado River. After crossing the river, they encountered more obstacles before arriving at their destination.

Several side roads along the backway lead to scenic canyons, arches, and attractions like Dance Hall Rock—a gathering place for the original Hole-in-the-Rock expedition. Views of the Straight Cliffs of the Kaiparowits Plateau and Escalante River slickrock country can be seen throughout the drive. Hikers and backpackers will find excellent treks through the slickrock and convoluted sandstone canyons of the Escalante. Stop at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center for maps and information.

Devils Garden, one of the highlights along the Hole-in-the-Rock Scenic Backway, is located 13 miles south of Scenic Byway 12. Plan a picnic in the "garden" of unique rock formations and arches. Closest services are in Escalante.

13 Head of the Rocks / Escalante Canyons*



Leaving the Escalante area and driving east takes travelers on the "Million Dollar Road to Boulder." This section of Scenic Byway 12 was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and completed in 1935 (paved in 1971) providing the first year-round access for automobiles to this isolated pocket in southwestern Utah. Before then, mail and supplies were carried to Boulder by mules and pack horses over Hell's Backbone or the Boulder Mail Trail, both hazardous routes.

Scenic Byway 12 winds through vast expanses of slickrock country including part of the Escalante Canyons and other popular hiking areas. Pullouts along the route provide opportunities to view the Escalante Basin, the Henry Mountains and other awesome scenery.

