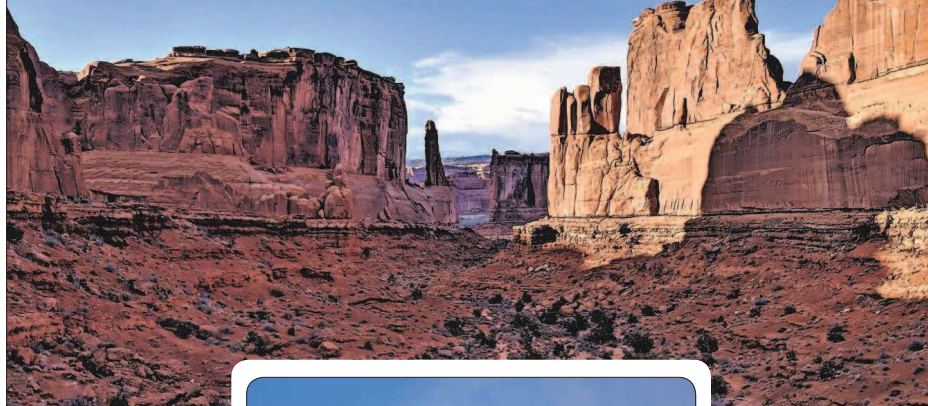


Power of nature

Arches National Park offers endless beauty



By CR Rae
More Content Now

With towering red rock formations, natural stone arches and 77,000 acres of land to explore, Arches National Park in Utah lives up to its name.

The park is minutes from the city of Moab. Deciding what to see can be somewhat overwhelming, as the crescent-shaped rocks seem to be everywhere. So far, there are 2,000 confirmed rust-colored natural formations in the park.

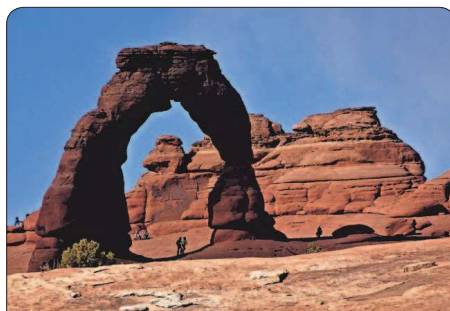
The most popular times to visit Arches National Park is April-May and September-October, and it can get quite crowded during those months. The National Parks Service states on its website that traffic can get congested and parking can be a problem from March through October.

However, we visited in March and the park was not overcrowded, parking was not an issue, and it was chilly but comfortable.

On the day of your visit get an early start. The park is open 24 hours every day of the year and the visitors center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Must-see

Delicate Arch is the most famous and popular arch in the world and is seen on TV and in photographs many times over.



Park Avenue and Courthouse Towers (top) and Delicate Arch (above) are among 2,000 natural formations in Arches National Park. (CR RAE PHOTOS)

People come from all over the world to get a glimpse of this iconic stone. Visitors cannot see the arch from the car, however — there are a couple of viewing points to see the arch without a long walk. If you are hiking to the arch, allow at least two or three hours. At Delicate Arch is a historic homestead from the turn of the 20th century, Wolfe Ranch. On the hike the homestead can be seen, as well as Ute Indian petroglyphs.

The Windows Section of the park is an area where Turret Arch, Double Arch and North and South Windows are located. These are some of the largest arches in the park.

Balanced Rock can be seen from the road, and those wanting a short hike can walk around it and get views of the Windows

Section.

Devils Garden is home to a variety of arches that are connected by hiking trails.

Park Avenue and Courthouse Towers are seen shortly after passing the visitors center and making your way up the steep winding roads. The canyon walls of Park Avenue stand tall and are thin, statuesque rocks resembling a big-city street lined with skyscrapers.

Scenic drive

Whether your visit is for one day or a week, taking the scenic drive is the best way to see the highlights. Driving all the paved roads in the park would take about 4.5 hours, with time to stop at each viewpoint.

If you only have a short time

to drive, go as far as you can, and it is easy to turn around and go back to town or make your way to the next destination. Maps are available at the visitors center.

Hike

Hiking opportunities are abundant. Hikers can spend days on the trails, which vary in length and skill level, ranging from a 50-yard nature trail to a several-hour hike.

The Delicate Arch hike takes about three hours and is rated difficult. There are smooth rocks that become slippery in wet weather.

A primitive trail of 7.2 miles takes hikers on a loop through seven arches. Visitors can take in just the first, Landscape Arch, and hike back or make the entire loop through parts of the park that many visitors do not see.

Hiking information is available at the visitors center or at nps.gov/arch.

Moab

Moab offers visitors many places to stay, eat and play. For outdoor activities there is Colorado River rafting, canyoneering experiences, golfing and more.

From Moab visitors can go to two national parks: Arches and Canyonlands. Also close by are Dead Horse Point State Park and Manti-La Sal National Forest.

For more information, visit discovermoab.com.

Visit a piece of London in Arizona

By CR Rae
More Content Now

As children we sang the well-known song "London Bridge is Falling Down." Of course, the bridge did not fall down, but in 1962 the 131-year-old bridge was sinking into the Thames River, as it was not able to handle the increase in traffic of the modern day.

The bridge was torn down and moved, not to another location in England but to, of all places, the foothills of the Sonoran mountains in a lowland desert area known as Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

Today the bridge spans the Colorado River, linking an island to Lake Havasu City. The body of water at the bridge, Lake Havasu,

was formed by Parker Dam, which is on the Colorado River along the California-Arizona border about 25 miles south of the city.

The city of London had decided when the bridge was slated to come down to put the treasured landmark up for auction. That is when Robert McCulloch, chairman of McCulloch Oil Corporation, purchased the bridge for \$2,460,000. McCulloch is known as the founder of Lake Havasu City, and it was there that he was going to reconstruct the iconic bridge.

The bridge was dismantled, and each stone was carefully numbered. All the pieces were shipped to Long Beach, California. The bridge was trekked across the desert by



The original London Bridge was purchased at auction and reconstructed in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, in the 1960s. (CR RAE)

truck to its new home. Reconstruction of the famous bridge began in September 1968, and the Lord Mayor of London laid the cornerstone.

The bridge was dedicated Oct. 10, 1971, at its new home on a narrow boating channel that connects with Thompson Bay on the Arizona side of Lake Havasu.

The bridge continually brings sightseers to the area, also popular for water activities, shopping, restaurants and a city that has more than 1,000 businesses, including two newspapers and a college.

Lake Havasu City has 300 days of sunshine a year, beautiful water, mountains, hiking, boating, fishing, offroading, shopping and more.

An hour-and-a-half walking tour about the interesting history of the bridge is offered at the visitor center.

It is offered Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. January through April. For more information, visit golakehavasu.com/visitors-center.