

“Four National Parks in Utah” - A00122

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(<http://learningenglish.voanews.com/content/visiting-four-national-parks-in-the-state-of-utah-143741516/611565.html>)

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The associated slideshow A00122 does not incorporate the text of this story. It is a looped presentation of photos showing the locations and beauty of these parks.

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Four National Parks in Utah

(Adapted from VOA-Special English)

Millions of people from all over the world visit the state of Utah every year. One reason is the many national parks. These are areas of great natural beauty that are protected by the United States government. More than three hundred fifty national parks can be found in the United States. Today we will visit four of them – all in the state of Utah. These parks include huge colored rock formations, rivers, waterfalls, beautiful trees, other plants and many different kinds of wild animals.



The first area we will visit is Arches National Park, near the town of Moab in eastern Utah. Experts say this park has the greatest number of arches of any similar geographic area in the world. Arches are formations that look like half a circle above an opening or hole in a rock.

Scientists say that most arches seen today developed within the past million years. The National Park Service has counted more than two thousand arches in Arches National Park.

The rock formations in Arches National Park are mostly a deep red color. Rocks get their color from minerals. The red color is the result of iron oxide or rust.

Arches National Park is not the only place in Utah where visitors can see arches and other beautiful rock formations. They are also found in the nearby national park named Canyonlands.

Canyonlands National Park is a wild, lonely area of rocks, rivers and desert plants. It is difficult to walk or ride through the park. The National Park Service says Canyonlands National Park is wild America.

Rivers created the area as they cut rock into many different formations. At the center of the park are two deep canyons carved by the Green and Colorado Rivers. Three areas that surround these rivers are included in the park.

One of these areas is called the Maze District. This area includes rock art made by people who lived there more than two thousand years ago.

Another area of the park is called the Needles. It includes long, thin, red and white rocks that reach high into the air like fingers on a hand.

Two other national parks in Utah are included on our trip. The first is Bryce Canyon National Park, in southern Utah. About two million people visit Bryce Canyon National Park each year. Rock formations at Bryce National Park are extremely beautiful. Sunlight makes many of them appear to be the color of fire.

The fourth and final park we will visit today is Zion National Park. It is not far from Bryce. But it is very different. About three million people visit the park each year.

Visitors to Zion National Park are surprised by the huge mountain structures of red, pink and white. Driving is restricted in much of the park. Instead, visitors travel in small buses that take them to areas where they can walk on paths into the wild areas.

Visitors to Zion National Park can sleep under the stars in a camping area. Or they can stay at the hotel in the park. Many people stay in the nearby town of Springdale and travel into the park each day.

Of course, visiting these parks includes time to watch local wildlife. Visitors can see all kinds of birds, deer, foxes, and even mountain lions, elk, moose and bears. But they must be careful not to get too close. Many wild animals can be dangerous if they feel threatened.

Most people who visit America's national parks bring a camera and take many pictures. But many who have seen the parks we described today say that such pictures cannot really capture the beauty of the four national parks in Utah.



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