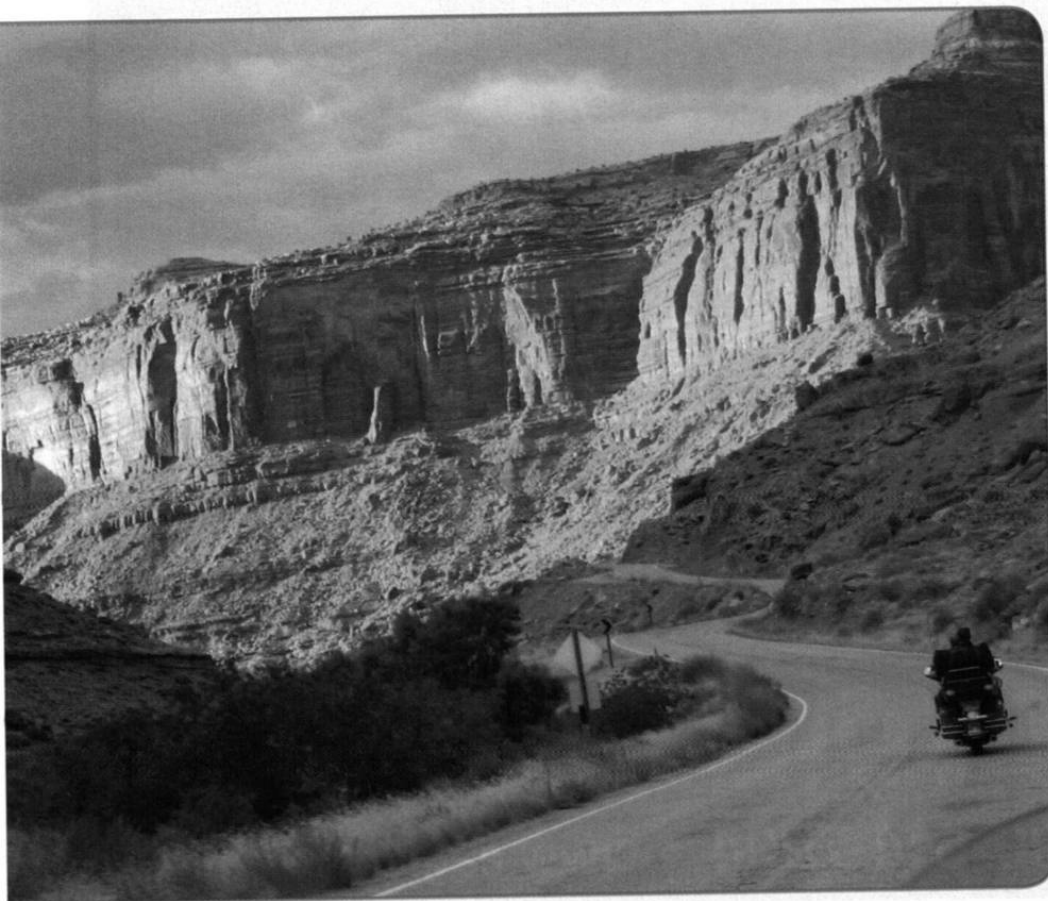


Experience Moab



The Ultimate Destination, via Denver Featuring Utah Scenic Byway 128

words: Tina L. Lopez
photos: Robert Riberia

Moab is the jewel at the end of all itineraries from and through Denver, and with so many different routes to choose, you can visit year after year and experience a new journey each time.

For those who are of the "want to get there fast" frame of mind, take I-70 all the way into Utah and then

take Exit #214 to Scenic Byway 128 (described below), which delivers you to Moab.

If you want a taste of the Rocky Mountains and some curves, without adding too much time, then Exit I-70 at Glenwood Springs and head south through Carbondale, Redstone, over McClure Pass through Hotchkiss and toward Delta. Take Hwy 65 north through Cedaredge, over Grand Mesa and rejoin I-70 east of Grand Junction. Continue west on I-70 and take Exit #214 to Scenic Byway 128.

But if you want even more mountain scenery, history, a lot of curves and plenty of choices? If so this route has it all and more.

From I-70 west, you have a choice of two routes to Leadville. You can choose Exit #195 through Copper Mountain and over Fremont Pass; or take Exit #171 through Minturn and over Tennessee Pass. From Leadville, continue south on Hwy 24, until the road splits, take Hwy 285 to the Hwy 50 junction and then proceed west on Hwy 50 through Gunnison and on to Montrose. From Montrose, you have many choices.

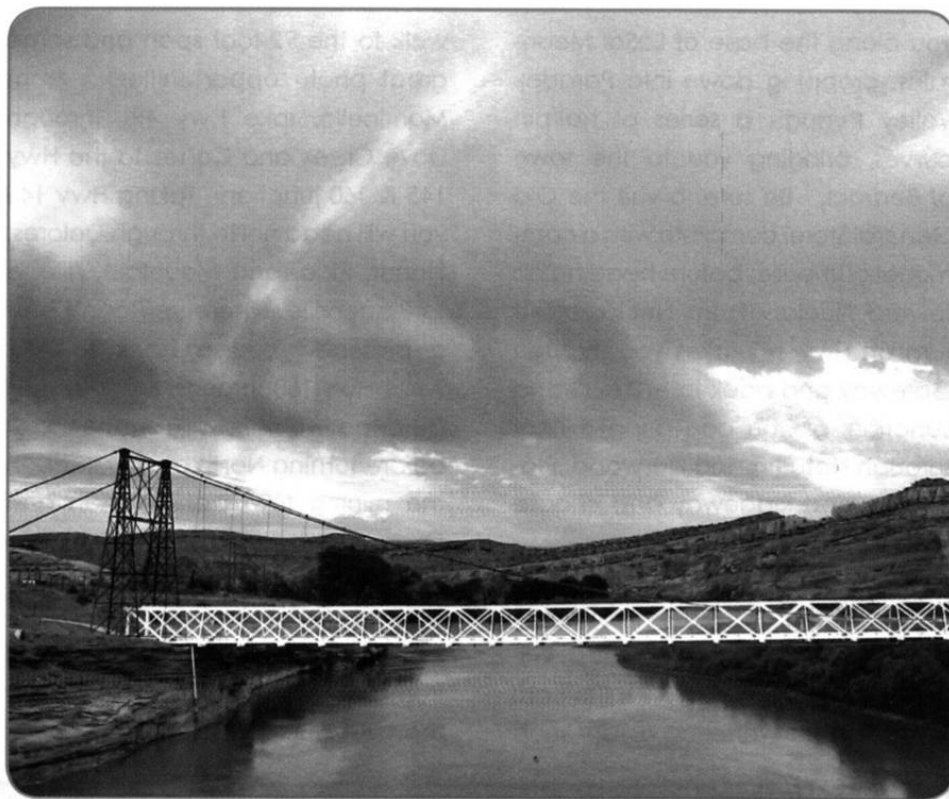
You can go through Delta, where you will then have the choice of Hwy 65 through Cedaredge and Grand Mesa returning to I-70; or stay on Hwy 50 to Grand Junction and to I-70. Another route to consider is heading south from Montrose and travel through Ridgway, Placerville, Norwood, Naturita, and Gateway, then rejoin I-70 in Grand Junction. Whichever path you choose, take exit #214 off I-70 to Scenic Byway 128.

Scenic Byway 128 along the Colorado River is the preferred route into Moab from Interstate 70. You start your journey across the open desert with a few sweeping curves, until you reach the Colorado river where considerably sharper turns will command your attention. The route crosses the mighty river near the

historic Dewey Bridge. Built in 1916 and used until 1986, this suspension bridge is on the National Register of Historic places and is now open only to foot traffic. A nearby rest area makes this a perfect stop to stretch your legs. Beyond the bridge, the byway continues to follow the Colorado River with more twists and turns, before giving way to a straight, but spectacularly scenic, section. Along this stretch, you will pass the majestic Fisher Towers and the famous Castle Rock, a finger-like spiral to the south-west, the location for many films and commercials, can be seen just before the Castle Valley Junction.

At the Castle Valley Junction, you can continue on 128 or go up and over the LaSal Mountains and enter Moab from the South. To take the LaSal Mountain Loop Road, turn left at this junction and you soon enter a series of sweeping curves before the road opens up as you enter Castle Valley, where the Priest and Nuns rock formation and Castle Rock are visible. Turn right onto the LaSal Mountain Loop and you immediately find yourself ascending in a series of hairpin turns that will grab your attention and demand full concentration.

Make sure you stop at the many view points to take in the breath-taking vistas as the vegetation changes from pinyon and juniper trees to large pines and towering aspen. Shortly after passing the turnoff to Warner Lake Campground, the road winds down into Mill Creek Canyon, over bubbling brooks and through towering trees, before climbing again for the final descent past Ken's Lake



Recreation Area and into Moab.

If you prefer to save this 60-mile loop for a day ride during your visit to Moab, then continue on Hwy 128. Just past a ranch used in many John Wayne movies, you'll want to focus on the road as it rejoins the river and the spectacular twisty curves return. Breath-taking scenery is in abundance on this well-maintained paved two-lane road, it twists and turns as often as the river it follows through the steep canyons to Highway 191 just 2 miles north of Moab.

Scenic Byway 128 is a "must do" route that can be worked into your itinerary, as an arrival or departure route, or just up to Dewey Bridge and back, for a quick fix. The tight curves can catch you off guard, and the beauty can be overwhelming, so watch out for on-coming traffic, as they may be distracted by the scen-

ery and cross over. There are many turnouts along this 42-mile route offering beach access, restroom facilities, picnic tables and camping.

After spending several days exploring the many wonderful rides in Moab featured in last month's issue, you can select one of the above itineraries or one of the following for your return home.

Head south for your return trip on Hwy 191 toward LaSal Junction. Stop by and visit the unique Hole N' The Rock, a 5,000 square foot, 14 room home, that was carved in a cliff face in 1940. Another 10 miles and you will reach LaSal Junction and the first of many choices. Your first decision will be whether to turn left and continue toward the towns of New and Old LaSal or to continue on Hwy 191.

Taking the left hand turn will take

you along the base of LaSal Mountains, dropping down into Paradox Valley through a series of hairpin curves, bringing you to the town of Bedrock. Be sure to visit the Old General Store, complete with a communal outhouse, before heading on toward Nucla. From Nucla, a left turn on Hwy 141 takes you through Gateway and back to I-70 in Grand Junction; or you can hang a right through Naturita and Norwood, Placerville and Ridgeway and choose a path back to I-70.

Continuing on Hwy 191 to Monticello, also offers many variants. Wilson Arch is located just 3.2 miles from LaSal Junction, offering a very short

walk to the 92-foot span and some great photo opportunities. From Monticello, take Hwy 491 through Dove Creek and Cortez to the Hwy 145 & 160 junction. Taking Hwy 145 you will head north through Delores, Stoner, Rico, and Mountain Village to Placerville, where you can chart a preferred course back to I-70; while Hwy 160 through Mancos and Durango will take you further west before turning North on 550 through the mining towns of Silverton and Ouray, back to Ridgway and on to I-70 through your chosen route.

While there are many ways to and from Moab, the destination is truly the best reward. Be sure to check

out the numerous motorcycle rallies held in cities along these routes, such as Copper Mountain and the Four Corners, and definitely mark your calendar to attend Moab's Annual Iron Horse Motorcycle Rally scheduled for August 24th – 26th, 2007.

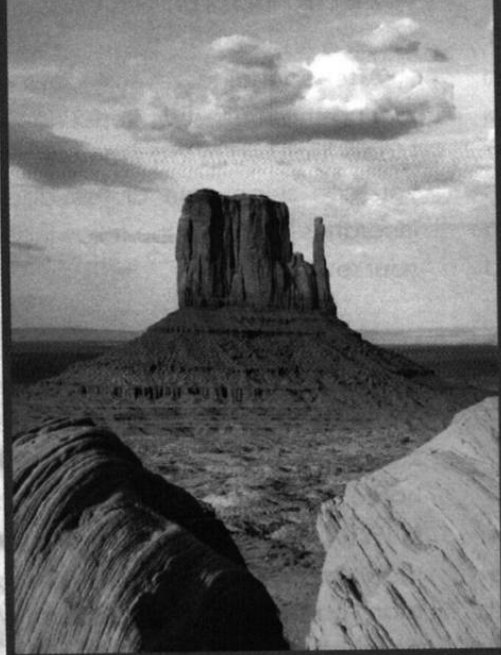
For more information on the Rally or other Moab Events, contact the Moab Area Travel Council at 800-635-6622 or visit their website at www.discovermoab.com

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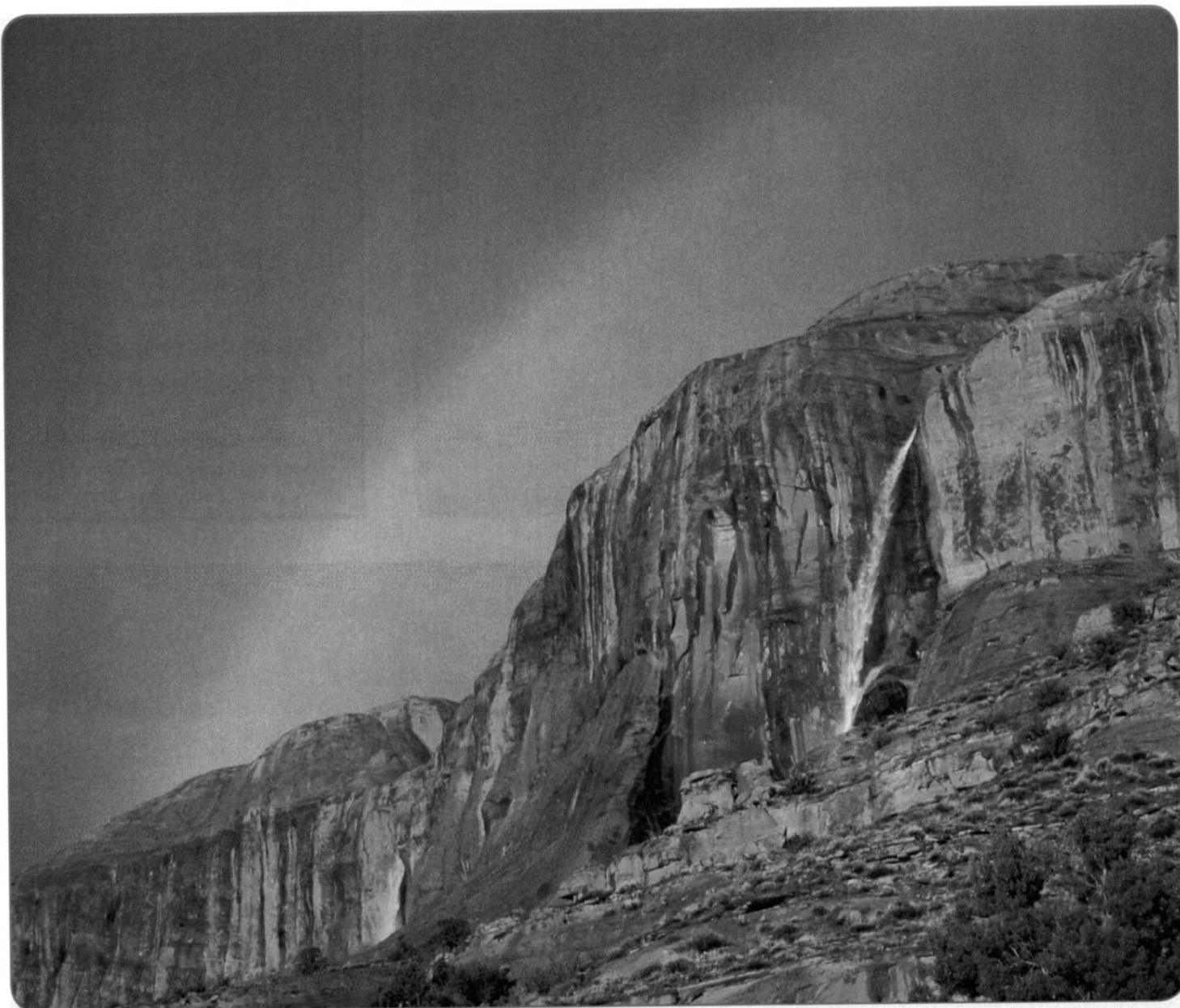
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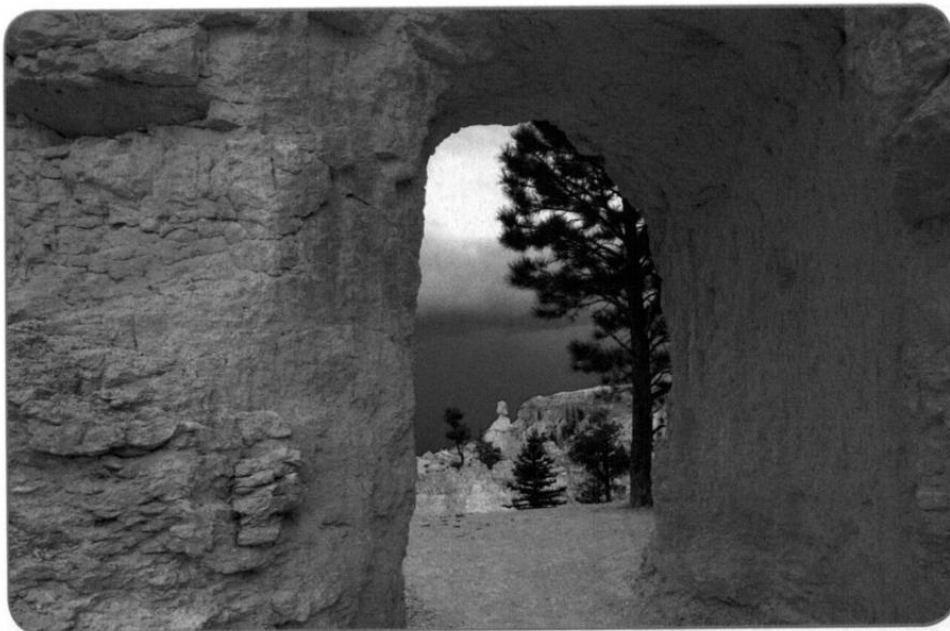
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