



## 14 Awesome Things to Do in Kanab, Utah

### Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park

Coral Pink Sand Dunes is such a beautiful, unique, and fun state park! One of our favorite things to do is pack a picnic and spend the day riding boogie boards and sandboarding down the steep hills.

What makes these sand dunes unique is that they aren't formed near water like most sand dunes.

Instead, you'll find these rolling hills scattered with desert wildflowers and tucked in between junipers, pinion, and ponderosa pines.

The dunes are estimated to be about 10-15,000 years old and were created by eroding Navajo Sandstone cliffs.

This is also the only major dune field in the entire Colorado Plateau.

The sand is less of a pink shade and more of a golden orange, depending on the angle of the sun. It is also soft to the touch and less grainy than most sand.

The 2,000-acre sand dunes are continually shifting due to the wind and can move as much as 50 feet per year!

These unique and beautiful dunes only see an average of 50,000 visitors a year, compared to the 4.3 million visitors that annually descend upon the nearby Zion National Park. There's a good chance you might have the whole place to yourself if you visit in the off-season!

Tips for Visiting the Coral Pink Sand Dunes:

- There is a day-use fee per vehicle. Bring cash for self-pay if a ranger is not on duty.
- Sleds and sandboards are available to rent at the visitor center.
- If you don't want to hike on the dunes, there is an observation deck located near the visitor center.
- This is a popular spot for ATV riding, I recommend booking this [ATV tour](#).

- Be sure to stop by the visitor center to view their collection of sand from around the world.
- There is a short 0.5-mile nature loop trail with informational signs. Beyond that, the entire park is open to hiking and exploring.
- This is the only place in the world where you can find the Coral Pink Sand Dunes Tiger Beetle. To keep them off the endangered species list, there are marked conservation areas for the beetles. Please be respectful of the boundaries.
- There is a campground available, be sure to make reservations in advance during the holiday and peak summer season. Primitive camping is available on the nearby BLM lands.
- The park is open year-round during daylight hours.
- The dunes are located in a remote area about 30 minutes from Kanab. Plan ahead and pack enough food and water, particularly if visiting in the summer when the temperatures are high.

## Moqui Cave Museum

The Moqui Cave is more than just a roadside attraction. This sandstone erosion cave located 5 miles north of Kanab has a fascinating history.

Archaeologists believe this cave originated as a food store and place of shelter for the Anasazi people.

During the prohibition era, it served as a subterranean speakeasy. In the 1950's it was reopened as a tavern and dance hall.

Today it serves as a small natural history museum and gift shop.

It houses an impressive collection of ancient Indian artifacts, 140 million-year-old dinosaur tracks, pottery, arrowheads, and the largest collection of phosphorescent rocks and fossilized minerals in the US.

If you're hungry, grab a bite to eat at the Cave Cafe, a small food truck that can often be found parked outside the cave museum.

## Moqui Sand Cave

After visiting the Moquie Museum, continue driving about 0.4 miles south to check out the Moqui Sand Cave.

The Sand Cave parking lot is located by milepost 69 on Hwy 89 at the turn-off for Kanab Canyon Road.

The 1.2-mile out-and-back trail leads to the base of the mountain. You'll then need to scramble up the rock face to reach the cave.

The Sand Cave is actually a man-made cave that was once used to mine sand to make glass.

The cave has several large openings that allow sunlight to filter in, making it great for photos. Just use caution as some of the openings lead to sheer drop-offs.

The best time to come is an hour or two before sunset when the light shines directly into the cave. The cave continues back for about 200 feet and is fun to explore with a flashlight.

The cave is free to visit, easy to access, and definitely worth a stop!

**\*Related post:** *if you're looking for another underrated spot in Utah, check out our guide, [Sanpete County: A Utah Hidden Gem!](#)*

## Great Chamber

The Great Chamber is a massive wind cave formed over millions of years. It truly is mind-blowing!

To reach the cave, you'll need a high-clearance 4WD vehicle. I HIGHLY recommend taking a guided ATV tour so that you don't get stranded or lost. We took a tour with [Kanab Tour Company](#) and had a great experience.

The drive out to the Great Chamber is both fun and beautiful. Once you arrive, you'll need to hike about 1/4 mile up to the cave. Although the trail is short, the sand and steady incline will have you breathing heavily!

Once you reach the cave, the best spot for photos is from the back where you'll need a wide-angle lens to capture the full beauty.

I also love seeing the countless layers of sandstone on the cave walls and thinking about just how long it took for this cave to form.

We had so much fun running and jumping down and sand hill. Our shoes were filled with sand by the end, but it was worth it!

I loved visiting this spot during golden hour, and taking in the sweeping views from the top of the cave as we made our way down.

Although it does take a little extra effort to get here, it is one spot you don't want to miss in Kanab!

## Peek-a-Boo Slot Canyon

Southern Utah is known for its incredible slot canyons. Some of the more famous ones include Buckskin Gulch and Antelope Canyon.

However, there are so many lesser-known slot canyons that are just as beautiful and less crowded. Peek-a-Boo Slot Canyon is one of those lesser-known canyons that lacks crowds but not beauty!

This dramatic slot canyon is located 9 miles north of Kanab along Highway 89. Due to the deep sand, a [guided ATV tour](#) is highly recommended.

The Kanab Tour Company offers a combo tour to see both the Great Chamber and Peek-a-Boo slot canyon.

The half-day tour is 5 hours and offers a little bit of everything. Not only will you get a chance to visit the Great Chamber and Peek-a-boo Slot Canyon, but you'll also do some rock crawling, drive over sand dunes, and learn about the history of the area with a knowledgeable guide.

Peek-a-Boo Slot Canyon is definitely a highlight of the tour. You'll be able to walk about a half-mile through the narrow canyon with towering red sandstone walls.

If you visit during the afternoon in the summer, the sun will create tunnels of light if it hits the canyon at just the right angle.

We've been to this canyon a few times and it's crazy to see how it is continually shifting and eroding due to weather and flash floods. Mother Nature is amazing!

## Toadstools Trail

The Toadstools Trail is about 40 minutes east of Kanab. The short 1.5-mile roundtrip trail leads to the coolest rock formations!

The trailhead is located in the southern portion of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. There is a sign that marks the small parking lot just off Highway 89. As a bonus, there is no fee to hike this trail!

The trail is clearly marked and follows closely alongside a dry creek bed. The hike is fairly easy with little elevation gain and is great for kids.

My boys loved this hike because there were so many rocks and hills to climb along the way. They kept getting sidetracked from the trail and getting lost in their imaginations!

Once we made it to the hoodoos, they were in heaven! From here the trail ends and you are free to explore.

It felt like we were walking on a different planet as the terrain is scattered with hoodoos and toadstools.

As a side note, you can tell the difference between a toadstool and a hoodoo due to the cap rock that precariously balances on top of the toadstools, just like a mushroom. A hoodoo is a tower with a wider base.

The first toadstool you'll come to is a giant red one that has been featured in many photographs and guidebooks.

But don't stop there! As you continue to the left you will be rewarded with a landscape of geological formations that vary in color from white to deep red.

You can even capture some views of the stunning Paria River Valley.

With so many fun places to hide, climb, and explore at this natural playground, be sure to set aside a few hours!

Just be sure to bring plenty of water, especially in the summer since there is not much shade along the trail.

**\*Related post:** for another one of Utah's best-kept secrets, check out our guide to visiting [Utah's Pink Lake!](#)

Other Hikes Near Toadstools Trail:

- **Buckskin Gulch:** Buckskin Gulch is one of the most popular slot canyon hikes in Utah. The trail runs continuously for 15 miles through a canyon, making it one of the longest slot canyons in the world. You do not have to complete the entire trail to enjoy the beauty. Permits are required for day hiking and overnight backpacking.
- **Wire Pass Trail:** The Wire Pass Trail is a popular entry point into Buckskin Gulch. The hike is only 3.7 miles roundtrip but offers dramatic views and a narrow slot canyon. You'll even find ancient Indian hieroglyphics on the canyon wall. Advanced permits are not required for this hike, but there is a self-pay station for day use.
- **Paria River Valley:** This region is known for its colorful Paria Badlands. You can also explore the ghost town at the Old Pahreah Townsite.
- **Coyote Buttes:** There are two separate areas for the Coyote Buttes. The Coyote Buttes North is located on the Arizona side of the border, and the Coyote Buttes South is located on the Utah side of the border. The famous "Wave" hike is located in Coyote Buttes North. Permits are required for hiking the buttes. Limited permits are released by a lottery system for "The Wave" trail.
- **White Pocket:** White Pocket is a great alternative to The Wave. You'll discover remote beauty, without casting your lot for a lottery permit. A high-clearance 4WD vehicle is required to reach the trailhead. The trail itself is only about 1-mile roundtrip. If you don't

have the right vehicle, consider booking a [guided tour](#). Here is another [tour option](#) for you to compare.

- [Lower Hackberry Narrows](#): An easy 1.5-mile trail through a slot canyon with ankle-deep water.
- [Dinosaur Tracks](#): Over 20 species of dinosaurs have been discovered around Kanab. This 1-mile round trip trail leads to 185 million-year-old dinosaur tracks! The trail is a little steep and rocky, but doable for kids just use caution.

**\*Related post:** for another underrated place to visit in Southern Utah, check out our guide [A Weekend Getaway in Bluff Utah!](#)

## Belly of the Dragon Tunnel

Mount Caramel Junction is about 20 minutes north of Kanab. It is known as the gateway town to Zion National Park. However, its lesser-known claim to fame is the Thunderbird Restaurant, home of the "ho-made" pie. I just love quirky small towns like this.

Most people just drive on through these small towns, but if you take the time to explore you may just find some unexpected gems.

Just down the road is Orderville, where I actually lived for a few years when I was younger. It's always a bit nostalgic driving the main drag through town.

The town's name comes from its early history when they practiced the "law of order", an experiment in communal living. Everything produced by the town belonged to the common order. They even ate together in a common dining hall and kitchen in town.

If you have time, stop and grab some lunch at Soup Town Cafe.

From the window, you can get a view of "V" mountain where each graduating class paints their year on a rock. It will keep your kids busy trying to find the oldest year!

If your kids are anything like mine, they will love stopping at the Orderville Mine Rock Shop. They have some brilliant rocks and gems for sale of all shapes, sizes, and prices. My boys had the best time picking out a few small treasures.

We also loved staying nearby at [Whispering Pines](#), a beautiful and remote Conestoga wagon campground in Alton.

However, our favorite stop near Mount Caramel Junction is the Belly of the Dragon Tunnel. This cool tunnel is actually used for drainage, but it looks like you just stepped inside a dragon's belly!

The tunnel is very easy to access. It runs right under Highway 89, but most people drive right over without realizing it even exists.

To get to the tunnel, if you're heading from Kanab to Mount Caramel Junction, look for a gravel road on your left about a half-mile before you reach the town. This is known as the Barracks Road, but it isn't marked.

You'll follow this road for about 0.25 miles until you come to a dirt parking area on your left just before the entrance of the tunnel.

Once you're in the tunnel, you can spend time exploring and walking through to the other side. Since it is used for drainage, do not enter if there is water or it has been raining.

If you have extra time, continue up the wash for about 4 miles and you'll come to a beautiful little slot canyon.

It's a great spot to get out and stretch your legs on a road trip!

Another relatively unknown place near Mount Caramel Junction that I'm anxious to visit, is the [Sugar Knoll Red Caves](#).

## Best Friends Animal Sanctuary

The Best Friends Animal Sanctuary is the largest sanctuary for homeless animals in the country. It is home to around 1,600 rescued animals of all different species.

The sanctuary is open to the public and you can sign up for a [volunteer shift](#) to help care for the different animals. The next time we visit, I am definitely volunteering at the Piggy Paradise! You can even volunteer to take a dog out exploring for the day or to have a sleepover.

You can also sign up for [free guided tours](#) to visit the different animals around the nearly 3,700-acre property.

We did the Wild Friends Tour and really enjoyed meeting the resident wild animals and hearing their stories.

You'll also want to stop by the Adoption Hub where you can visit some of the dogs and cats that are up for adoption. Just be warned that you will want to take them all home!

After your morning with the animals, stop by the Angel Village Cafe where you can enjoy a vegetarian buffet and salad bar for only \$5. The dining room overlooks the beautiful Angel Canyon and Grand Staircase.

They also have the CUTEST pet-friendly [Best Friends Roadhouse Hotel](#) if you're looking for a place to stay in town!

## Kanab Creek

Kanab Creek is a fun little water hike and one of Kanab's best hidden gems.

To reach this accessible area of Kanab Creek, take Hwy 89 north for about 5 miles outside of Kanab, then turn right onto Angel Canyon Road (also known as Kanab Canyon Road). This will take you to the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.

The paved road will turn into a maintained dirt road just past the welcome center.

Continue on the dirt road for about 1.4 miles then take a right and continue a short distance until you see a small parking area just above the creek.

There is a sandy area at the top where you can have a picnic and watch the kids splash in the water.

Carefully make your way down to the creek where the water level varies from ankle deep to waist high.

You can explore both upstream and downstream. I'm not sure how far you can go, we just walked up a little way until it was up to our waist then turned back.

It's a fun place to cool off in the summer and you can even see little fish and tadpoles in the stream. Just avoid the area when it is raining as it is prone to flash flooding.

See our [Complete Guide to Kanab for Families](#) for more recommended things to do in Kanab with kids.

## Hidden Lake

If you continue up the dirt road about 1.5 miles past Kanab Creek, you'll discover Hidden Lake, or Crocodile Lake.

You'll need 4WD, preferably an ATV, to reach the lake as the road has spots with deeper sand. You can also walk the 1.5 miles from the creek.

There is a small parking area and a short walking trail that ends at a small opening at the base of a towering sandstone cliff.

You'll need to stoop down to get through the entrance, but once you get inside you'll find a soaring cave with a crystal-clear lake at the bottom.

The water seeps up from an underground spring, resulting in a fertile green oasis in the middle of the desert.



The water stays chilly year-round and early settlers even used the cave as a cooler. They would put goods inside a tethered rowboat then the cool cave temperatures would keep the perishable items refrigerated.

## Little Hollywood Museum

For a small town, Kanab has actually seen its fair share of the big screen!

The Little Hollywood Museum is a free museum that houses an extensive collection of old movie sets from Westerns filmed right here in and around Kanab.

It's fun to walk around to see the memorabilia and explore this little piece of history. My boys had fun peeking in windows, opening doors, and finding hidden corners.

The Trading Post at the museum also includes a gift shop and restaurant that serves delicious BBQ.

For a fun and unique experience, you can also book a [Campfire & Stargazing Tour](#) at an old movie fort.

## Heritage House Museum

This Victorian-style house was built in 1894 and was once home to many prominent families in town. It was considered to be the "first modern home in Kane County".

The ornate home has since been refurbished and converted into a museum that chronicles the history of Kanab.

Today, visitors can take a free guided or self-guided tour and catch a glimpse of what life was like in the 1800s. You'll also learn some interesting history and hear fascinating stories from the knowledgeable docents.

For example, Kanab had the first all-female town council in the United States, four years before women could even vote!

Check the calendar of events for demonstrations and hands-on experiences held throughout the month.

## Canyoneering Tour

Discover incredible beauty and incredible adventure on this family-friendly [canyoneering tour](#)!

The tour will take you through the Huntress Canyon, a remote hidden slot canyon away from the crowds.

We did the half-day canyoneering tour that lasted about 5 1/2 hours and included a total of 8 rappels and an awesome natural rock slide. It was awesome!

The tour is geared for ages 5 years and up, and no previous experience is needed. This was our youngest's first time rappelling and our tour guide was so great with him. He loved it and can't wait to do it again!

See our [Kanab Canyoneering Guide](#) for more details and information.

## Urban Mural Scavenger Hunt

You can find several colorful murals around town that depict the history and beauty of Kanab and the surrounding area.

For a fun afternoon, go on a self-guided scavenger hunt to find all of the colorful works of art. They can be found on the walls of places like the visitor center, grocery store, motels, and even the gas station.

Some of them are even within walking distance of each other. Check [Visit Southern Utah](#) for the location and information about each of the murals.

I hope this guide will help you discover some amazing things to do in Kanab, I just know you will fall in love with its remote beauty!