

Hiking Happenings

Doing It Like a Local: An Early-Bird Hike Up the Moab Rim

by Kathy Grossman

It gets pretty hot around here in late summer. Almost too hot for vigorous hiking. But, if you hike like a Moab local, arriving super-early at a trailhead, you can still enjoy some of our most iconic trails in relative comfort. How early? I'm at the Moab Rim Trailhead on this particular weekday morning at 6 a.m. It's 66 degrees. Photo-tour guides and mountain bikers tell me they often like to arrive at trailheads on summer mornings when it's still a bit dark. For this west-facing trail, starting very early is the ticket to a grand experience in complete shade. The route skirts the Behind the Rocks Wilderness Study Area and tops out at an overlook of the Moab Valley.



Colorado River from trailhead



Trail register

In my pack, I bring snacks, a liter of water, and a liter of limeade. Eating breakfast, especially a long, lingering, restaurant breakfast before a hike delays my start time. Besides, I prefer not to hike on a full stomach anyway. Especially a hike as aerobic as this

one. The Moab Rim Trail cardio exercise opens up at the top to a stunning panorama of our valley intersected by the glorious Colorado River. To the north lies Arches National Park, to the east is Sand Flats Recreation Area and the La Sal Mountains, and to the west (across the Colorado River) and up a cliff, Little Arch winks at you. Though the overlook is billed as a great view of the city and valley of Moab (intensely green this time of year), the most gorgeous spectacle is really to the south. The Colorado River riparian corridor of emerald islands, grassy bends, and somber, slow-moving silverness is just stunning. This is one serious river, the fifth longest in the United States.

Rated as a moderate to difficult hike—and known locally as Moab's StairMaster—the Moab Rim Trail goes up about 1,000 feet in about a mile. But there's no need to power walk up this thing. Watch your foot placements, take breaks, and stay well away from the cliff edges, especially if there have been recent rains. You can eyeball the Colorado River from many parts of the route, following the painted white dashes (looking a little scuffed-up these days) and scrapes and tire marks on the rocks. This is a multi-use trail, and, if you do

encounter articulated off-road vehicles creeping their way up, the trail corridor is usually wide enough for you to go around. In the past, I've enjoyed watching these great mantis-like contraptions navigate the Kayenta sandstone ledges, ramps, and slabs. On this particular morning's two-hour hike, I only encounter four women hiking plus one very good dog. After I take my photos at the top, I turn around and start picking my way back.

Best route to this trailhead at present: Take 400 North west from Main Street to 500 West, turn left (south), and proceed to the T intersection of Kane Creek Boulevard, then turn right.



The Valley from the Top. Watercolor by Kathy Grossman

Kathy Grossman is a California hiker, writer, artist, and nature journalist who's been in Moab since 2011.



A rougher alternative with possible delays: go west on Kane Creek Boulevard from Main Street at the McDonald's. Carefully follow the signs and restrictions set up for renovation and widening of this road. From the stop sign at Kane Creek and 500 West, take Kane Creek for another two miles. You'll follow the Colorado River downstream on your right. Look for the parking lot and a one-seater toilet on the left. The trail starts to the left (north) of the lot.

My downclimb back to the bottom is pretty challenging as I work those quads. And the hamstrings, calves, and glutes for that matter. Not for the faint of legs! But the rock slabs are still all in shade, so I take my time. Once back down, I sign out on the register, check my car's thermometer (it shows 75 degrees), then drive back north along the river into town, a canyon wren's bright, cascading notes calling farewell. With plans for a long, lingering, restaurant breakfast on my mind.



Downtown Happenings

There's Music and Magic at Moab's Backyard Theater

Everybody knows that Moab is a magical place, even in the heat of the summer. But did you know that Moab has its very own magic man? Rick Boretti has been wowing audiences throughout the west for years, and his Moab downtown magic show has become one of the longest-running outdoor magic shows in America. He performs his acclaimed jaw-dropping illusions every Saturday at 8pm to Moab Backyard Theater, an outdoor venue located in the heart of downtown Moab, just behind Zax.

"I love doing magic at the theater," Rick says. "It's great to see people laugh, have a good time and the adults become kids again. People come back that have seen me over the years and become like family."

A working member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, Boretti has been perfecting his craft over the years at festivals, theaters and private functions. He also specializes in the difficult sleight of hand known as "close-up magic", creating illusions that can leave audiences gasping. His fascination with magic started early.

"I was bitten by the magic bug when I was 6. Later when I learned to do a cut and restored rope my life was never the same. I like to have fun and for people around me to have fun. Magic is one great way to do this."

When he's not doing magic, Boretti is a Ranger and wildlife biologist in the heart of the Canyonlands wilderness, helping keep people and animal populations safe on the San Juan river. But he's mostly famous around the Four Corners for one thing: magic.

"I'm always working on creating new miracles," he says. It is family fun with lots of laughs but hopefully strong magic."

You can catch Moab's "Magic Man" every Saturday in August at 8pm at Moab's Backyard Theater, located at



Magician Rick Boretti

56 W. 100 South, just behind Zax. Admission is ten dollars for adults and 5 dollars for kids 5 and over. It's worth every penny to see the premiere magician in Southeastern Utah. Wednesdays are Bluegrass nights and Thursday is Honky Tonk Fusion with Juniper Drive.

Downtown Entertainment!
Bring food (and drinks) to go and see a show!!
SHOWTIMES 8PM!

WEDNESDAYS BLUEGRASS
THURSDAYS COUNTRY & GOSPEL
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SATURDAY MAGIC fun for all ages!
visit website for exact times and more info!
MOABBACKYARDTHEATER.COM
56 W. 100 S. (1/2 Block off Main next to Zax)

