

# Arches National Park leaves guests in awe

## Natural structures, sights comprise Moab's magical wonderland

**I**t could be said the most recognizable arches in the U.S. are golden and represent a fast-food chain.

That might be true, but the most magnificent arches are comprised of sandstone and can be found in Utah – not far from Moab. Arches National Park is home to these natural structures. The sun radiates through their openings, lighting the way toward miles of picturesque horizons.

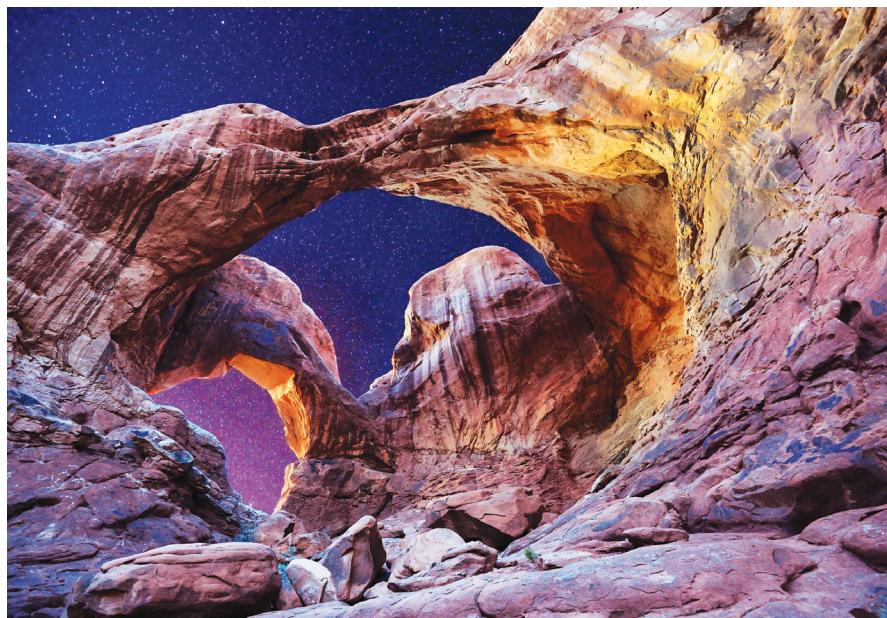
First-time guests travel to this national park with high expectations and leave awestruck. The sights are wondrous and enough to barely keep jaws from hitting the ground.

It should come as no surprise that edifices of this magnitude weren't formed overnight. The process took hundreds of millions of years.

A salt-bed layer, deposited some 300 million years ago when the area was an inland sea, lies beneath Arches National Park. The sea's evaporation left salt deposits; some areas collecting more than 1,000 feet of deposits. Winds, floods, streams and oceans inundated the area with debris for millions of years.

The debris compressed into rock. The weight of the rock layer caused the salt bed to become fluid, allowing it to thrust up and create domes and ridges.

A 2-cent history lesson on the origin of Mother Nature's finest children barely scratches the surface about what is in store for those who make the



**SUPERSTAR** – The night sky permeates through the Double Arch at Arches National Park in Moab, Utah. Image: ipivorje. Adobe Stock.

journey. The sights sparkle in one's eyes and burnish memories in their minds.

The options seem endless. More than 2,000 arches can be found throughout the park. Each is unique and worth visiting, but limited stays make it wise to have a plan before choosing which ones to visit.

It's a good problem to have,

particularly when it's nearly impossible to make a poor decision. Satisfaction is guaranteed for adventurers and sightseers.

But just to be safe, here are five arches that guests shouldn't ignore:

**Delicate Arch** – The most famous arch in the park and arguably the world, it adorns Utah's license plate. Sunrise is considered the best time to

photograph it.

**Double Arch** – Two arches rest on top of one another, creating a pair of giant arches next to each other. Visitors can see through both at the right angle.

**North Window** – This arch provides a clear view to the other side. Turret Arch is framed through the North Window. Visit it at sunrise for the best views.

**Landscape Arch** – A magnificent bridge-like structure, it rises into the sky in the foreground of blue skies dotted with puffy clouds along Devils Garden Trail and is ideal for hikers.

**Double O Arch** – Not to be confused with the Double Arch, it offers two "O" shapes stacked on top of one another.

The diversity of the national park is another unique quality. Rock formations and canyons are eye-catching locations waiting to be absorbed by the keen eyes of visitors in search of unparalleled scenery.

The rock formations assume the appearance of circus-like balancing acts, a city skyline or the pristine vision of angels. Canyons drop into the Earth's surface, waiting to be explored.

Minimal light pollution allows stars to light up the night sky. A dark dome puts the park to bed after another perfect day.

Arches National Park might not be a golden experience, but it certainly is priceless.

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