

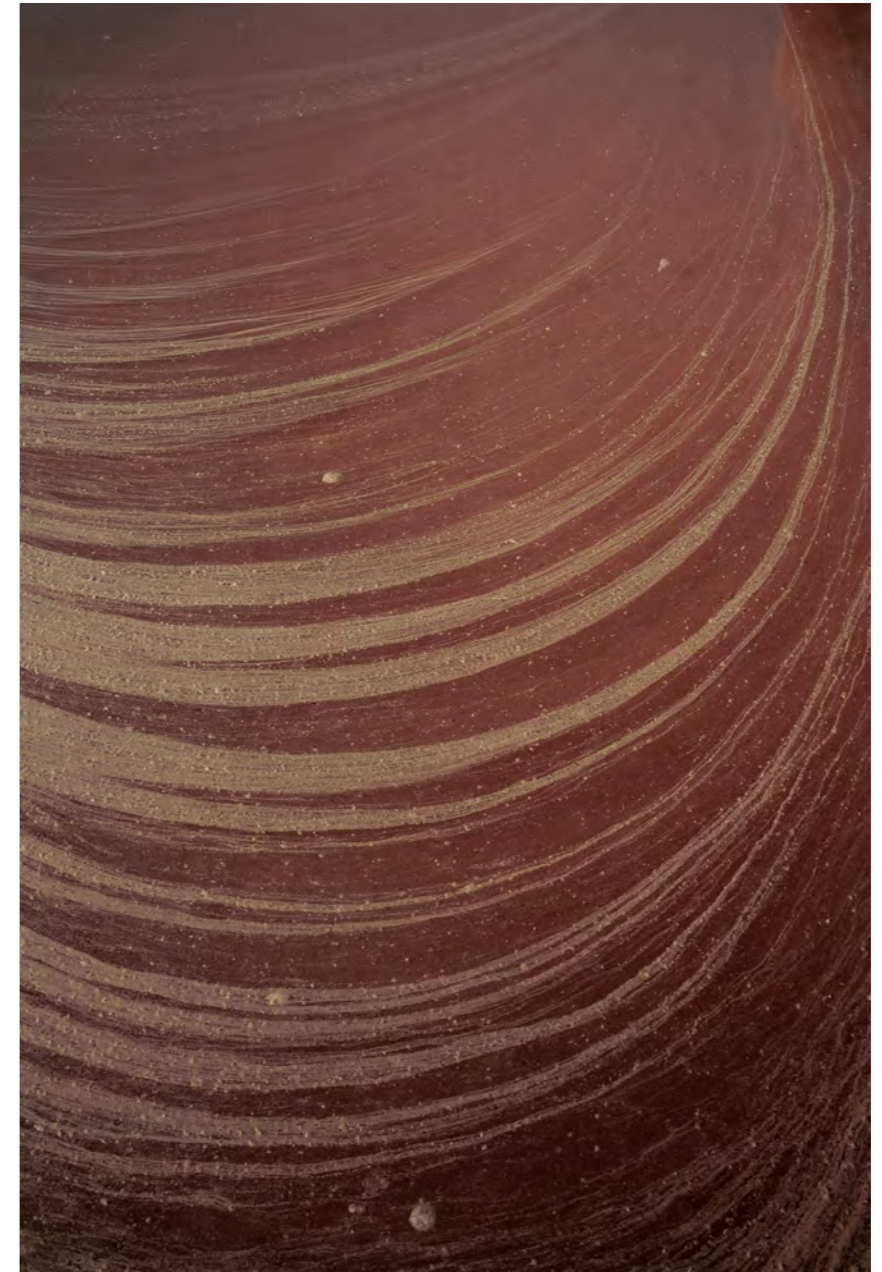
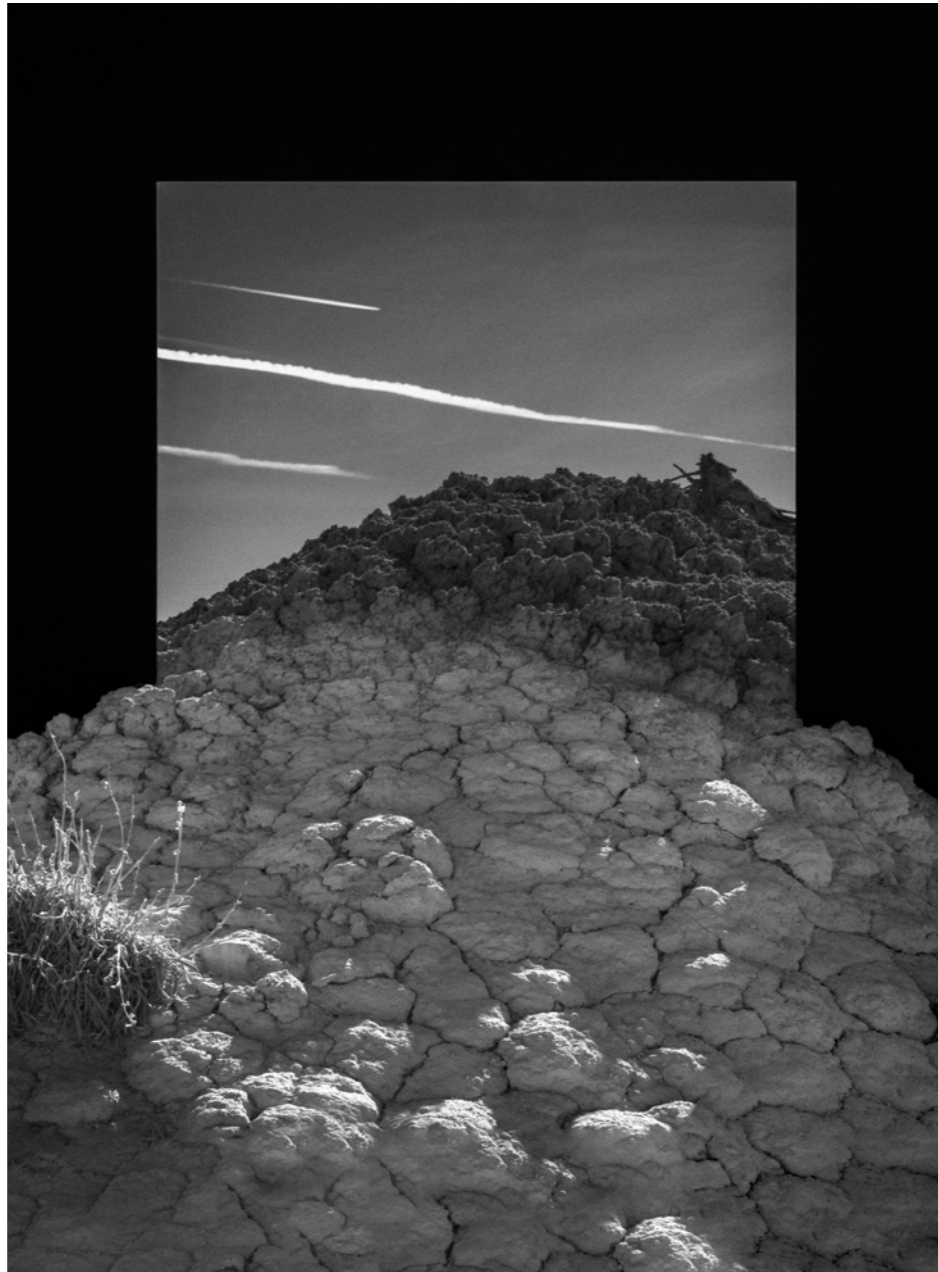
# **TOURISM THAT LOCALS LOVE**

**Some stories & inspiration from the somewhat  
reluctant creator of Utah's The Mighty 5™**

Alexandra Fuller

Idaho Conference on Regional Tourism - October 2023

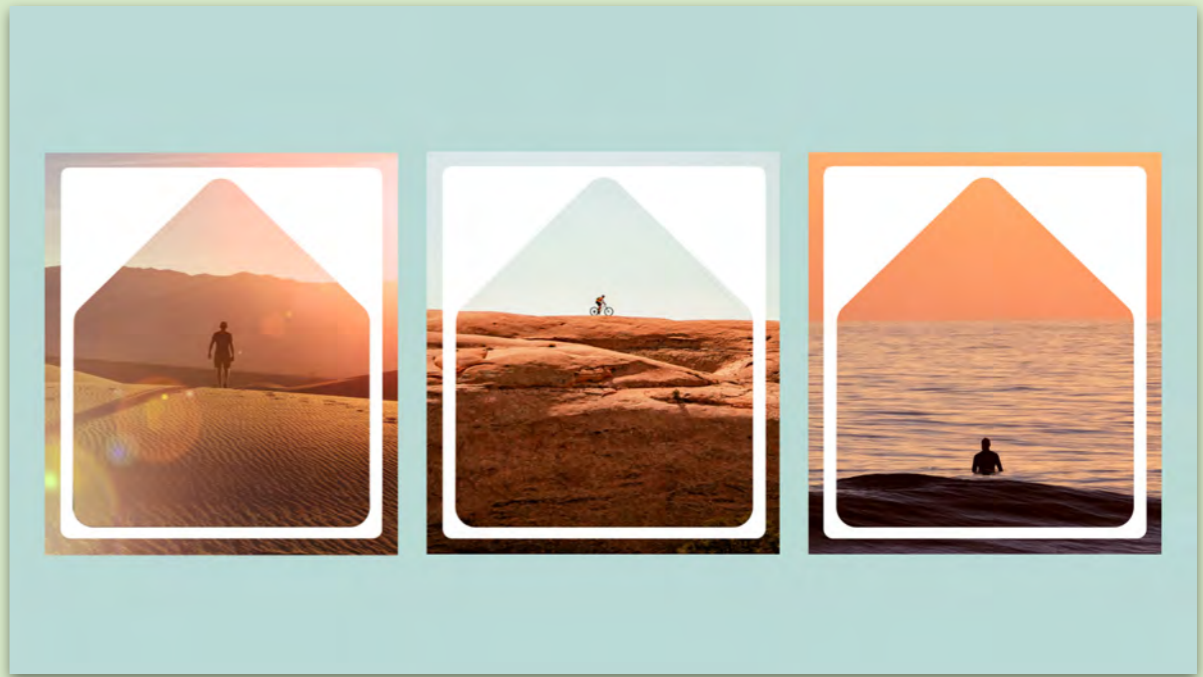
**Hi, I'm Alex.**



# I ♥ tourism work.

















**\$591 million**

in tourism revenue  
in the campaign's first year alone

**\$338**

brought in for every dollar  
spent on the campaign

# Accolades

U.S. Travel Mercury Awards — Best Integrated Campaign, Best Broadcast  
HSMAI Adrian Awards — Platinum Winner for Complete Campaign  
Profiles in AdAge, HOW Magazine, Fast Company, Creativity Online

# FOX 13 News 360: Utah's 'Mighty Five' national parks becoming mighty crowded



## Reservation needed? Jammed highway lights fire under Arches controversy

May 31, 2015



ARCHES NATIONAL PARK — A chaotic and dangerous traffic mess on Memorial Day weekend that forced an unprecedented temporary closure of Arches National Park has lit a fire under the question: Should tourists be required to have a reservation before they can enter the national park?

The park's superintendent — concerned about a recent explosion of tourist visitation — has approval to begin charging higher entrance fees at peak times. Her proposal to initiate a reservation system, though, is drawing fierce opposition from the business community in Moab.

The brewing dispute over the future of the park — which seems to have been newly discovered by hundreds of thousands of tourists — seems to reflect a deep philosophical divide. On the one hand, business interests argue that even larger crowds can be accommodated through a series of parking and construction strategies. On the other hand, many park lovers would like to limit or slow growing visitation in order to protect the park's natural resources and the quality of the visitor experience."

### Traffic nightmare

The traffic crisis at the park entrance on the Saturday before Memorial Day marked the first time the park has ever been closed for traffic reasons, and it threw a spotlight on the recent surge of visitors.

As events unfolded at the park entrance, the entire Moab area was experiencing what many residents say is the heaviest traffic, by far, that they have ever seen. For much of the weekend, cars headed for many

## Mighty 5 campaign brought an extra half-million visitors to parks; now Utah wants to steer them to other places



(Trent Nelson | The Salt Lake Tribune)

The New York Times

## National Parks Struggle With a Mounting Crisis: Too Many Visitors

Ad closed by Google

4 of Utah's 'Mighty 5' broke visitation records in 2021 — is it time to try other parks?

Written by KSL.com January 31, 2022



St George News



Take The  
**ROAD TO MIGHTY**

ITINERARY #2  
HIDDEN SECRETS

**DAY 1**  
ST. GEORGE to CEDAR BREAKS  
Snow Canyon State Park  
Kolob Canyons  
Cedar Breaks National Monument

**DAY 2**  
KODACHROME BASIN to BOULDER  
Kodachrome Basin State Park  
Lower Calf Creek Falls  
Hell's Backbone Grill

**DAY 3**  
CAPITOL REEF to ARCHES  
Hickman Bridge + Navajo Knobs  
Goblin Valley State Park  
Delicate Arch Hike

SEE THE REST OF THIS ITINERARY AND EXPLORE MORE AT VISITUTAH.COM

FIVE NATIONAL PARKS  
ONE ICONIC AMERICAN ROAD TRIP  
VISITUTAH.COM

THE MIGHTY 5

LIFE UTAH ELEVATED

**THE ROAD HAS ALWAYS LED WEST**

— WALLACE STEGNER (1969, 1992) Pulitzer Prize winning author

REAL PARKS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING OF ONE ICONIC ROAD TRIP

VISITUTAH.COM

LIFE UTAH ELEVATED

**FIVE NATIONAL PARKS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING**

ITINERARY #3 *Southern Dinos & Goblins*

<b>DAY 1</b> MOAB to DEAD HORSE POINT STATE PARK Hummer Tour Moab Giants Dinosaur Museum Dead Horse Point State Park	<b>DAY 2</b> MOAB to BLUFF FORT Hole-in-the-Rock Newspaper Rock Bluff Fort Historic Site	<b>DAY 3</b> BLUFF to MONUMENT VALLEY TRIBAL PARK Sand Island Petroglyphs Monument Valley Jeep Tour Goulding's Lodge	<b>DAY 4</b> MONUMENT VALLEY to GOBLIN VALLEY Natural Bridges National Monument Goblin Valley State Park Little Wild Horse to Ding & Dang
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Explore more at VISITUTAH.COM

LIFE UTAH ELEVATED

**FIVE NATIONAL PARKS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING**

ITINERARY #9 *Away From it All*

<b>DAY 1</b> CEDAR BREAKS to BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK Cedar Breaks National Monument Under the Him T'vail Dark Skies of Bryce Canyon	<b>DAY 2</b> BRYCE CANYON to CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK Cathedral Valley Backway Gobab Canyon to Grand Wash Hickman Bridge + Navajo Knobs
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Explore more at VISITUTAH.COM

LIFE UTAH ELEVATED

**FIVE NATIONAL PARKS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING**

ITINERARY #4 *Southwest Silver Screen*

<b>DAY 1</b> MOAB and CANYONLANDS Moab Movie Locations Red Cliffs Lodge and Castle Creek Winery	<b>DAY 2</b> CANYONLANDS to MONUMENT VALLEY Cave Spring Hike Forrest Gump Point Monument Valley Jeep Tour	<b>DAY 3</b> MONUMENT VALLEY to CAPITOL REEF Horseshoe Canyon Goblin Valley State Park Gifford Homestead	<b>DAY 4</b> CAPITOL REEF to KANAB Amateur Rodeos Western Legends Roundup Johnson Canyon Road
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Explore more at VISITUTAH.COM

LIFE UTAH ELEVATED



# Utah Wanted All the Tourists. Then It Got Them.

As red-rock meccas like Moab, Zion, and Arches become overrun with visitors, our writer wonders if Utah's celebrated Mighty Five ad campaign worked too well—and who gets to decide when a destination is "at capacity."

"It was laughably simple," says Alexandra Fuller, the former creative director of Struck. "Taking natural features that have been there forever and parks that have been there for decades and putting it together with a new brand."

The campaign introduced to the mainstream a type of adventure that for decades had only a cult following. Unlike traditional park fare—peaks, woods, wild animals—canyons are an acquired taste, less achievement and more mystery, an immersion into the stone innards of creation that can be at once sensual, hallucinatory, and religious.



Sundeen in the same spot, September 2019 (Courtesy Mark Sundeen)

The Mighty Five campaign was a smash. The number of visitors to the five parks jumped 12 percent in 2014, 14 percent in 2015, and 20 percent in 2016, leaping from 6.3 million to over 10 million in just three years. The state coffers filled with sales taxes paid on hotels and rental cars and restaurants. The Struck agency brags that the state got a return on its investment of 338 to 1. The clink of crystal flutes bubbling with Mountain

state Office of Tourism, the county's tourism board has tried to shift the money raised by its local hotel tax away from advertising and into building infrastructure and educating visitors with its new **Do It Like a Local** campaign, which teaches etiquette like "don't bust the crust" (when hiking or biking, stay on marked trails to avoid destroying microbiotic soils) and "respect the rocks" (stay off rock formations and don't touch Native American rock art, which can be ruined by oils from your skin). In 2017, Moab elected a new mayor, Emily Niehaus, who was previously a ranger at Bryce Canyon and founded a nonprofit that helped low-income people build and own straw-bale, solar-powered homes.

“

**As one salty Moabite summed up the new campaign: "They ruined the parks, and now they want to ruin the places in between."**

But the town's attempts to turn back the state's pro-business agenda are in limbo. One of Niehaus's first duties as mayor was to travel to Salt Lake City and defend Moab's new laws from an at times skeptical, if not downright hostile, legislature. When Moab banned plastic bags, a legislator introduced a bill that banned cities from banning bags. A state law demands that the county spend 47 percent of its hotel tax to promote tourism. Meanwhile, the ban on new hotels is under scrutiny. The governor has warned against the rise of "socialism" in places like Grand

***“Tourism IS an extractive industry.”***



# Moab locals say tourists, newcomers are running them out of their own community

The community's dearth of affordable housing is hitting the population's workforce hard.



## FORTUNE

Ashley Gathman, a 28-year-old server at the popular Bit and Spur restaurant in Springdale, lives in a 1976 orange and white El Dorado van that blends in with the scorching rust-colored Bureau of Land Management land on which she camps.

Equipped with only a bed, a small kitchenette, and an unplugged window air conditioning unit, Gathman has been living the van life for four years, mostly owing to the lack of affordable housing in the town.

"You know, pretty soon you're not gonna have a town," Gathman said. "You're not gonna have workers to cater to all of these tourists that you want to come into town."



FEATURES - HOUSING CRISIS

# Why the tourism boom at national parks is leaving local workers homeless

BY K. SOPHIE WILL

October 15, 2023 at 7:00 AM MDT



**Building awareness**



**Increasing consideration**



**Driving demand**



# **DMO RESPONSIBILITY**

**Building awareness**

**Increasing consideration**

**Driving demand**

# **DMO RESPONSIBILITY**

**Public affairs**

**Infrastructure**

**Sustainability**

**Commerce**

***Could tourism become a  
generative industry?***

**EMBRACE PARTNERSHIPS**



**“If you’re out on the beach enjoying it and you think this is a beautiful place, treat it like a beautiful place”**

Caulin Wants You to Join Him + Keep Our Destination Beautiful

Learn from TikTok Influencer Caulin Donaldson - it matters to pick up your trash.



**TAKE YOUR LOVE FOR MARQUETTE TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Support our outdoor spaces with a donation. We recommend a donation of \$10 for every day spent enjoying Marquette County’s outdoors. You can donate to our partner organizations that manage trails or recreation land in the area.



NOQUEMANON TRAIL NETWORK



RANGE AREA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION (RAMBA)



SUPERIOR WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP



UPPER PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY



IRON ORE HERITAGE TRAIL



NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION



UPPER PENINSULA CLIMBERS COALITION

**"FOREVER MIGHTY IS MORE OF A MINDSET AND AN ETHIC OF HOW DO WE PROTECT ALL OF UTAH?"**

- Phill Monson, Outdoor Stewardship Promoter



**How to Poop in the Outdoors**

Written By Melissa Fields

4 minute read

Before heading off on that multi-day backpack, river or rock climbing trip, set aside your squeamishness and think about a responsible plan for when nature inevitably calls.

Article



**How to Support Local On Your Utah Road Trip**

Written By Elaina Ciaramella

5 minute read

Many small businesses in Utah rely on tourism for survival. These expert tips help road trippers make a real difference in communities by supporting local.

Article



# Travel With Care

In Idaho, we care for our outdoor spaces. When visiting our beautiful state, we hope you recreate responsibly so you (and others!) can experience Idaho to its fullest—now and in the future.



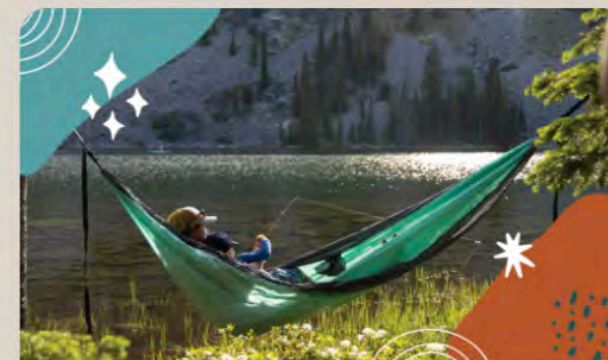
## Care for Idaho

When out on the trail, don't leave your pesky granola bar wrappers behind. Take all your trash with you (there aren't garbage services in most Idaho recreation areas). Encourage your friends to stay on marked trails, and always drown out your campfires—yes, even in the winter. Take only pictures, and leave nothing behind. Idaho's beauty should be shared. But to share it, we also need to protect it.



## Care for Yourself

We, of course, want you to have the adventure you're dreaming of, but we also want you to know your limits and make sure you're safe. Are you prepared for your hike? Do you have the things you need? Did you bring water and sun protection? Do you know about bear safety? Did you tell someone where you're going? Do you have a plan B? Know the risks of recreating outdoors, regardless of the season, and take the necessary steps to have a good time and stay safe.



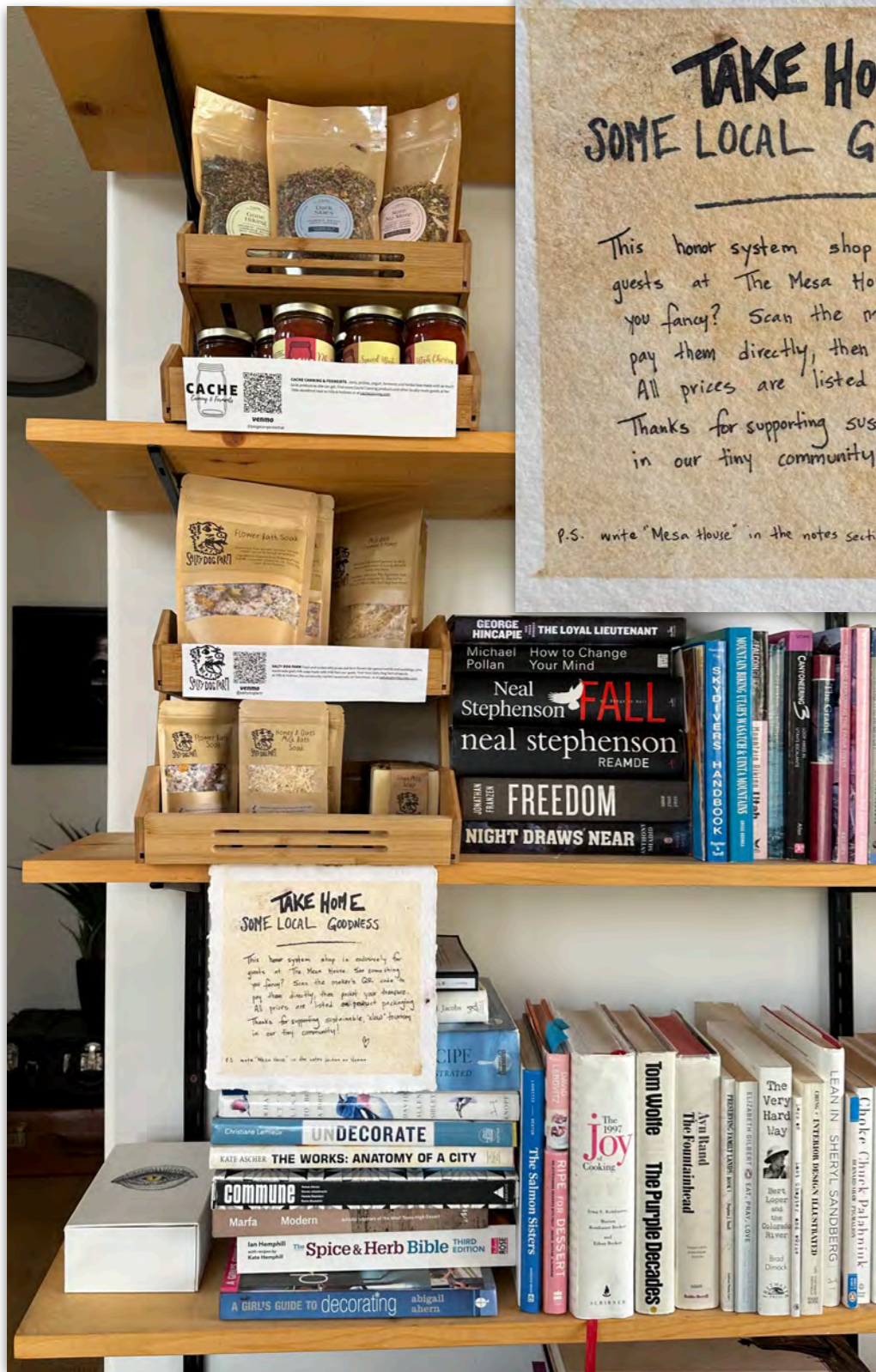
## Care for Others

Whether out on a trail, sipping wine at a vineyard or shopping downtown, please be patient and kind to those around you. Like many places, staffing shortages can be a challenge. Please keep your cool and be kind to the employees assisting you. They are doing their best. Out on the trail, remember to be welcoming and respectful to all.

**ASK THE LOCALS**



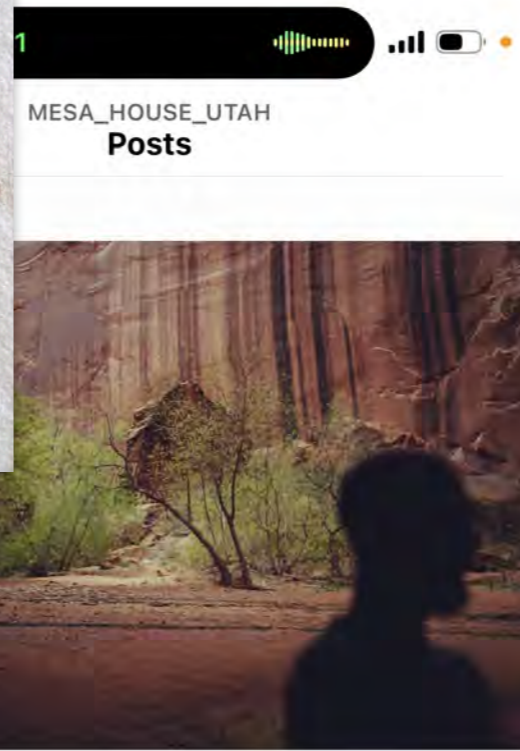
***Tourists are ephemeral members of the communities they visit. Locals are a critical part of a visitor's experience.***



**TAKE HOME  
SOME LOCAL GOODNESS**

This honor system shop is exclusively for guests at The Mesa House. See something you fancy? Scan the maker's QR code to pay them directly, then pocket your treasure. All prices are listed on product packaging. Thanks for supporting sustainable, 'slow' tourism in our tiny community!

P.S. write "Mesa House" in the notes section on Venmo



View insights

Boost again



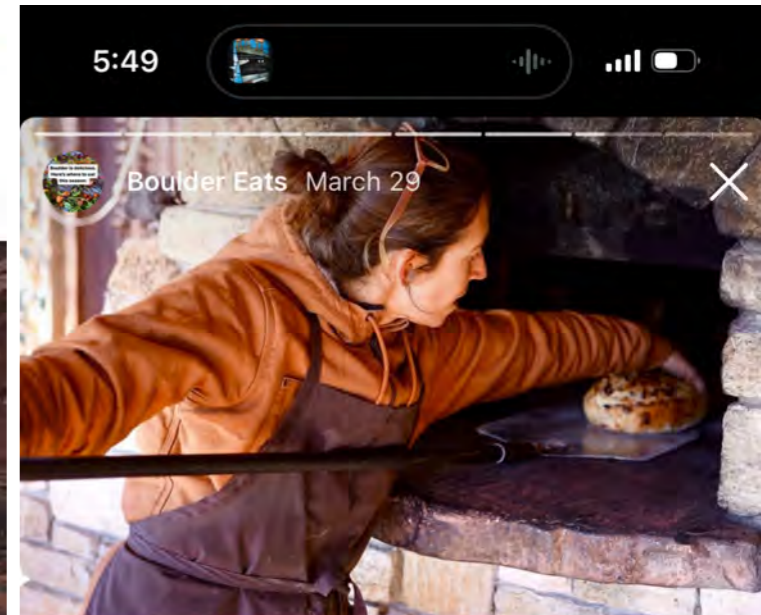
Liked by wildindigocafe and 72 others

mesa\_house\_utah To celebrate our favorite corner of the earth, we're committing to donating 1% of 2023 profits from The Mesa House to @grandstaircasepartners, an organization which works to preserve, protect and educate about Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. We'd encourage all our guests to make a donation, too.

jadegrimmius Love it ❤️

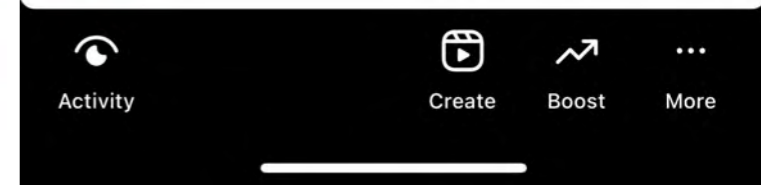
siobhanartist ❤️

April 22



**Boulder Bread  
The Gluten Is My Love Language**

Astoundingly good wood-fired sourdough bread, pastries and cakes baked by a former wilderness guide and one of Boulder's only volunteer EMT's. Find @boulderbread at Hills & Hollows. If you're really lucky, you'll time it right for a rare pizza night.





[alexandrafuller.com](http://alexandrafuller.com)