



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO

BICKNELL, UTAH

The community of Bicknell is located in the heart of Capitol Reef Country, about 17 miles west of Capitol Reef National Park. While the community was originally established by cattle ranchers and wheat farmers, today it charms visitors with local events and festivals and boasts the best “Pickle Pie” in the state. The surrounding mountainous, high-elevation area is prime for easy access to fishing, hiking, ATV rides and exploration of the nearby National Park.

Bicknell is accessed via Scenic Byway 24 through Loa and Lyman on the west and Torrey on the east. Many drivers stop to see the beautiful features of the area along the way. Nearby is the Bicknell Bottoms Wildfowl Area as well as the historic Nielsen Mill.



Bicknell Bottoms/Wildfowl Area

A bird watcher's paradise, Bicknell Bottoms is a 670 acre wetland and farmland area located along the Fremont River. The peaceful area is an attractive place to spot waterfowl and birds of all kinds. See here for more information and directions.



Thousand Lake Mountain

The areas on and around Thousand Lake Mountain are used for camping, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing. This high plateau is found directly north of Boulder Mountain and surprisingly, Thousand Lake Mountain is boulder-filled terrain with a few lakes, while Boulder Mountain is covered in approximately 80 lakes. There are several stories to explain these mismatched names, most common is that a cartographer recorded the names incorrectly on early maps of the area. Today, you can explore this beautiful, boulder-filled area, no permits necessary.



Velvet Ridge

This 14-mile ridge-line is used frequently for hiking, mountain biking, and ATV riding. The Velvet Ridge offers views of canyons, cliffs, ledges and mesas as it wraps around the southern end of Thousand Lake Mountain. This ridge parallels the Fremont River and can be accessed from near the towns of Torrey and Bicknell at two locations. Look for the trailhead closest to Bicknell just outside the east edge of town (north side of the road).



Fishlake Scenic Byway

This stunning, paved drive allows visitors to view mountains and meadows from the windows of their car, or as they stop and explore the beautiful mountainous area along the drive that includes everything from sagebrush to high mountain aspen. Wildlife sightings are common along the way as deer, squirrels, moose, and elk have all been spotted in the area. The byway itself is 13 miles long and can be reached by traveling up Hwy 24 towards Loa where the loop begins. Continue on Hwy 24 until you reach a right turn for Hwy 25. Head north and follow this road around to Hwy 72. Turn right to head back to Hwy 24.



National Scenic Byway 12

This famously beautiful drive is 124 miles of red rock, wildlife, and some of the best mountain scenery Utah has to offer. Visitors can choose to travel any length of the drive, stopping at any safe point to explore the trails and views along the way. It is recommended to calculate time for your journey based on a 40 mph. average speed. Turn this trip into a loop by accessing the road west to Hell's Backbone Bridge and circling north back to Bicknell on back roads (best in dry and warmer conditions).



Scenic Byway 24

Hwy 24, which leads visitors to most of the towns in the area as well as through Capitol Reef National Park, is listed as a scenic byway. The beautiful drive takes travelers from the high mountains down to red rocks and desert of the lower attractions on the other side of the park. This may be a great drive for first-time visitors looking to explore all the area has to offer.



Overview of Closest Attractions to Bicknell:

Name	Distance from Bicknell	Time Spent	Level of Difficulty/Age
Thousand Lake Mountain	45 min-1.5 hrs, depending on destination	Half day to multiple days depending on activity	All ages
Bicknell Bottoms/ Waterfowl Area	3.5 miles southeast of Bicknell	Varies. Transportation to and from is short.	All ages.
Velvet Ridge (Mountain Biking Trail)	5 min. drive	1-2 hours	Trail is listed as "good for all levels"
National Scenic Byway 12	12 min. drive to turnoff	Varies (see above description)	All ages (some trails along drive may be listed as "moderate/hard")
Scenic Byway 24	Bicknell is found on route	1-2 hours	All ages
Fishlake Scenic Byway	12 min. drive to start of loop (Loa)	1-2 hours	All ages

*Here are some recommended hikes for the area. See website for more details and other hikes.

Name of Trailhead	Distance	Difficulty Level
Fremont River Trail	2.5 Miles	Easy
Sunglow Trail	0.65 miles	Easy/Moderate

Other Don't-Miss Attractions in the Nearby Area:

Name of Trailhead	Distance from Bicknell	Time Spent	Level of Difficulty/Age
Capitol Reef National Park	15 min. from Bicknell	Half day to multiple days	All ages. Trails and areas with all levels of difficulty.
Notom Road and Burr Trail Loop. Hwy. 24 & Byway 12	30 min. East	3-4 hours for scenic drive. Half day for hikers.	All ages. Dirt road may be new to some drivers.
Fishing, Hiking, Hunting	Varies.	Half-day to Multiple days	All ages

A Brief History of the Area

The community now known as Bicknell was first established in 1879 by A.K. Thurber, who built the first home in the area. However, the land he chose was eventually deemed unsuitable for farming and water, so in 1895 “Thurber Town” was relocated to a more productive location. The predominantly LDS (mormon) congregation in the town constructed the Relief Society Hall (purchased and restored in 1971 by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers), which housed the school, church meetings, and social functions. In 1914 Rhode Island’s Education Commissioner, Thomas W. Bicknell, offered to donate a 1,000-volume library to any town in Utah that would take his name. Two towns split the prize (with the other town taking his wife’s maiden name) and in 1916 Thurber became Bicknell and received 500 books. The town was incorporated in 1939.

