

## **Four Wheeling for Every Level Try these 4 Utah Terrains**

I'm converted to four wheeling. Having not understood why people would travel long stretches trailing in a cloud of dust before, I'll tell you how I have come to enjoy it. ATVs can be a lot of fun if you're blazing the right terrain with the right people in the right way.

Drive at your comfort to keep it safe, and then see how a variety of trails provide a variety of different adventures. Here in Utah, I've experienced some different types of trips, each more conducive to different styles. My favorite four illustrate each types advantages and disadvantages:

### **Hobble Creek to Squaw Peak**

Ascending trails wind along a canyon and up through trees while opening up to picturesque scenes of Utah Valley civilization. It sure beats hiking, as far as covering ground. The road is wide enough for cars so go on a day where there won't be as many. We went around 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. Four wheeling seems to be a constant here as it is a close jaunt to access. It is cool up in the trees, there are some camping spots, and a trickling waterfall, but they are small stop off points and the main viewing area is definitely Squaw Peak itself. The couples taking in the view don't seem too distracted by the noise of four wheelers, but later into the evening hours they might be more aware of the annoyance.

### **Soldier Summit & Strawberry Peak**

Smooth stretches of gravel provide for an easier ride, but don't get too comfortable; it also makes for more dust and less visibility. Narrow areas of trail on loose rock with what amount to blind curves due to numerous trees also exist. But for the most part, this is a scenic travel. Our trip included many sights and smells. There were several animals, like deer, squirrels, cattle, sheep, and horses. Wonderful smells of mountain pastures and flowers, and Aspen and Fir trees. Of these trips this one has the most possibilities. Even after running out of gas I didn't see all the trails to behold. We spent the night in one of many campgrounds to be found, making it a two-day journey. There are some campgrounds with restroom facilities and picnic tables for a fee, but we just found one in a flat place among the trees in the open air for free. My uncle made the trip extra exciting; he swerved out of control, out of the blinding dust, and into some sagebrush rolling his ATV on its side. The second time he drove off the trail he bailed out before the vehicle crashed into a tree down the hillside. We let him ride instead of drive after that. The camping gear getting in the way of his steering wheel may have been the culprit the second time. But really, I promise you can drive within your abilities and maintain control; still do wear a safety helmet and goggles (You will want those, once you are in the dust; I know my contacts always do).

### **Deer Creek Reservoir to Cascade Springs**

Somewhat difficult terrain with steep grades and rocky trails provides breathless views, but that could have just been the altitude or the gasping at cliffs. Actually this was one of my favorite rides. We experienced different speeds according to the terrain, and starting with a reservoir, finding a nice shady pull off area next to a stream to hang a cot and read a book, and ending at spring water and waterfalls to hike around making the trip more purposeful. It has some of the rockiest terrain so you can really experience off-roading. You will see less dust and won't see cars on this trail. At some places you will get to drive through the stream. It is a great day trip.

### **The Sand Dunes**

My absolute favorite place to go in Utah has to be the Dunes. Figure eight trails and other weaving paths make for fun riding while banking through S-curves. The visibility through these canals is not so good, hence the requirement for a flag when driving here. Again, the precaution of driving away from engine noises but within your own comfort is a good preventative measure to keep from accidents. Camping here gets your equipment all sandy, but using the fire pits to make a nice lunch while people wait to play on the ATVs is reasonable. The Dunes provide trails in every direction. You don't typically have to follow someone else's dust. You just have fun wandering about and then return to your base after a good spin on the machine. You can bring more people to the Dunes to share turns four wheeling, as all the trails start and end at wherever you unload and don't just continue to a distant destination.

There are a number of trails to be explored but you can find them first on the Internet. ATV stores offer a CD with all of the good sites of Utah trails to be sure you are using a legal route for ATVs. Signs in the locations themselves also let you know where ATVs are allowed. These four trails can give you a good start to different trips and terrains. Find out which one you like best. Maps detailing paths and trailheads will help you plan ahead and give you an idea of the distances involved. Bring enough gas, water, food and other provisions and tie them down well on your vehicle possibly leaving bigger items in the car or at camp; just be sure nothing gets in the way of your driving enjoyment. Happy trails!