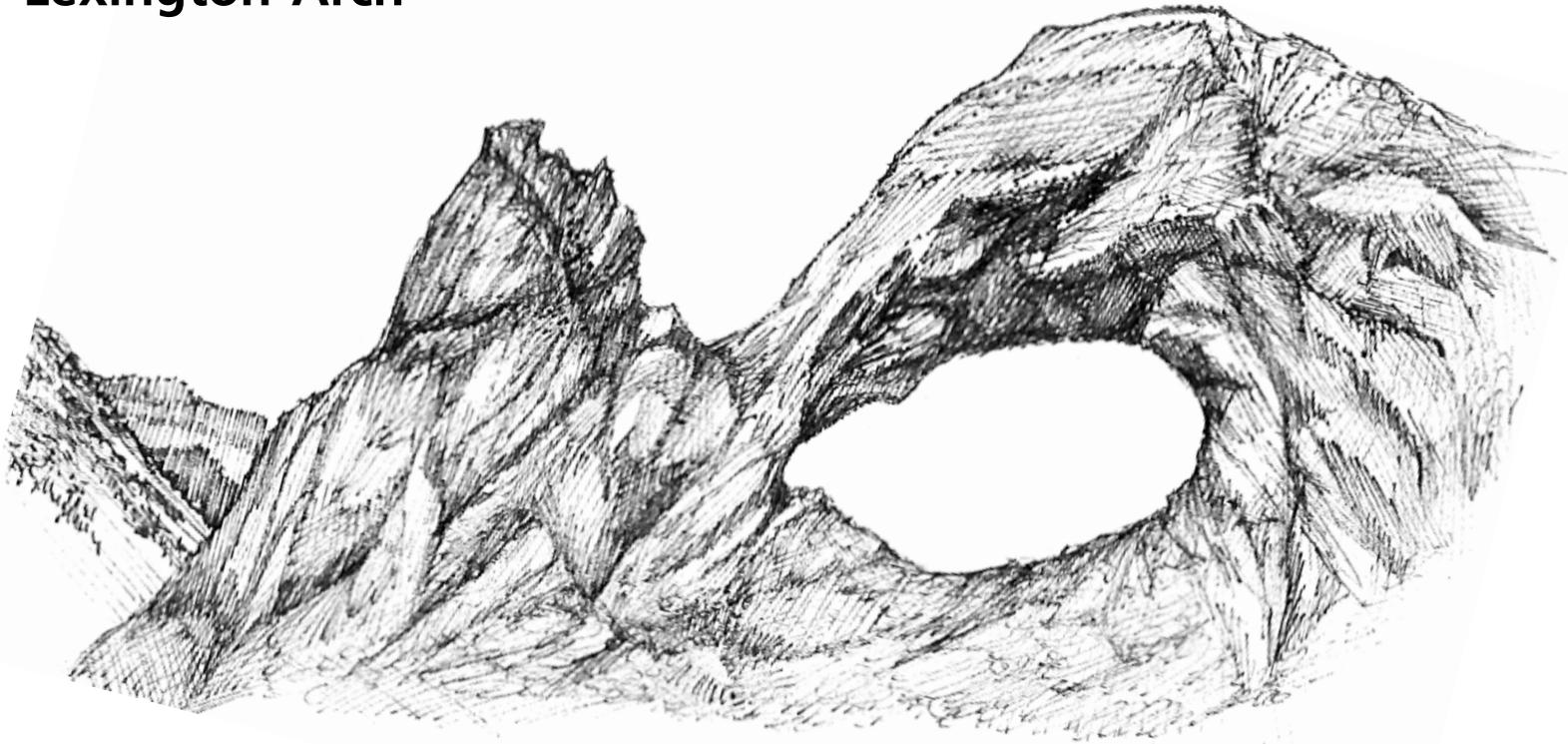




Lexington Arch



Rising high above the floor of Lexington Canyon is an imposing arch that was created by the forces of weather working slowly over the span of centuries. Hike to the arch and find solitude, the sound of wind whistling through the stone span, and a sense of the patience of earth time- time slow and long enough to create this unique natural arch.

What is it?

Lexington Arch is a six-story tall limestone formation on the hillside above Lexington Creek. Although natural arches and bridges are not uncommon, most of them are formed from sandstone. Lexington Arch, in contrast, is formed of limestone. Limestone bedrock is normally associated with underground formations, such as

the numerous caves and caverns that are found in Great Basin National Park. Above ground arches carved from limestone are relatively rare, and Lexington Arch is one of the largest limestone arches in the western United States.

How did it form?

The fact that Lexington Arch is made of limestone leads to speculation that it was once a passage in a cave system. Flowstone, a smooth glossy deposit that forms in caves, has been discovered at the base of the arch, lending support to this theory.

It is even possible that Lexington Arch is not an arch at all, but rather it is a natural bridge. While arches are formed by the affects of weathering (wind and water eroding the rock), bridges are created by the flowing waters of a stream. It is possible that long ago, when Lexington Canyon was not as deep, the waters of Lexington Creek

flowed through a cave in the wall of the canyon and in doing so enlarged the tunnel that became Lexington Arch. If this is how the arch formed, then Lexington Arch is truly a natural bridge.

However the arch originally formed, the forces of weather continue to sculpt the arch today. The limestone is particularly vulnerable to the dissolving action of rainwater. As time goes on, the rain, ice, heat, and cold chisel the arch into a unique natural form that will continue to change with the passing centuries.

Hiking to the Arch

The 1.7 mile hike to Lexington Arch originates in the Humboldt-Taiyabe National Forest, which surrounds Great Basin National Park. The trail begins with a steady climb up one mile of switchbacks, then levels off. The arch is not visible from the trail until just before entering the park; an overlook off the trail allows your first view of the six-story limestone formation. Once inside the park, the trail passes the arch, then drops down to cross Lexington Creek. As the trail climbs up

from the creek it brings you to the backside of the arch, where you can look through it to the Snake Valley and the ranges to the east.

Trail Specifics:

Length: 1.7 miles one way (2.7 km)
Elevation at Trailhead: 7440 feet (2268m)
Elevation Gain: 830 feet (250m)
Distance from Baker: 25 miles (40 km)

Planning Your Trip

Lexington Arch is located in a remote and wild section of Great Basin National Park. The dirt road is unimproved. Be prepared for rugged terrain and remember that you are at high elevation here.

Hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes are essential on the rocky trail. Bring plenty of water (one to two liters per person, depending on the season), as dehydration is common in this high desert environment. Bring some food too, as you should plan to spend the better part of a day driving to the trailhead and walking to the arch.

Weather can change rapidly, so be prepared for conditions including thunderstorms and snow, even in the summer months.

Remember that anything you bring with you on the trail needs to leave with you too; carry a plastic bag in your pack for food scraps and trash.

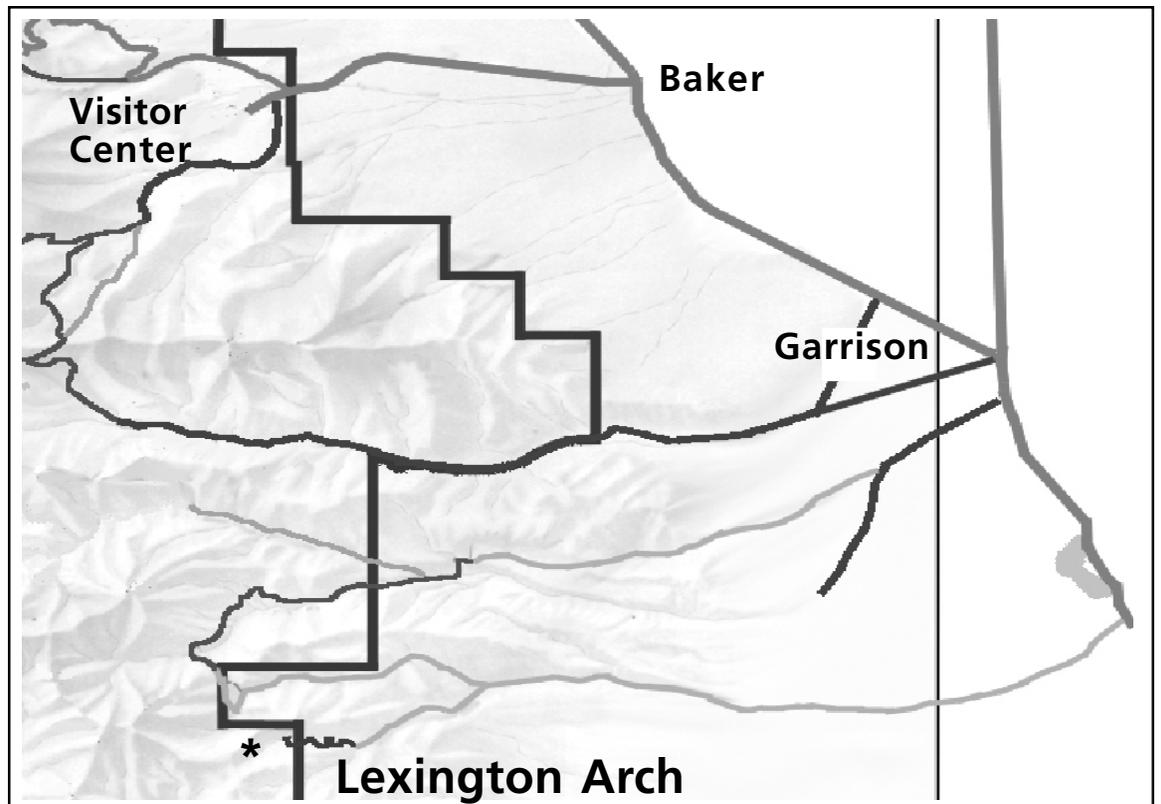
Getting There

To reach Lexington Arch from the Visitor Center, drive east to Baker on Nevada 488, a distance of 5.5 miles (8.9 km). In Baker turn right (south) onto Nevada 487.

Drive south 10.7 miles (17.2 km). On this stretch you will cross the state line into Utah, at which point NV 487 becomes Utah 21. Pass through the town of Garrison, and then pass Pruess Lake located on the right (west).

Look for the first dirt road on the right just south of Pruess Lake, posted for Lexington Arch. Proceed west 12.0 miles (19.3 km). The road will branch in a few places.

At each fork look for the sign indicating the correct direction. The road ends in a small parking area with a sign indicating the trail to Lexington Arch.



Hiking with Your Dog

The trail to Lexington Arch is mostly in the Humbolt-Taiyobe National Forest, finishing with the last quarter mile in the park. Because of this an exception has been made for the Lexington Arch trail regarding dogs on the trail. Dogs, on a

leash and under the control of the owner, are now permitted on the Lexington Arch trail all the way to the trail terminus.

Leave No Trace



Leave No Trace is a national program to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. Following the six principles of Leave No Trace helps to both make your trip into the backcountry a safe trip with minimal impact on the resource.

For more information on the Leave No Trace program and Leave No Trace workshops, visit their web site at www.lnt.org, call (800) 332-4100, or write to P.O. Box 997, Boulder, CO 80306.

The six principles of Leave No Trace are:

1. **Plan Ahead and Prepare**
2. **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**
3. **Dispose of Waste Properly**
4. **Leave What You Find**
5. **Minimize Campfire Impacts**
6. **Respect Wildlife**