THE BLOCKS - SAN RAFAEL SWELL

Rating: Easy Hiking, Moderate Route Finding.

Length: 4-6 hours.

Maps: The Blocks, UT

Season: Any, although summers could be hot.

Waypoints:

Trailhead	12S 517696mE 4303349mN N38° 52' 44" W110° 47' 46"
Overlook	12S 517304mE 4305476mN N38° 53' 53" W110° 48' 02"
Drill Hole	12S 515740mE 4305723mN N38° 54' 01" W110° 49' 07"

Hype

The Blocks, just north of I-70 in the Swell has always intrigued me. The topo map shows an area of large towers, and impressively deep canyons along the way. The area doesn't disappoint. En route to The Blocks, you are treated to outstanding views of deep canyons and far off domes and towers. This is a hike to be enjoyed by those craving open space, and sweeping views. Part of the hike follows and ATV trail, but don't let that deter you. Once off the ATV trail, this area is seldom visited. Begin the hike at sunrise for amazing photographic opportunities as the sun's first rays light the domes on fire.

Tags: hike, dog friendly, access: high clearance

Trailhead

Note: You used to be able to get off the freeway near Dutchman arch. This is no longer the case, you now need to follow the longer directions listed below.

Take exit 131 from I-70 (about 30 miles west of Green River). Go south off the freeway.

- Reset your odometer on the south side of the freeway. (12S 529655mE 4303563mN / N38° 52' 50" W110° 39' 29")
- 3.8 miles from the freeway you will find a signed junction for Head of Sinbad. Go right at this junction toward Head of Sinbad. (12S 525540mE 4299475mN / N38° 50' 37" W110° 42' 20")

- 1.0 miles past this junction a road comes in on the left, stay right. (12S 524095mE 4298719mN / N38° 50' 13" W110° 43' 21")
- Stay on this main road for 3.4 more miles (4.4 from the first junction) to a signed junction to Dutchman Arch. (12S 519546mE 4301513mN / N38° 51' 44" W110° 46' 29")
- Go right, crossing under the freeway in 0.5 miles. (12S 519168mE 4302140mN / N38° 52' 04" W110° 46' 45")
- After the freeway the road branches into several forks, you should go left on road #641, following the fence a short distance then turning north. 0.2 miles from the highway is a junction, go left and Dutchman Arch will be on your right in 0.5 miles. (12S 518799mE 4302532mN / N38° 52' 17" W110° 46' 60")
- Continue past Dutchman Arch 0.7 miles (1.2 from the crossing under the highway) to a parking place on the left before the road climbs a small hill and deteriorates, becoming a difficult 4x4 trail. Park here off the road. (12S 517697mE 4303348mN / N38° 52' 44" W110° 47' 46")

Route

From the trailhead, follow the ATV/4x4 trail. About 5 minutes from the car, you will find an information kiosk with a map of the area, and information on the Devils Racetrack Trail. Chimney Rock Dome is the large dome a short distance away to your left. It is perched high above the south fork of Coal Wash, and provides a visible landmark you can see for most of the hike.

Continue along the trail (trail #641) about 45-60 minutes until you reach a fabulous overlook on your right into the north fork of Coal Wash. This is one of the most amazing views on the hike and makes a great short break. Just past the overlook (1 minute), there is a wooden fence on the left (west) blocking an old road. Go behind the fence, following the vague road. Although a bit vague at first, it becomes more defined as it winds its way out to an old drill hole site. Follow the road to its end at the drill hole. (90 minutes from the trailhead).

At the drill hole, The Blocks are easily visible a short distance away. Getting to them is very easy, simply hike cross country. Beware, though, finding the drill hole on the return is a little trickier because there are no obvious landmarks. Pay attention to your route out to The Blocks, so you can reverse it when done.

Once at The Blocks, it's a very easy area to wander around, visiting the various towers and domes. If time permits, you can also hike due south to the rim of the south fork of Coal Wash, which presents some great views. When finished return the way you came.

Drill Hole

Overlook

Trailhead