



DAVIS GULCH - HOLE IN THE ROCK ROAD



Rating: Moderate Hike

Length: 6-7 hours (2 or so if using the climbers exit)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear, short 15 m (50 ft.) rope recommended.

Maps: Davis Gulch, UT;

Water: Varies from little to quite a bit. Wetsuits recommend in cold seasons.

Flash Flood Danger: Moderate in the short upper slot section

Season: Spring, Fall, Winter

Notes: Sadly my camera gave out just after the slot section. This is a stunning canyon for photography, be sure to bring extra batteries... ;)

Waypoints:

Trailhead	12S 502304mE 4122853mN N37° 15' 08" W110° 58' 26"
Canyon	12S 502315mE 4122995mN N37° 15' 13" W110° 58' 26"
Easy Exit	12S 502464mE 4123371mN N37° 15' 25" W110° 58' 20"
Moki	12S 502591mE 4124387mN N37° 15' 58" W110° 58' 15"
Bement Arch	12S 503095mE 4126384mN N37° 17' 03" W110° 57' 54"
Exit	12S 504356mE 4128185mN N37° 18' 01" W110° 57' 03"

Hype

Davis Gulch offers the non-technical canyoneer a technical canyoneering experience, and is one not to be missed by the experienced desert hiker. Technical canyoneers will probably find the slot section short and not as dramatic as many other technical slot canyons, but the exit hike is very worthwhile. The full route exits below Bement Arch, one of the showcase arches in the area. Keep an eye out, many believe Davis Gulch to be the last area Everett Ruess was visiting.

Are you a climber? Looking for a short, sporty evening route? Davis Gulch fits the bill. Just after the slot section, a moki step exit on the left (west) side offers those with the skills an elegant short route back to the car. **The Moki exit is NOT RECOMMENDED for non-climbers. Though relatively easy, a fall could easily have fatal consequences. I would rate it at 5.6 or 5.7, no gear possible, and a bit sandy and insecure in spots.**

Note: This is a long way down the Hole In The Rock Road. Be sure to have enough food, water, fuel and supplies with you in case you have any problems. One frosty January weekend we visited only to

have the roads thaw while we were out hiking during the day. We BARELY made it back to pavement after letting the roads harden a bit overnight and driving out before dawn. Rain, melting snow, etc.. can all quickly make this impassable.

Water: The slot section has been dry or with just knee deep water when I have visited, but there are reports it can hold a lot of water after recent rains. If the top section of slot has pools, the bottom section will have even more!

Tags: hike, intermediate, access: high clearance

Trailhead

Head east out of the town of Escalante about 5 miles on highway 12 until the well signed Hole in the Rock road. Reset the odometer at the mileage sign on the Hole in the Rock road (0.3 miles from the highway), and travel down the Hole in the Rock road. There are many side roads that leave the Hole in the Rock Road, stay straight (on the main road), paralleling the Kaiparowits Plateau. Generally the road is passable by most vehicles (high clearance recommended), but usually deteriorates the farther you get from pavement.

At 51.6 miles, pass a cattle guard and fence as the road descends to the head of Davis Gulch. Park off the road at about 51.8 where the wash crosses the road. This is the trailhead, with the obvious slickrock drainage to the north. There is good camping next to the road, few venture this far down the Hole In The Rock road.

Route

Canyon Section (4-5 hours)

Let the fun begin! From the trailhead, follow the wash north as it begins cutting into sandstone. This first section has some down climbs, but is straightforward. It soon opens offering and escape. If the top section seemed hard, take the exit. The final section of slot is the hardest.

The final section of slot drop and narrows quickly. Some may need to use the rope as a handline in 2-3 spots, but a little teamwork will prevail. Experienced canyoneers will likely find these drops easy downclimbs.

The slot ends abruptly, and the canyon opens. The Moki step exit is easily visible on the left just after the narrows. Experts only! All others, continue the stroll down the canyon. The going is easy, and the canyon magnificent, with big undercuts and towering walls.

Bement Arch is the next landmark, and stunning. It is best photographed from the upstream side. It marks about the 1/2 point of the canyon. Stay on the developing hikers trail for easiest passage through the brush down the canyon. An old fence on the north wall marks the exit, not far above the high water mark of Lake Powell.

Exit (1.5-2 hours)

From the fence, follow an old cattle trail and cairns to the rim. One on top, an emerging trail here heads southwest away from Davis Gulch to avoid the many small drainages that drain into it. If you lose the trail, just head south/southwest toward Fifty Mile Point and intersect the road, then follow the road east to the trailhead.

