



THE FRYING PAN - **CAPITOL REEF**



Rating: Moderate Hike

Length: 3-4+ hours / about 5 miles depending on options

Gear: Standard Hiking

Maps: Fruita, UT;

Water: None, bring all you need.

Season: Fall, Winter, Spring

Waypoints:

Trailhead (Hickman Bridge)	12S 480095mE 4237869mN N38° 17' 19" W111° 13' 39"
Cohab Canyon Trailhead	12S 478469mE 4237218mN N38° 16' 58" W111° 14' 46"
Cohab Junction	12S 479485mE 4237570mN N38° 17' 09" W111° 14' 04"
Cassidy Junction	12S 480332mE 4235171mN N38° 15' 52" W111° 13' 29"
Grand Wash Junction	12S 481322mE 4235312mN N38° 15' 56" W111° 12' 49"
Grand Wash Trailhead	12S 481117mE 4235100mN N38° 15' 49" W111° 12' 57"
Grand Wash Lower Trailhead	12S 483182mE 4236699mN N38° 16' 41" W111° 11' 32"

Hype

The Frying Pan Trail connects either Hickman Bridge trailhead or Cohab Canyon trailhead on the Scenic Drive to Grand Wash. The trail is a stunning hike across a mesa with picturesque distant views and many up close towers and hoodoos to see along the way. It is an excellent hike, though would be miserable when it's hot in the summer. Perhaps summer heat is why it is called the Frying Pan? Sizzle! Plan this one for spring/fall, or in the winter if there is no snow.

There are a few ways to do this hike. If going from the top Cohab Canyon (near the Capitol Reef Campground) to Grand Wash, the hike requires a 3.5 mile car/bike shuttle or hitchhike. This is GENERALLY an easy hitchhike during busy times of the year. This makes a good route, but I would highly recommend spotting a car at the **BOTTOM** of [Grand Wash](#) and biking, or hitchhiking the 2.5 miles from there to the Hickman Bridge Trailhead. Doing the route this way sees the Frying Pan Trail, then finishes by seeing Grand Wash as well, all in a 5-7 hour day suitable for most fit hikers. The amble down Grand Wash makes for a nice finish after spending the day up on the mesa tops.

The hike is described from Hickman Bridge to the bottom of Grand Wash. See the Cohab Canyon trail if wanting to start from that trailhead. The map shows both options. Times are for average paced hikers, not stopping for many photos. You can easily spend most of a day visiting the side trips and taking photos of the scenery along the way.

Tags: hike, fall colors, family friendly, beginner, access: paved, access: 2wd

Trailhead

Hickman Bridge Trailhead (Recommended Start Trailhead)

From the Visitor Center, travel east on Highway 24 about 2 miles to the signed Hickman Bridge trailhead on the north (left) side of the road (mile post 81.2). There is a pit toilet here.

Cohab Canyon Trailhead

To reach the trailhead, go past the Capitol Reef visitor center 1.3 miles on the scenic drive. The Cohab Canyon trail is signed. Find parking where you can. There are a few spots along the road.

Upper Grand Wash Trailhead

From the visitor center, take the scenic drive. It passes several visitor attractions at 1.0 miles, and the campground at 1.2. At 1.6 miles is a fee station. Currently (2010) the fee is \$5 per car, or free with a National Parks pass. Continue to 3.4 miles where Grand Wash is on the left. Follow the Grand Wash road 1.2 miles to it's end. En route down Grand Wash, at 0.75 miles, you will see the Cassidy Arch viewpoint. This is a nice stop to see the arch from below before starting the hike.

Lower Grand Wash Trailhead (Recommended Exit Trailhead)

From the Visitor Center, travel east on Highway 24 about 5 miles to the signed Grand Wash trailhead at mile post 83.9.

Route

To Cohab Canyon (0.5 miles / 15-20 minutes)

From the Hickman Bridge trailhead, cross the highway bridge over the Fremont River, and go west a couple of minutes to where the bottom end of the Cohab Canyon trail leaves the highway and climbs to the south. After 10 or so minutes (0.5 miles) a junction is reached. Right goes up through Cohab Canyon and then descends to the Capitol Reef Campground. Go left here, on the Frying Pan trail.

Note: In addition to the route through Cohab Canyon, a side trail climbs up to the north to a viewpoint, and is worth the time if you have the energy (0.5 miles round trip).

Why the name Cohab Canyon?

The canyon received its name from the early Mormon settlers who occasionally fled to the canyon to avoid federal officers who pursued them over their polygamist beliefs. -John W. Van Cott

To Cassidy Arch Side Trail (2.6 miles / 1.5 hours)

The Frying Pan trail meanders up and across the mesa. Be sure to look behind you now and again for amazing views of the Navajo domes in the distance. After passing a small tower, the trail descends into an unnamed canyon and re-ascends the other side, then meanders down with views of Grand Wash and Ferns Nipple before reaching the Cassidy Arch side trail junction. It is 2.6 miles from the Cohab Canyon junction to the Cassidy side trail junction. If you have not seen Cassidy Arch before, it is worth the 0.5 mile round trip to visit it.

To Grand Wash (1 mile / 30 minutes)

The Frying Pan trail now descends to Grand Wash over about a mile, with great views of Grand Wash along the way.

Down Grand Wash (2 miles / 60 minutes)

If the lower Grand Wash trailhead is your exit plan, head down Grand Wash. It is an easy and popular stroll down the wash bottom. Though never a slot, it has some good narrows midway through.

Up Grand Wash (10 minutes)

If the upper Grand Wash trailhead is your exit plan, turn right at the junction. The trailhead is less than 10 minutes up canyon.

