



SAND CREEK FALLS - TORREY



Rating: Easy Hike

Length: 2-3 hours (3 miles round trip)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: Torrey, UT;

Water: Running at the falls

Season: Any, can be icy in the winter.

Waypoints:

Trailhead

12S 459187mE 4245387mN

N38° 21' 21" W111° 28' 02"

Old Fence

12S 459554mE 4246964mN

N38° 22' 12" W111° 27' 47"

Side Trail

12S 459632mE 4247080mN

N38° 22' 16" W111° 27' 44"

Falls

12S 459509mE 4247136mN

N38° 22' 17" W111° 27' 49"

Hype

I have heard Sand Creek Falls compared to Calf Creek Falls in its beauty. This, in my opinion, is a pretty big stretch! The falls are short and beautiful but don't even come close to the stunning Lower Calf Creek Falls. Sand Creek Falls, on the other hand, sees very few visitors and offers an off the beaten path feel that you will certainly never encounter at Calf Creek!

The falls hike can be done year around, though would be difficult with much snow on the ground, and can be blistering hot during peak summer season. The pictures in this description are from a Thanksgiving trip. The ice and plunge pool at the bottom of the falls were an exquisite treat.

Note: Reaching the trailhead requires high clearance. Two roads are shown on the map, though only the northern route is described. Both are about the same, with several rough spots. On one spring trip, the road was bad enough we had to move rocks to get a Jeep Grand Cherokee to the trailhead. On the last trip, the road was a fair bit better, but still likely required four wheel drive.

Tags: *hike, fall colors, dog friendly, family friendly, beginner, access: 4x4*

Trailhead

On the west side of the town of Torrey, turn north onto Sand Creek road. This is well signed. Reset your odometer as you turn onto Sand Creek Road off of highway 24. (The main road through Torrey)

- 0.75 miles - Junction, go left onto the dirt road. (12S 462190mE 4240290mN / N38° 18' 36" W111° 25' 57")
- 1.5 miles - North / South Route Jct just after crossing Sand Creek. Go right. (12S 461321mE 4241240mN / N38° 19' 06" W111° 26' 33")
- 2.3 miles - Junction. Go left toward Sand Creek. (12S 461481mE 4242320mN / N38° 19' 41" W111° 26' 26")
- 2.5 miles - Minor side road. Stay left on the main road. (12S 461237mE 4242402mN / N38° 19' 44" W111° 26' 37")
- 3.6 miles - Junction. Southern route joins up here. Head right on the main road as it soon passes some water system equipment. (12S 460009mE 4242943mN / N38° 20' 01" W111° 27' 27")
- 3.9 miles - Junction, stay left on the main road. (12S 459755mE 4243432mN / N38° 20' 17" W111° 27' 38")
- 4.5 miles - Junction. Go left, crossing Sand Creek quickly. (12S 459299mE 4244265mN / N38° 20' 44" W111° 27' 57")
- 5.25 miles - Trailhead on the right. (12S 459188mE 4245387mN / N38° 21' 21" W111° 28' 02")

Route

From the trailhead, follow the trail as it almost immediately crosses Sand Creek. This was clearly an old road at some point but has washed out badly in sections. Follow the trail as it meanders up along Sand Creek. The trail is deeply rutted in several sections; it was likely used (or is still used) to move livestock from the valley up to Thousand Lake Mountains.

The red and white cliff ahead to the left is stunning and dramatic. For orientation, the falls are on the far right side of this cliff band, just at the top of the red (Wingate) sandstone layer.

The trail steepens, and passes through an old fence at about 1.2 miles. This is an important landmark. About 0.1 miles past the fence (a few minutes) begin looking for a cairned side trail on the left. This is also the point you should be able to hear the falls and even catch a glimpse of them.

There were (as of 2016) two side trails here. Both are steep and a mix of human and animal prints. Pick either one and follow it as it descends to Sand Creek. The falls are visible at several points on the way down. A little bushwacking may be required to get to the base of the falls, depending on which social trail you chose!

