



ARCH CANYON RUIN - CEDAR MESA



Rating: Roadside Attraction

Length: less than 1 hour (2 miles)

Maps: Hotel Rock, UT

Season: Any

Notes: High clearance vehicles can drive right to the ruin, those in low clearance vehicles may have to walk to last 1/4 mile.

Waypoints:

Fenced Ruin	12S 617342mE 4156322mN N37° 32' 47" W109° 40' 18"
Ruin	12S 617206mE 4156446mN N37° 32' 51" W109° 40' 23"
Ruin	12S 617122mE 4156572mN N37° 32' 55" W109° 40' 27"
Ruin	12S 616215mE 4156800mN N37° 33' 03" W109° 41' 04"

Hype

Arch Canyon Ruin is a family friendly roadside attraction. Most vehicles can drive within 100 feet of the ruin, others may need to walk the last 1/4 mile. The ruin itself is somewhat vandalized, but still an interesting visit. The views in all directions for the ruin are magnificent. This is a good stop if in the area, or passing through.

On my first visit, I stopped at the first ruins. Good, but not great. After, I had several people e-mail me that better ruins were to be seen, just up the canyon. Alas, I finally got back to check them out. From the Fenced Ruins, there are several other ruins within a short hike that are very good and well worth seeing. Some are calling these "Beaver Pond Ruins", but the locals refer to all three sets on the map simply as the Arch Canyon ruins. A great place to spend an afternoon.

If you have a bit of extra time, [Walnut Knob Panel](#) is worth the hike and starts from the same trailhead.

Tags: *roadside, rock art, indian ruins, family friendly, access: 2wd*

Trailhead

Note: Accessing the trailhead crosses Tribal Lands, posted no trespassing. The road is legal to travel, however please be respectful and do not park, camp, or hike on the tribal lands.

Begin at mile post 107 on highway 95. This is 107 miles south east of Hanksville, or about 18 miles south west of Blanding. To reach the area from Blanding, travel south out of Blanding about 3.5 miles to the junction with highway 95. Go right onto 95 about 14 miles to mile post 107.

- Turn off highway 95 north onto San Juan County road #205. (12S 618724mE 4152478mN / N37° 30' 42" W109° 39' 24")
- 2.3 miles - Go left into Arch Canyon. Park anywhere here. (12S 617906mE 4156079mN / N37° 32' 39" W109° 39' 55")

There are several camping spots here. High clearance vehicles can continue into Arch Canyon about 1/4 of a mile to the well signed ruin on the right.

Route

Rock Art and Historic Site Etiquette

Rock art and historic sites are fragile, non-renewable cultural resources that, once damaged, can never be replaced. To ensure they are protected, please:

- Avoid Touching the Petroglyphs: Look and observe, BUT DO NOT TOUCH!
- Stay on the Trails: Stay on the most used trails when visiting sites, and don't create new trails or trample vegetation.
- Photography and Sketching is Allowed: Do not introduce any foreign substance to enhance the carved and pecked images for photographic or drawing purposes. Altering, defacing, or damaging the petroglyphs is against the law -- even if the damage is unintentional.
- Pets: Keep pets on a leash and clean up after them.
- Artifacts: If you happen to come across sherds (broken pottery) or lithics (flakes of stone tools), leave them where you see them. Once they are moved or removed, a piece of the past is forever lost.

As with all historical artifacts, please don't touch, or climb on the ruins. Good camping at the mouth of Arch Canyon makes this a great place to spend a weekend. If in the area, Hotel Rock and the Walnut Knob Petroglyph panel are great to visit as well.

Above the fenced ruins, are two other ruins and panels just up the canyon. The easiest way to visit them is to hug the bank and walk upstream from the fenced ruins, escaping out to the right onto slickrock slopes as soon as you can. It is a bit of a thrash but short-lived. The first set of ruins is obvious and has a great panel. For the next set, follow the social trail north-west along the cliff to the somewhat hidden ruins.

Most will not want to re-visit the willow thrash, it is easier to return from the second set of ruins by heading cross country directly south to the rough 4x4 track and following it back. Still have more energy? Go up the 4x4 track 10-15 minutes to the second place the road makes a left-hand bend. There are ruins here on the right a short distance off the road. Follow the social trail.

