



BRIMHALL ARCH - WATERPOCKET FOLD



Rating: Moderate Hike

Length: 4.5 miles / 3-5 hours

Gear: Standard hiking gear, drybag

Maps: Deer Point, UT;

Water: One big pool a few minutes before the arch. Plan on swimming.

Flash Flood Danger: Low except in a few short sections.

Season: Fall, Spring

Waypoints:

Trailhead	12S 506165mE 4174516mN N37° 43' 04" W110° 55' 48"
Graffiti	12S 505825mE 4175091mN N37° 43' 23" W110° 56' 02"
Halls Creek	12S 505314mE 4174761mN N37° 43' 12" W110° 56' 23"
Rock Ladder	12S 504783mE 4174360mN N37° 42' 59" W110° 56' 45"
Pool	12S 504698mE 4174499mN N37° 43' 04" W110° 56' 48"
Arch View	12S 504342mE 4174341mN N37° 42' 59" W110° 57' 03"

Hype

For an advertised park route, this one surprised me with its sporty nature! The route, tucked at the south end of the park, is seldom trodden but offers excellent views of the Waterpocket Fold and an impressive arch to boot. Be prepared, however, this one is for experienced hikers only. En route, you'll climb an exposed rock pile /ladder, as well as a likely short and bitterly cold swim before getting within sight of the arch. Good fun for the desert aficionado, not so much for the uninitiated.

Be sure to bring a drybag or others means of shuttling clothes and cameras across the pool. You will likely be full on swimming, and take it from the voice of experience, you're not likely to want to re-swim it when you realize you left your camera with the pile of extra dry clothes on the downstream side....

Note: The trailhead is just inside the park boundary, and thus no camping. A few hundred feet before the trailhead, and at several spots along the road to the trailhead are excellent primitive camping spots.

Tags: hike, advanced, access: high clearance

Trailhead

Travel east out of Capitol Reef National Park on highway 24. Just past the park, 0.25 miles, is the well signed Notom road.

- Reset your odometer as you turn on to the Notom Road. (12S 488766mE 4237257mN / N38° 16' 60" W111° 07' 42")
- 7.7 Cross Burro Wash (12S 491754mE 4226057mN / N38° 10' 57" W111° 05' 39")
- 9.0 Cottonwood Wash Turn Off (12S 492222mE 4224163mN / N38° 09' 55" W111° 05' 20")
- 10.0 Five Mile (12S 492659mE 4222775mN / N38° 09' 10" W111° 05' 02")
- 12.7 sheets gulch trailhead 10:04 (12S 493747mE 4218694mN / N38° 06' 58" W111° 04' 17")
- 13.6 Sandy Ranch Junction - go right (12S 493907mE 4217293mN / N38° 06' 12" W111° 04' 10")
- 13.8 Stay Right (12S 494098mE 4216859mN / N38° 05' 58" W111° 04' 02")
- 15.2 Stay Straight (12S 494085mE 4215042mN / N38° 04' 59" W111° 04' 03")
- 16.3 Cattle Guard Stay Straight (12S 494292mE 4213481mN / N38° 04' 09" W111° 03' 54")
- 19.0 Cattle Guard (12S 494227mE 4209220mN / N38° 01' 50" W111° 03' 57")
- 21.2 Cedar Mesa Campground (12S 492761mE 4206627mN / N38° 00' 26" W111° 04' 57")
- 24.8 Bitter Creek Divide (12S 494269mE 4201193mN / N37° 57' 30" W111° 03' 55")
- 32.6 Burr Trail Junction - Stay left (12S 498876mE 4189808mN / N37° 51' 21" W111° 00' 46")
- 34.4 Surprise Canyon Trailhead (12S 500987mE 4187885mN / N37° 50' 18" W110° 59' 20")
- 34.9 Headquarters Canyon Trailhead and The Post side road. Stay left. (12S 502184mE 4186128mN / N37° 49' 21" W110° 58' 31")
- 43.6 Junction, go right toward Bullfrog (12S 508099mE 4179108mN / N37° 45' 33" W110° 54' 29")
- 44.4 Turn off to Halls Creek Overlook. Reset odometer as you turn off the main road. (12S 508000mE 4177705mN / N37° 44' 48" W110° 54' 33")
- 0.1 Stay Left (12S 507756mE 4177654mN / N37° 44' 46" W110° 54' 43")
- 2.5 go right. Follow this short and very rough side road to its end in less than 1/2 mile. There is a picnic table and sign at the trailhead. (12S 506386mE 4174733mN / N37° 43' 11" W110° 55' 39")

Route

From the trailhead, follow the signed Brimhall Arch trail. It is easy to follow as it descends a bit and heads north before making a quicker and steeper descent down to Halls Creek. There are some old cowboy signatures along the way. This must have been an incredibly isolated place to be passing though back in the early 1900's!

Once at Halls Creek, cross it and head downstream. There are quite a few social trails here, pick one and head down a few minutes to the first side canyon coming in on the right.

History Note:

In 1879, a Mormon expedition made the Hole-In-The-Rock crossing on their way to settle southeastern Utah. One member of the expedition was Charles Hall. After the expedition Charles Hall created a ferry at Halls crossing (about 30 miles upstream from Hole-In-The-Rock) in 1882. The old wagon road that meanders down Halls Creek was constructed to support the ferry and allow settlers to cross the Colorado.

The ferry created a small settlement at the mouth of Halls Creek (under the waters of Lake Powell now), but the settlement and ferry were abandoned after only a couple of years. Charles Hall was also prominent in helping create other settlements, including Escalante and Parowan.

If you look closely, you can see section of this road as you near Halls Creek though it is mostly overgrown now.

Hiking up the side canyon, keep an eye out for an alcove on the left. On the west side of this alcove are some old moki steps presumably used to visit the alcove as well as some very faint Indian art.

Continuing up from the alcove, the fun begins at a dryfall and plunge pool. A stack of rocks allows careful passing of this obstacle on the right. Be very careful both going up and coming down, the pile is a bit more unstable on the way down than the way up!

Shortly up from the rock pile, the canyon makes a left and narrows as it cuts between the cliffs. This is the second obstacle, the arctic swimming pool. On my trip, it was crystal clear and way over my head. You will likely be swimming, then need to do a few 4th class scramble moves to escape the other side. Be sure everything that needs to be dry bagged is.
(and don't leave your camera on the big rock downstream of this if you want pictures of the arch.. ;))

The canyon quickly opens, follow it up around a major bend to the right by hiking along the bank. Brimhall Arch is visible shortly above this bend on the left. The arch is said to have a greater than 120' span in the largest span. Stunning!

Return the same way.

