



## SOUTH FORK OF MULE CANYON - CEDAR MESA



**Rating:** Moderate Hike

**Length:** 5-7 hours (9.1 miles)

**Gear:** Standard Hiking Gear

**Maps:** South Long Point, UT; Hotel Rock, UT

**Water:** Intermittent stream, filter if drinking

**Season:** Any, hot in the summer

**Waypoints:**

Trailhead	12S 612018mE 4155245mN N37° 32' 15" W109° 43' 55"
R1	12S 610916mE 4155922mN N37° 32' 37" W109° 44' 40"
R2	12S 609667mE 4156788mN N37° 33' 06" W109° 45' 30"
R3	12S 608874mE 4157009mN N37° 33' 13" W109° 46' 03"
R4	12S 608546mE 4157295mN N37° 33' 23" W109° 46' 16"
Big Ruin	12S 607925mE 4157668mN N37° 33' 35" W109° 46' 41"
Wall Ruin	12S 607850mE 4158152mN N37° 33' 51" W109° 46' 44"
R5	12S 607461mE 4158125mN N37° 33' 50" W109° 46' 60"
Doorway Ruin	12S 607125mE 4158254mN N37° 33' 54" W109° 47' 13"

### Hype

South Mule makes a great introduction to ruins on Cedar Mesa. The trailhead is close to the highway and can be walked to if needed, making this a good choice in the winter or anytime dirt roads might be difficult.

The hike is sublime, winding up South Mule passing many ruins of varying quality along the way. One of the first you will visit is the **House of Fire Ruin**, which is often photographed. The House of Fire Ruin is one of the more photogenic ruins in the area and stunning to visit, especially if the light is hitting is just right!

The ambitious can make a fairly long day (10 miles) out of it to see the full canyon. The less ambitious can turn around at any point, making this suitable for hikers of all ability. The first ruins are within 30 minutes of the trailhead, so you don't have to go far to see ruins.

Note: The area now requires a small BLM use fee. Dogs are allowed, but must be leashed.

*Tags: hike, rock art, indian ruins, access: 2wd*

## Trailhead

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Take highway 95 to milepost 101.8, which is 101.8 miles south-east from Hanksville, or about 23 miles west of Blanding.

- Reset your odometer as you leave the highway. ( 12S 611559mE 4155183mN / N37° 32' 13" W109° 44' 14" )
- Follow this road (County Road 263) 0.35 miles to where it crosses the South Fork of Mule Canyon. This is the trailhead, with several spots to park next to the road. ( 12S 612010mE 4155242mN / N37° 32' 15" W109° 43' 56" )

## Route

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### 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.

From the trailhead, start up South Mule. About a mile (20-30 minutes) from the trailhead, the first ruin is on the right. This is House of Fire Ruin. All the ruins are on the right (south facing) side of the canyon. Keep a sharp eye out, there are many ruins on various levels of the canyon.

About 3 miles from the trailhead, a pool and small dryfall force the trail up and out of the canyon floor on the south side. Follow the trail around the dryfall, and look for a big ruin a few minutes up the canyon on the right. It is well hidden by large trees, but a good landmark and very good ruin.

Continue up from the big ruin to the next side canyon coming in on the right. This side canyon contains Wall Ruin, a fantastic ruin. Follow the side canyon up about 5 minutes to the obvious ruin on the right (east) wall.

Continuing up in the main canyon, there are several more ruins shortly above the Wall Ruin side canyon. The most spectacular of these, Doorway Ruin, is in the next side canyon up from the Wall Ruin side canyon. Access is by going up the side canyon and traversing back to the ruin. Be careful, it is easy, but very exposed.

There is not much above Doorway Ruin, return the way you came.

Note: Because of the easy access and spectacular ruins, this area is receiving heavy use. Be sure to stay on social trails, and don't touch the ruins in order to preserve them for future visitors.

