



TEMPLE MOUNTAIN - EASTERN REEF



Rating: Easy/Moderate Hike

Length: 3-5 hours (6.5 miles)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: TEMPLE MOUNTAIN, UT

Water: None.

Season: Any, hot in the summer.

Waypoints:

Campground	12S 527434mE 4279919mN N38° 40' 03" W110° 41' 05"
Road Up	12S 527837mE 4279685mN N38° 39' 55" W110° 40' 48"
Mine	12S 528001mE 4280510mN N38° 40' 22" W110° 40' 41"
Mine	12S 528026mE 4281508mN N38° 40' 54" W110° 40' 40"
Old House	12S 528890mE 4281844mN N38° 41' 05" W110° 40' 04"
Jct - Left	12S 528148mE 4282751mN N38° 41' 35" W110° 40' 35"

Hype

The San Rafael Swell has a long history of mining. In the early 1900s, mining for uranium and other resources was taking place at Temple Mountain, one of the iconic peaks of the Southern Swell.

Demand for uranium faded, and most of the mines were left dormant from the 1920s until demand grew again after World War II. In the late 1940s, mining in the area boomed a second time. Between the late 1940s and the 1960s, the area was overrun with miners and associated works trying to find their mother lode. This second boom is what led to many of the roads in the San Rafael Swell that we use today. Miners carved roads into any desolate corner they thought might hold uranium.

Today, Temple Mountain is no longer actively mined, though mining claims in the area are still kept current in case another boom comes. These days the area has become popular with the ATV, motorcycle, mountain bike, and hiking crowds.

Note: The area is very popular with off-road vehicle enthusiasts. If hiking, and looking for more solitude, winter can be very pleasant and much less busy than early fall or late spring.

Note 2: Though this is described as a loop hike, just wandering near Temple Mountain has many shorter options for those looking for a smaller outing.

Tags: dog friendly, beginner, access: 2wd

Trailhead

Reach the trailhead by going west from Green River Utah on I-70 to the junction with highway 24 that goes to Hanksville. Go toward Hanksville for about 25 miles to Mile Post 135.

A signed road goes off to the west signed Goblin Valley. Turn onto this and reset your odometer.

5.1 miles to a junction. Go straight.

6.1 miles, two roads go off on the right to an old drill hole and the large panel. This is a nice quick side trip to the exquisite Temple Mountain Panel.

7.3 miles - Large Temple Mountain Campground on the right. This is the trailhead.

Route

Roads criss-cross and circle the mountain in all directions. My recommended route is to go counter-clockwise, especially if starting in the morning. This gives good lighting for photos.

From the campground, walk down the wash a couple of minutes to where a road crosses the wash and heads toward Temple Mountain. This is a popular camping area as well. Follow the road, which quickly turns to a rocky ATV track as it begins to climb toward Temple Mountain. At a junction, the road to the left goes to a major mine site. Stay right, climbing to the shoulder of Temple Mountain.

Once at the shoulder, stay on the most used road as it meanders across the small valley. The valley is littered with mining ruins worth short side trips to visit. Across the valley, the road reaches a notch with broad views of the summit of Temple Mountain high above.

From the notch, the road heads east and descends to the valley floor at an old house and car ruin. Continue on the well-traveled ATV trail north-west to the north side of Temple Mountain. Many smaller mining roads leave the main road. Ignore these until you are north of Temple Mountain and the side road is a very well traveled road.

Go left, as the road goes west, then south along Temple Mountain and back to the trailhead.

