


# TOM'S UTAH CANYONEERING GUIDE

## Archive

### Crack Canyon San Rafael Swell, Eastern Reef

<b>Rating:</b>	II-III Class 3 
<b>Best Season:</b>	Spring, summer or fall. About 50% full sun, so can be HOT mid-summer.
<b>Time:</b>	2 to 5 hours.
<b>Access:</b>	Starts and ends at the head of Crack Canyon as it enters the Reef; out and back hike.
<b>Permit:</b>	Not required.
<b>Equipment:</b>	No technical equipment required.
<b>Map:</b>	USGS 7.5' Temple Mountain, Goblin Valley. Easy navigation.
<b>Cold Protection:</b>	None required; after recent rain expecting wading and muddy conditions.
<b>Drinking Water:</b>	Bring plenty.
<b>Flash Flood Risk:</b>	Moderate—do not descend with thunderstorms in the area.
<b>Skills Required:</b>	Some short, moderate downclimbing about 8 feet tall. NOT dog friendly.

Crack Canyon is a very fine journey into the reef, with enough effort required to keep the riff-raff away. A nice variety of narrows sprinkled within a wider, dramatic canyon provides excellent entertainment. Occasional boulder problems add a little spice, but not much of a barrier, at least for fit individuals. The canyon cuts due south through the reef, and is only about 50% shaded, so high summer exploration is probably best in the early morning or evening. Like Little Wild Horse, walking through Crack Canyon and returning the same way makes a good half-day trip.

Crack *can* be combined with Chute Canyon for a 13 mile round trip. This is the Chute and Crack Loop Hike. However, this is not the most charming way to visit these canyons. The couple miles of travel across the front and back of the reef are not human being friendly. Finding the front of Chute requires good map reading skills.

**Approach:** From Temple Junction, drive north through the Reef on Temple Mountain Road 2.2 miles to the unmarked Behind the Reef Road. Turn left and drive 4.2 miles to the road/wash at Crack Canyon. Turn left again and park, or follow the road as far as your vehicle and common sense allow. (In most cases, this only gets you another .2 miles). (UTM 12S 0522356E 4276820N)

**Fun Stuff:** Follow the wash and road toward the reef and the obvious large and magnificent walls of the canyon. A ledge section can be passed easily on the right. After about 20 minutes, we come to the Crack Canyon Wilderness Study Area Boundary and parking for those with macho vehicles and attitudes to match. A few minutes past here we enter the life-giving shade.

Soon after is the first interesting narrows section - a 'subway' type double undercut at a delightful kid size scale. The first boulder problem is reached after another 20 minutes (about 45 minutes from the car). It is easier than it looks, as the rock is rough and frictiony. The first problem marks the start of another fun narrows section. (Dogs/kiddies can be handed down).

Information courtesy [CanyoneeringUSA.com](http://CanyoneeringUSA.com) ©2011 Imlay Canyon Gear All Rights Reserved

The canyon continues narrow and interesting for another mile or two, another 40 minutes. A ledge section containing several boulder problems can be avoided by a cairned trail on the left, a little difficult to find from the top. Our final narrows in this section is impressive - 10 feet wide and 100 feet straight up. Very nice. Be sure to check out the slot on the left at the end of the tall narrows. All but dedicated canyon rats will return to the car at this point. (UTM 12S 0523352E 4274303N)

OK, we've had great fun for an hour and a half. Unfortunately, the canyon changes nature at this point, spreads out and becomes less dramatic. There are still a few interesting sections, but generally we are talking wide, gravelly and fully exposed to the sun. Another hour of walking gets you to the last cool place, a cave-like undercut, 20 foot dry fall and short narrows. At this point, Crack Canyon enters the badlands in front of the Reef. Return upcanyon. (UTM 12S 0524001E 4273323N)

