

Ride Name: Arch Canyon

Arch Canyon is in the northern part of Comb Wash west of Blanding Utah along HWY 95. As you drop down into Comb Wash look for a dirt road heading north (see map) The trailhead is about 3 miles up this road. There is some parking under a few cottonwood trees, and the stream flows most of the year (it has when we've been there in the fall). There are some fantastic campsites across the stream if your rig can make it. If you have 4WD it will be no problem.

You can camp at the first cottonwoods right past the private property signs and not have to cross the stream. You will be camping right at the mouth of the canyon. Another option is to camp on the south side of HWY 95 at the BLM campground/dispersed camping. Mule Canyon can be ridden from there, and then trailer up to the Arch Canyon trailhead to ride that.

Blanding is only 15 miles away, good for groceries and having the occasional flat tire repaired, or even an emergency trip to the veterinarian. Yes, you guessed it, we've been there, done that!

The ride is on a multi-use trail. Expect to encounter the occasional ATV or motorcycle. It is an easy and level ride on a Jeep trail, with numerous creek crossings so there is plenty of water for your horses. Take time to follow the side trails as they lead to ruins not visible from the trail. There are also a many ruins high up on the canyon walls.

There are several other rides from the same camping area, too. Some are old Jeep trails, some is off trail riding up the wash and exploring. You can go over to Butler wash from there, too, which is to the east and has more ruins.

There are three arches in Arch Canyon, but we have never made it as far as the third one. The first arch is at about 8 miles, and the second one shortly after. There is a nice shady place under the ponderosas to have lunch where the jeep trail ends and a hiking trail begins just past the first arch.

This is a wonderful area to ride in both the spring and fall, and possibly warm winter spells too. In mid-May the gnats come out and can be very aggressive. By the end of September the temperatures are dropping to comfortable levels, and usually by the third week of October the cottonwoods are in their full autumn glory.

I'm not sure if people need driving directions or not, if they have a map they should be ok. We usually get there by going to Cortez, Monticello, then Blanding. It takes us about 4 hours hauling horses to get to Comb Wash. The whole area is great, it's almost all public land, an area larger than the Weminuche.





