


# TOM'S UTAH CANYONEERING GUIDE

## Archive

### Ding & Dang Canyons San Rafael Swell, Eastern Reef

<b>Rating:</b>	II Class 4 
<b>Best Season:</b>	Spring or fall. The approach and return is exposed to full sun, so it can be toasty in high summer.
<b>Time:</b>	4 to 6 hours.
<b>Access:</b>	Route starts and ends at the Little Wild Horse road, 1.25 miles past the Little Wild Horse Canyon parking lot.
<b>Permit:</b>	Not required.
<b>Equipment:</b>	No technical equipment required.
<b>Map:</b>	USGS 7.5' Little Wild Horse Mesa. Navigation is pretty easy.
<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>	High—do not descend with thunderstorms in the area, this canyon has extensive headwaters area that is not visible from the trailhead.
<b>Skills Required:</b>	There are several chockstones to be surmounted in descending Dang Canyon. Though not exposed, they do require some athleticism to descend. To ascend Dang Canyon requires bouldering past these at about 5.7.

**Approach:** From Temple Junction, take the Goblin Valley Road southwest along the face of the reef, to the junction just short of the entrance to Goblin Valley State Park. Take the good dirt road to the right for five miles to the prominent parking lot at Bell and Little Wild Horse Canyons. Continue another 1 and 1/4 miles to where a large wash comes in on the right and the road turns due south and heads toward Wild Horse Mesa. There is a short side road here leading to a few parking spots under some cottonwoods.

**The Business:** Ding and Dang make a great half-day circle trip up and down narrow and interesting canyons, with enough climbing obstacles to keep the riff raff at bay. If the group is a little daintier, a jaunt up Ding and back makes a splendid foray. This is the southern-most set of canyons accessed from the southeast side of the reef and the Goblin Valley Road.

From the parking spot, traipse up the prominent wash and follow it's course through the badlands of the fore-reef. This is a remarkably inhospitable zone of well-sculpted gravel, dirt and rock ridges, with little vegetation. Follow the wash about 1 mile across the stinking desert to the base of the reef. An amazingly symmetric ridge divides the wash into two equal parts - go right for Ding Canyon. ( Left goes 1/2 mile to the bottom of Dang Canyon ). You immediately enter the reef.

Follow this through various convolutions deep into the reef. There are several small obstacles, but none are terribly difficult. Near the entrance is a steep quartzite slab with many holds - no problem. Near the top of the canyon are some interesting deep potholes, and a little climb up a steep step above it is the most difficult problem ( class 3 ).

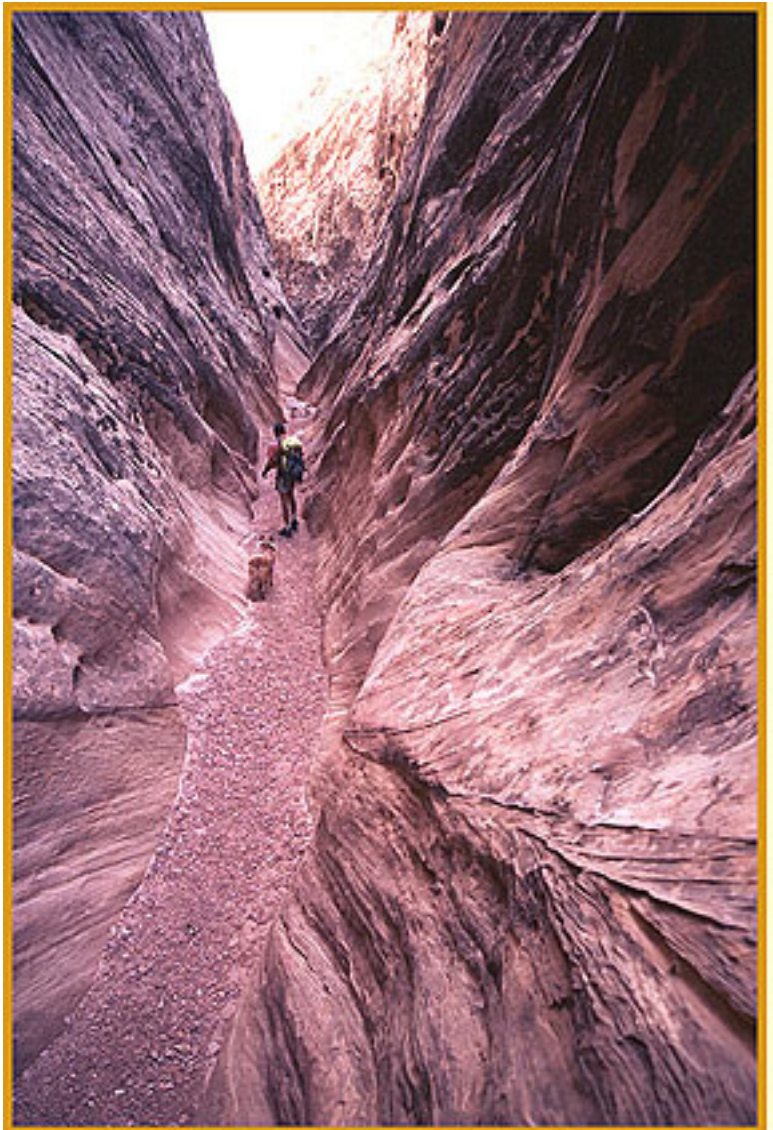


Chopper & Mike in Dang Canyon

The reverse direction is good fun - ascending Dang is more challenging than descending, with many 5.8ish boulder problems to surmount the many chockstones.

At the end of the canyon, follow a path and jeep trail to the left and between the craggy heap of Ding Dang Dome and the reef. Just past Ding Dang Dome one gets swept down into the top of Dang Canyon. There are old mining roads in this area, but it is hard to get to with a 4WD vehicle. This area is used occasionally by ATVers and dirt bikes.

**Descend Dang Canyon.** There are many chockstones in the canyon that require a little bit of climbing to get past. None are particularly high, but they do require a little bridging and shimmying to overcome. The deep cut, narrow canyon through the beautiful sandstone reef with gravel floors and the occasional puddle all make it very worthwhile. When you pop out on the front of the reef, follow the wash 1/2 mile back to the split and a further mile back to the car.



Interesting Rock Layers

