

Group size limit is 12.

Type:	There and back
Length:	3.5 rugged miles (5.3 km) each way
Time:	6-10 hours
Altitude Gain:	1000 feet (300 m)
Starts At:	Left Fork Trailhead, Kolob Reservoir road.
Shade:	Most of the hike is in the full sun.

Getting There

From Springdale, drive south and west 14 miles to the town of Virgin. Turn right on the Kolob Reservoir Road (KR road, sometimes called the Kolob Terrace (KT) road). The paved KR road winds through town, then climbs a dramatic ridge in making its way to Kolob Terrace. Six and a half miles from Virgin, the road enters the park and three trailheads are soon encountered – the Right Fork, Grapevine Springs, then the Left Fork. Park at the Left Fork Trailhead. The trailhead is not shown on many maps, but is close to the Bench Mark labeled BM 5248. Mileage from the town of Virgin is 8.6 miles. Driving time from Springdale is 45 minutes.

The Trail

Follow the trail into the woods. In 15 minutes, the trail comes out on the rim of the canyon, with a great view of the Left Fork and the Guardian Angels standing proud to the east. Follow the trail left along the rim to where it drops into the canyon. Take great care to stay on the path as it descends steeply to the canyon floor. The trail is steep and loose. At least one person has died here when they strayed from the trail and fell.

The Canyon Floor

At the bottom, turn around and make a careful mental note of where the trail up starts. You do NOT want to miss this on the way out. Cross the stream and turn left. This is a backcountry, off-trail route, so there is no official path, though well-established social trails provide easy passage for much of the canyon. Follow social trails up the main canyon, crossing the stream numerous times, for about two hours. The canyon starts wide and gradually narrows as it approaches The Subway. Close to The Subway, the stream gets more rugged and travel becomes slower and more difficult. Picking through a series of boulders and splashing up the stream, the intrepid Subway hiker finally comes to a series of Red Waterfalls, where the stream flows down slabs of dark red Kayenta sandstone. Hike up the slabs, then turn the corner and you are at the mouth of The Subway.

The Subway

"The Good Stuff" is a series of slots, alcoves, pools and waterfalls of marvelous beauty, about a third of which can be easily reached from the bottom. With a little swimming and climbing, all of the good stuff can be reached.

From the bottom, it starts with the **namesake** tunnel-like formation. The top is not closed over to form a true tunnel, but it almost feels like it is. The bulgy, round tunnel at the bottom of a slot curves into the rock, with the solid red floor spotted with pools, slots and flowing water. Be careful of your footing here, the rock can be very slippery. The pools are filled with clear, clean water and are only a few feet deep. In the fall, red and orange maple leaves accent the red rock and make the place almost psychedelic.

Around the corner, the canyon opens up a bit and larger pools block progress upcanyon. Swim the pools and explore the slot beyond. Be sure to step through the waterfall at the end and visit the waterfall-room behind the curtain. Those who are athletically inclined can boulder up to a ledge, then climb right on a series of ramps to gain access to more good stuff above this obstacle. A 60-foot (20 m) rope may be useful for belaying members of your party. Further up is the famous "Log in the Subway", plus a marvelous long corridor and Keyhole Falls.

The Siesta

If it is really hot out, a siesta in the cool area at the start of the Subway might be in order. Be sure to leave enough time to get ALL the way out before dark.

The Walk Out

Return the way you came. It takes parties two to four hours for the hike out. About halfway downcanyon, look for two large tumbledown boulders close to the water on the right. Their flat, gray faces hold many dinosaur tracks. This is a good place to stop for a snack and rest. Do NOT actually touch the dino tracks – they are in a soft layer of rock that is easily damaged.

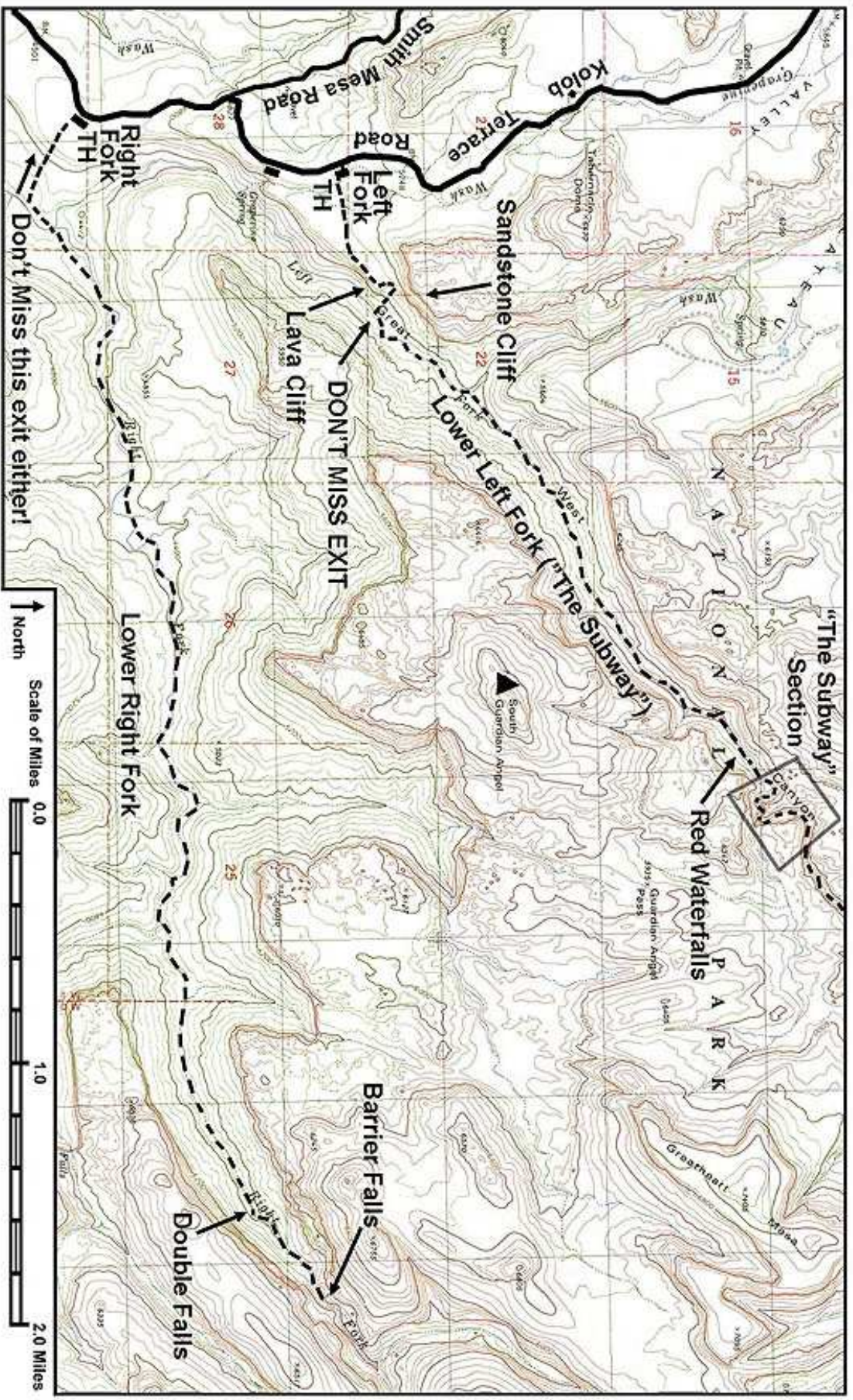
Another hour downcanyon and it's time for the steep climb up to the road. Missing the exit is easy, so make sure you pay attention. Two streams come into the Left Fork from the north (right). One third of a mile (1/2 km) past the second stream, the exit gully will be in front of you. The north (right) wall of the canyon is a 400-foot (120m), steep, tree-covered talus slope with 400-foot (120m) vertical sandstone wall above. Downstream, the sandstone at the top ends and a black lava cliff replaces the steep talus. The trail out climbs the crease below the left edge of the vertical sandstone where it meets the lava flow.

The climb out is extremely hot - the black rock traps the heat. Take a final dip in the stream before starting the steep, 400-foot climb. Find a well-established trail on the right side of the creek that starts up a gully. Do not begin the climb without finding the trail. At the top of the slope, the trail traverses left to the top of the lava flow and works its way left through ledges to the mesa top. Follow the trail through the pinon-juniper forest 1/2 mile (800m) to the parking area. Enjoy the ice-cold beverages you left in your cooler.

The Subway from the Bottom

Landmark	hours	hrs total	miles	miles total	km	km total
Left Fork Trailhead		0:00		0.0		0.0
Top of Steep Slope	0:15	0:15	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0
Bottom of Canyon	0:15	0:30	0.1	0.7	0.2	1.2
Start of Red Falls	2:00	2:30	2.0	2.7	3.2	4.4
Start of Subway	0:15	2:45	0.4	3.1	0.6	5.0
Play at the Subway	1:00	3:45	0.4	3.5	0.6	5.7
Return to Start of Steep Slope	1:45	5:30	2.4	6.0	3.9	9.6
Climb Steep Slope	0:20	5:50	0.1	6.1	0.2	9.8
Stroll to Carpark	0:20	6:10	0.6	6.7	1.0	10.7

KOLOB TERRACE - LOWER RIGHT FORK AND LOWER LEFT FORK (THE SUBWAY)



Don't Miss this exit either!

DON'T MISS EXIT

"The Subway" Section

Red Waterfalls

Barrier Falls

Double Falls