

Canyoneering

Nowhere, Utah, U.S.

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August 12, 2017 by [Scott Gilbertson](#)

From the Dolores River we headed west into Utah in search of the canyon that the women we met down by the river had told us about. It's not easy to find. The road is unmarked (at least the north end) and there are a series of roads that all basically look the same. After driving back and forth a few times I finally gave up and stopped at the nearest town and asked a woman at chamber of commerce how to get there. I was given some very vague directions with one particular thing to look for, which eventually proved to be the missing piece of information we needed.

Once we found it there was no trouble with getting lost, there was only one road running down a long canyon filled with petroglyphs and ruins that were, for the most part open to the world at large. There was also a fully restored kiva that we went down inside.

In a day's worth of driving we saw only one other car. It was just about the best canyon exploring I've ever done by car (hiking, that's another story) and the best ruins and petroglyphs we've seen. There were even modern houses with people living in them, rock caves used as barns, and enough other oddities to feel a bit like you were on another planet. There were no signs, no fences and no rules. Thank you very much to the women who pointed us here.

In the spirit of this place I do not want to ruin your chance for serendipitous discovery so I have stripped all the geodata from the images and I'm not publishing the name. If you're headed to the area and you want to be pointed in the right direction, [email me](#).



The entrance to the canyon.



There are ancient dwellings...



...and modern ones too.



Even some that look a little like our home.



Ever since I was a kid exploring the west with my parents I've wanted to climb up some ancient handholds, but for one reason or another I never have. Until now.









By far the highlight of the day for me was getting to go down inside a kiva. I can't properly convey what it was like to go down there, but what made it really special was that there was no one else around but us.





Self portrait in kiva

Back at camp the kids wasted no time in finding a nice rock outcropping under which to play ancient puebloans, hunting, grinding corn, building with rocks, even attempting to weave grass sandals.







2 Comments



Drew Eldridge September 01, 2017 at 1:12 p.m.

Those Kiva pictures are frame worthy! Im going to have to get that location from you if im ever out that way- Thats amazing. Without me googling it, do you have any clue how they made petroglyphs? Its almost like they bleached the rock. Surely its not just a carving or scrape technique is it?



[Scott](#) September 03, 2017 at 5:57 p.m.

@drew- I emailed you some info on the canyon.

As for petroglyphs, yup they're carved, the hard way. Pictographs, which will be in a post soon, are drawn.