

Texas / Big Bend Ranch SP

Closed Canyon

DISTANCE: 2 miles

ELEVATION GAIN: 400 feet

ROUTE TYPE: Out & Back / Loop

Descend into Closed Canyon's slot for a 1.8-mile round-trip trek from Big Bend's scenic River Road toward the Mexican border and the raging Rio Grande. The trail takes you into the mouth of the canyon as it winds its way back and forth deeper into the canyon.

There are some points where you have to climb down past some boulders or drop-offs to continue. The rock floor is slippery, especially since it is covered with loose dirt, so be sure to watch your footing. Near the end of the trail, there is a fairly high drop-off (maybe 12 feet). Jumping down to continue will be a lot easier than climbing back up and out, so use your judgment so you don't get yourself stranded.

If you have some rope and climbing shoes, it would be very helpful. Some climber has driven in a metal stake to tie off a rope to and there are some foot holds and places to grab/stand.

Don't let the moderate rating discourage you. The first half is very easy and totally worth it. After a short downhill you enter the stream bed which is dark sand/gravel with light boulders dotting it. The contrast is stunning and the walking is easy. It enters the slot canyon which is like a manicured path for a good distance. It gets progressively more difficult as you go, so you can simply turn back when you hit your comfort limit. You won't feel short changed. We had rain the previous day so the pools were deep and we turned around after the second one. I tried hard to reach the end, even waded waist deep across one, but finally gave up. We had a blast! Definitely a no go with possible rain. There would be no way out of a flash flood! It is narrow with vertical walls. Absolutely beautiful!

