

Texas / Big Bend NP

## Devil's Den

DISTANCE: 4.5 miles

ELEVATION GAIN: 400 feet

ROUTE TYPE: Out & Back

Devil's Den is a dramatic limestone slot canyon in the park's northern backcountry. Follow the trail towards Dog Canyon. After 1.5 miles take a side trail off to the right into a wash. In another 0.5 mile, take the large wash that intersects from the left which leads directly into Devil's Den. You may hike into the den, or hike up along the southern edge of the deep crevice for great views into the canyon. You can then enter the den and hike back through it. Small tinajas hold water during the rainy season.

Note the hike indicated by the red line on this map is an 'off road' hike. If you follow the official trail it is much longer – about 6 miles. We tried to follow the red trail but there is no marking and you just have to use your GPS and follow it as best you can I guess. The normal route is to follow the Dog trail and turn right about 1.5 miles in, as described in the hike description here on Alltrails, then go about 0.5 miles to pick up a wash (aka old dry stream). It was very hard to find that and luck picked out a couple of cairns. Ok it wasn't luck some other people told us about it saying this was there second attempt to find it. Actually most of the hike we ran into people trying to figure out where to go. Various people had told us to follow the wash and then "go up" when it is obvious. Well it wasn't obvious. A couple of times it was getting harder to hike so we went up...only to find there was a valley that cut through from the side and you scaled back down and then up again. Eventually it was too hard to figure the path (though really, you are in a river bed than dead ends in a canyon, you really can't get lost) so we went up – to our right. Found a nice easy path to walk along the canyon. You get a nice view of the canyon. There are some interesting rock formations. But if you go to the end...it really doesn't deliver an awesome pay off. Nice hike to see a small canyon, that is all. Different terrains than the mountain hikes in the park. On our return we tried again to follow the "red" hike on the map and could not find the trail and didn't like just crossing land (don't like to increase erosion).

We just finished hiking Devil's Den & Dog Canyon totaling about a 9.5 mile hike. It was spectacular and more than we expected. The Dog Canyon hike was easy, so we did that first then we followed the arroyo in the opposite direction and hiked pretty much half way into Devil's Den canyon climbing boulders and dodging scrub, but eventually decided to follow a backcountry map given to us by the park ranger that indicated we should then climb out of the canyon and hike the rest of the way along a marked path off the south rim of the canyon. Good call because it went a lot faster and we got to the end to see the vast open 360 view of the hills and canyon below. It was well worth it and even the risky technical climb getting out of the canyon itself and onto the trail was a challenge for myself and my companion. Great fun though!

The hike was fun and the weather was great. It was very remote and the desert is just beautiful. The canyon itself was not quite what I was expecting, as I was told that it was a slot canyon. It is not! We actually declined to hike in the canyon, there was so much vegetation down in it, and we didn't want to get poked and scraped any more than we had to. We hiked along the ridge of the canyon and that was nice.

