

Utah / Saint George

The Vortex

DISTANCE: 2.2 miles

ELEVATION GAIN: 500 feet

ROUTE TYPE: Out & Back

Forces of nature have shaped the sandstone of St. George for many, many years. The many canyons were formed by water, and the sandstone cliffs shaped as petrified sand dunes give a great texture to the whole picture. The vortex does not differ in its unique beauty. Located north of Snow Canyon, you can access this beautiful spot by either coming up the long dirt road from Gunlock, or down the shorter dirt road starting just north of Dammeron Valley. This hike came to our attention from an aunt who visits St. George to hike often. Because it is tucked away in a corner, we lived for nearly 14 years in St. George without even hearing about it. Just goes to show how much of a gem this trail truly.

Although we have taken little kids on this trail, the terrain stays mostly uphill all the way there. If you choose to bring the little ones along, be sure to keep a close eye on them as there are lots of cliff edges once you make it to the top. However, the amazing view provides picturesque scenes in all directions.

The easiest way to find the trailhead would be following [this](#) Google Map. I would suggest coming from the top as it shortens the dirt road significantly. From the parking lot, although initially not hard to find, the trail drops into a wash shortly after the start where it becomes harder to follow. The best advice I could give you here would be to go straight across the wash, don't follow it. Although both ways will get you there, staying above the wash keeps the sand out of your shoes, and gives you a higher viewpoint to watch for the camel humps that mark your goal.

Once making it out of the wash, watch for the cairns that will mark the trail. These small piles of rocks will clearly identify the way before you, especially as you come closer to the bottom of the main hill. The cairns will lead you around the back, guiding to the easier way up the hill, for the adventurous spirit, hiking down the front side can lead to a fun challenge.

The destination is marked with not one, but two "vortex" holes in the sandstone. These depressions in the rock are formed by the wind and rain as it has beat down on it. One is much deeper than the other, although both give a good setting to talk about the dangers of letting little things in our lives start to slip. The hole starts out wide, but as we continue to let little things get in the way, it becomes harder and harder to get out. We then become sucked into the hole of misery as we let others control our life. Pretty soon we will find ourselves in a position we don't want to be in, and we will feel unhappy with the choices we have made. This hike provides not only good views, and some great exercise, but can also be applied to much needed life lessons.

