



Halls Creek Narrows



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Bounded by the high cliffs of Halls Mesa on the east and the steep slickrock slopes of the Waterpocket Fold on the west, the Halls Creek drainage is a large, beautiful canyon. Numerous side canyons beckon the hiker with sufficient time for exploration. The highlight of the hike is the three-mile (4.83 km) Halls Creek Narrows, a classic example of a slot canyon which so typifies the canyon country of southern Utah. Deeply incised into the white Navajo sandstone, it is hidden, secret, and mysterious. A trickling perennial stream and deep shade from the arching canyon walls create a cool, moist oasis in the midst of surrounding desert. The route is largely unmarked; carrying a topographic map is recommended. The route is extremely hot in summer. Water can usually be found at the Fountain Tanks and in the narrows. Use caution in narrow canyons particularly during the flash flood season (typically July–September).

From the Halls Creek Overlook, the total round-trip distance is 21.9 miles (35.25 km) and is best done as a three- to four-day trip. Backcountry permits are required for all overnight trips and can be obtained at the visitor center.

Location of Trailhead

Halls Creek Overlook is located on a spur road three miles (4.83 km) west of the Notom-Bullfrog Road. The road is rough and requires high clearance four-wheel drive. The Notom-Bullfrog Road is hard-packed dirt, usually passable to passenger cars. Total distance from Hwy 24 is 57.6 miles (92.73 km).

Mileages

Halls Creek Overlook to canyon bottom.....	1.2 miles (1.93 km)
Bottom of Halls Creek Overlook Trail to beginning of narrows.....	7.5 miles (12.07 km)
Narrows.....	3.0 miles (4.83 km)
Return to beginning of narrows via Halls Divide.....	1.5 miles (2.41 km)
Total round-trip.....	21.9 miles (35.25 km)

Hike Description

The hike begins at Halls Creek Overlook. From this spectacular viewpoint, a steep trail marked with rock cairns descends 800 feet (244 m) over 1.2 miles (1.93 km) to the Halls Creek drainage. Pay attention to landmarks as no signs mark the point where this route climbs out of the canyon; it would be easy to walk past the route on your return trip. The remainder of the route is largely unmarked but it is simply a matter of walking down canyon (south) to the narrows. A historic wagon trail followed this same route and is still visible in many places. Cutting across many of the wide meanders in the wash, it provides a convenient path for much of the route to the narrows.

At the narrows, Halls Creek abandons its logical path down the wide canyon separating the Waterpocket Fold and Halls Mesa and cuts into the Navajo sandstone on the west side of the canyon. The change is sudden and dramatic. A large grove of cottonwood trees is located near the entrance to the narrows. For the next three miles (4.83 km), the creek meanders through a deep, narrow canyon that always

requires walking in water and some wading. The depth of the pools can vary greatly from year to year and from season to season. Flash floods periodically scour out the sediment, leaving pools that may require deep wading or short swims. If you wear a backpack through the narrows you may have to carry it over your head in some of the deeper pools.

If you choose not to enter the narrows and want to continue south in the main drainage or if you want to bypass the narrows on your return trip, you must climb over Halls Divide which blocks the main canyon just beyond (south of) the entrance to the narrows. The easiest way to negotiate the 1.5-mile (2.41 km) Halls Divide is to look for the old wagon route and follow it over this obstacle. The hike across Halls Divide is very hot; make sure you have adequate water. An alternative is to hike over Halls Divide first and return via the narrows. To return to the trailhead, simply retrace the route back up the canyon to Halls Creek Overlook.

Additional Information

Maps:
USGS 7.5 Minute Series:
Deer Point, Stevens Canyon North,
and Halls Mesa
Available at the visitor center

Best Seasons:
Spring and fall

For more information and backcountry
permits, contact
Capitol Reef Visitor Center at
435-425-4111