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Upper Leslie Gulch



Coordinates

Trailhead:

43d 17' 67" N
117d 15' 05" W

Beginning of
slot canyon:

43d 16' 97" N
117d 13' 60" W

Distance: 4.4 miles out-and-back

Total Elevation Gain: 600 feet

Difficulty: Moderate

Elevation Range: 3,800 feet to 4,400 feet

Topographic Map: Bannock Ridge, Oregon

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours

Season: All Year

Water Availability: None

Cautionary Advice: Do not enter the slot canyon if there is a chance of rain anywhere in the area. Heavy rainfall or snow can make the roads impassable.

Information: Bureau of Land Management, Vale District (541) 473-3144

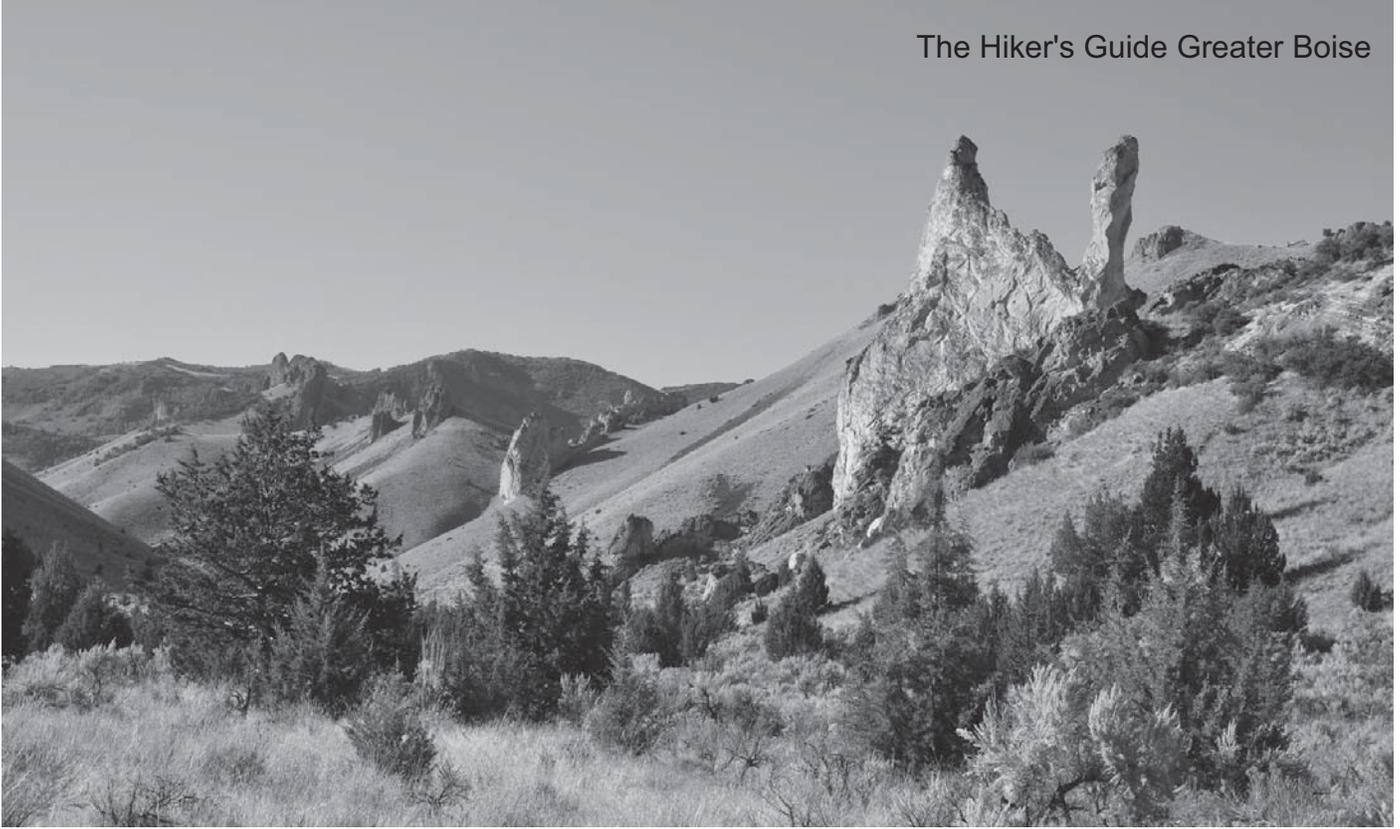
Restroom: No (A restroom is located by driving another half mile west into the canyon.)

Upper Leslie Gulch

Upper Leslie Gulch canyon leads through a geological medley of spectacular scenery. A 400-hundred foot sheer wall, colored in hues of cinnamon and orange, looms near the signed trailhead. Within minutes of hiking, colorful rock spires, twisting gulches, precipitous cliffs and dramatic rock formations keep hikers guessing what is around the next bend.

Along with Juniper Gulch and Dago Gulch, this is the only trail—all trails in Leslie Gulch are unmaintained—that appears to get much use. The first mile of trail meanders through segments of 6 to 7 foot sagebrush, interspersed with dark green juniper trees. After rounding a bend, the sparse path fades where the canyon opens and the 6,522-foot Mahogany Mountain looms in the far distance.

Here, on the left, another canyon beckons exploration with towering cliffs. The terrain is easily traversed by heading southeast along a wash which drains the canyon. The canyon eventually tapers, morphing into a slot canyon. Adventuresome hikers can experience a morsel of southern Utah by scrambling another half mile until the canyon becomes too narrow for travel.



Mahogany Mountain and a spectacular two-towered rock formation.

Trailhead Directions

Near Marsing and the intersection of Hwy. 55 and U.S. 95, travel south on U.S. 95 approximately 19 miles to a sign on the right for the Leslie Gulch Recreation Area. Turn right onto McBride Road and travel 8.7 miles to Rockville. Turn right again, following the signs to Leslie Gulch and travel 1.7 miles to the Leslie Gulch Road. Turn left, reset your odometer to 0 and drive 9.2 miles to the signed trailhead.

The Hike

From the signed trailhead, head southeast and cross a small stream bed at 0.1 mile. Enter a dense stand of large sagebrush, some more than 7 feet tall. Creme-colored rhyolite walls soaring 400 feet high shoulder both sides of the canyon while an occasional juniper tree provides shade. The faint trail turns to the right (due south) at 0.6 mile.

As you continue south, the juniper-dotted canyon opens and Mahogany Mountain becomes visible. At 0.9 mile, a spectacular two-towered rock formation will be on your right and the wide canyon will fork. Veer left (southeast), following a faint trail which intersects the wash draining the canyon at 1.1 miles. If the creek is flowing, you will want to hike to the left of the wash. As you make your way up canyon, the wash will widen the further you travel. At 1.9 miles, pass a colossal 400-foot rock formation. The

wash veers left, ascending into a narrow canyon. At 2.2 miles, you approach the mouth of the slot canyon. This is the end of the hike.

If you don't mind a little bushwhacking, continue into the narrow canyon.

You will quickly come to a spot where brush appears to make travel impassable. The brush only continues for about 15 feet. Scramble to the right around the brush and drop back to the wash; sheer canyon walls climb vertically on both sides.

Rock hop up the canyon about a quarter mile to a fork and another spot of overgrown brush. Again, it appears the journey is over, but not so. To continue to the most spectacular part of the slot canyon veer right around the brush and the canyon will be clear again in 15 feet. The canyon walls encroach overhead, making it feel more like a tunnel and the narrow

chamber is magical. You can walk another 500 feet up the slot canyon before it becomes so narrow that travel is restricted.



Towering rock formations near the slot canyon.



Upper Leslie Gulch.



Slot Canyon

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Upper Leslie Gulch Trailhead & Parking

Juniper Gulch Trailhead & Parking

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Timber Gulch Trailhead & Parking

