

Lower Browns Creek Canyon Loop Tour



Distance: 3.0 miles
Elevation Range: 2989'-3413'
Trail Type: cross-country, jeep track
Difficulty: difficult
Season: March-November
Driving Distance: 60 miles from I-84 & Kuna-Meridian Road (4.5 miles dirt)
Driving Time: 1:15
USGS Map: Antelope Spring



Pros

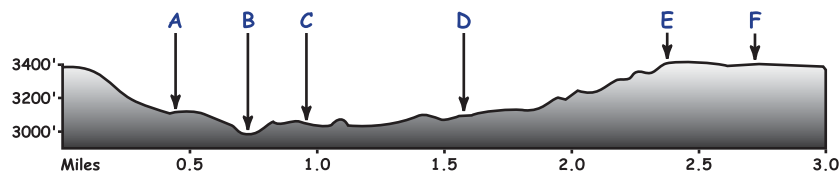
Lower Browns Creek Canyon is a very attractive chasm with sheer rust-hued rock walls that are oddly honeycombed in spots. The canyon's stream, Browns Creek, is lined with lush green vegetation, like a strip of oasis in the surrounding desert starkness. The overall setting is very aesthetic and hauntingly silent. Solitude is almost guaranteed.

Cons

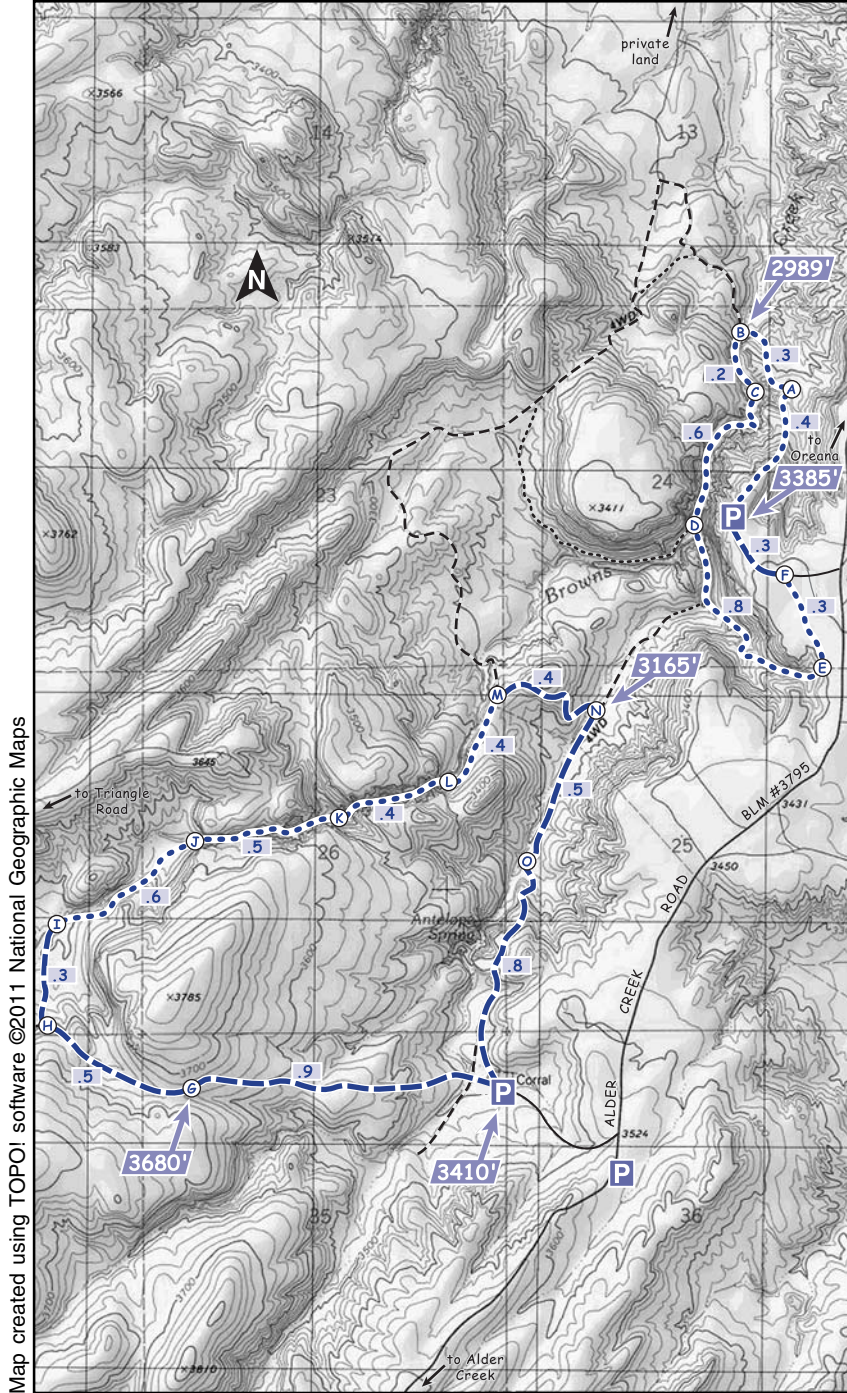
The canyon is heavily vegetated with creekside brush. Sometimes walking in the creekbed is the only way to avoid the dense thickets. This makes for a very wet hike during the spring season, with lots of knee-deep wading (the creek dries up later). Also, there are dense patches of poison ivy that are very hard to avoid.

Getting There

From I-84 and Kuna-Meridian Road (exit #44), go south on Kuna-Meridian Road (State Route 69) for 7.5 miles to the outskirts of Kuna, where the road curves right and becomes Avalon Road. Proceed on Avalon Road, which soon curves right, then immediately back left to become Kuna's Main Street. After a few blocks on Main, follow a curve left onto Bridge Street, which quickly curves back right to become the continuation of Avalon Road (9 miles). Proceed on Avalon Road, which becomes Kuna Road, for 4 miles to a left turn onto Robinson Boulevard (13 miles). Travel 2 miles on Robinson to a right turn onto Bowmont Road. Proceed 4 miles on Bowmont to its end at Hwy 45 (19 miles). Turn left on Hwy 45 and follow it 9 miles to a junction with Hwy 78, just past the Snake River crossing at Walters Ferry (28 miles). Go left on Hwy 78



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East and travel 24 miles to a right turn onto Oreana Loop Road (52 miles). Proceed 3.5 miles on this road, passing through Oreana, to the unsigned Alder Creek Road, which splits off to the right just after a sharp left curve. Travel 4 miles on the dirt-surfaced Alder Creek Road to the first jeep track that splits off to the right. Follow the jeep track (high clearance not necessary) to its end, just above the canyon (60 miles).

The Trek

From the end of the jeep track, start hiking northwest across the top of the plateau, parallelling the canyon below. Stay high on the flat, avoiding finger ridges that drop prematurely into the canyon. Soon the wide plateau narrows into a well defined ridgeline that drops away steeply. Zigzag down the ridgeline to the head of a small branch of the canyon, at 0.4 mile **(A)**. From here, climb over a small rise, then continue down the right-hand side of the ridge through an unusual landscape of ancient lake deposits. At 0.7 mile the mouth of the canyon is reached, just beyond a fenceline **(B)**.

Enter the canyon by skirting around the right side of a small dam. Right away, creekside brush and sheer canyon walls force the route into the creekbed, a situation that will reoccur many times while traveling through the canyon. At 1.0 mile a small branch of the canyon splits off to the left **(C)**. At 1.1 miles there is a pronounced horseshoe bend in the creek. Beyond the bend, poison ivy is dense along the creekside and difficult to avoid. At 1.6 miles the canyon forks **(D)**. The brush-choked Browns Creek comes from the right fork. The left fork is a dry wash.

Enter the dry left fork, leaving Browns Creek and its thickets behind. Follow the wash, making a steady gradual climb away from the main canyon. When the wash forks at 1.9 miles, go left and continue the climb. Go left again when a second fork is reached at 2.1 miles. Boulders blocking the entrance to this fork can be avoided by going a short distance up the right fork, then back left. Continue up the now tiny wash until the cliff band on the left fizzles out. At this point, climb a short slope to regain the plateau above at 2.4 miles **(E)**.

From here, it is just a matter of walking across the plateau and back to the start. Proceed by traveling parallel to the canyon. At 2.7 miles the course meets the jeep track leading to the start of the hike **(F)**. Follow the jeep track back to the start at 3.0 miles.

GPS Coordinates

The start-	N 42° 58.394	W -116° 24.120	3356'
Canyon branch (A) -	N 42° 58.692	W -116° 23.930	3119'
Canyon entrance (B) -	N 42° 58.833	W -116° 24.078	2995'
Canyon branch (C) -	N 42° 58.689	W -116° 24.033	3023'
Canyon fork (D) -	N 42° 58.368	W -116° 24.242	3076'
End of climb (E) -	N 42° 58.028	W -116° 23.815	3391'
Jeep track (F) -	N 42° 58.250	W -116° 23.937	3393'

Upper Browns Creek Canyon Loop Tour



Distance: 5.2 miles
Elevation Range: 3165'-3680'
Trail Type: jeep track, cross-country
Difficulty: very difficult
Season: April-November
Driving Distance: 61.5 miles from I-84 and Kuna-Meridian Road (6 miles dirt, 0.4 mile four-wheel drive)
Driving Time: 1:20
USGS Map: Antelope Springs



Pros

Upper Browns Creek Canyon is a dramatic narrow chasm with sheer rust-hued rhyolite walls. Its remote and rugged setting presents a great opportunity for challenging backcountry adventure. The Browns Creek area seems to receive very little attention. Solitude is very likely to be enjoyed.

Cons

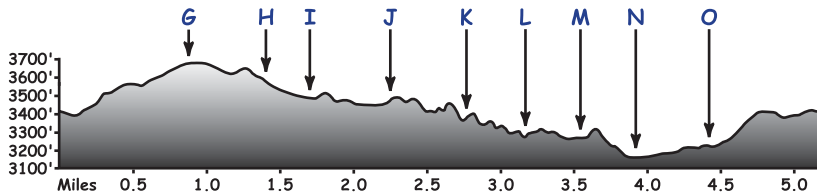
Inside the canyon, the course mostly follows the creekbed. During springtime, this makes for a very wet and slippery trek with more wading than hiking. Creekbed pools (up to four feet deep) force wading, even late in the season when Browns Creek is no longer flowing. Other difficulties include brief sections of rock scrambling and bushwhacking through dense thickets. Watch out for poison ivy and thorny shrubs.

Getting There

Follow the directions to Lower Browns Creek Canyon, up to the final turnoff at 59.5 miles. From this point, proceed another 1.8 miles on Alder Creek Road to a right turn onto an unmarked jeep track (0.3 mile beyond the second fenceline and gate). This rough four-wheel drive track descends into a basin. Follow it for 0.4 mile to a fenceline and corral. Pull off and park next to the fence.

The Trek (see the Lower Browns Creek Canyon map)

The journey begins by continuing along the jeep track on foot. Right away the track forks. Continue forward (the right-hand track will be used



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for the return route). Just a short distance further, a four-way intersection is reached. Continue forward, starting an aggressive climb that leads to a pass (the course highpoint) at 0.9 mile **(G)**. From the pass, the track descends to a fork at 1.4 miles **(H)**. Take the right-hand track, which descends to Browns Creek at 1.7 miles **(I)**. At the creek, the track passes through a gate and enters a parcel of private land. Don't go through the gate. Instead, turn onto an intermittent path to the right of the fenceline. This path avoids the private land and is also the best way to proceed.

The route now travels along Browns Creek, forging a mostly cross-country course. Right away, a granite-lined mini-canyon is entered. Travel through it on the right-hand side, following intermittent bits of path that are just upslope of the creek. At 2.1 miles the mini-canyon gives way to an open basin. Cross the basin toward obvious walls of rust-hued rhyolite. These impressive cliffs form the entrance to Upper Browns Creek Canyon, which is then reached at 2.3 miles **(J)**.

Upon entering the canyon, the trek immediately becomes more challenging and presents many obstacles. First, there are dense thickets to negotiate. Then the canyon tightens, which forces the route into the rocky creekbed. Here, pools of water often block the way and require tricky scrambling to get past. One particularly deep pool is bounded by vertical walls that make wading unavoidable. At 2.8 miles the canyon fizzles out briefly and gives way to grassy slopes **(K)**. Here, a BLM fenceline is crossed.

The next section of canyon is similar to the first, but generally not as difficult. Its biggest challenge comes right away from dense creekside thickets (watch out for poison ivy and thorny shrubs!). The canyon then tightens into a spectacular narrow passage. At its tightest constriction, a deep pool blocks the way and forces another wade. At 3.2 miles the narrow chasm suddenly widens, then peters out for good **(L)**. Ahead, ridiculously dense thickets clog the creekbed between short canyon walls. At this point, it's time to exit the canyon by climbing up a steep grassy break on the right-hand side.

Once out of the canyon, proceed along the rim, where the going is far easier. Along this stretch, the view back into the canyon is spectacular. At 3.5 miles a dilapidated fenceline is reached. Just beyond this, a jeep track is met at the top of a chalky-white cliff band **(M)**. This is the end of cross-country travel. Turn right onto the jeep track.

The route now follows the jeep track back to the start. At 3.9 miles the track goes through a gate, followed immediately by a T-intersection **(N)**. Go right, then pass through another gate at 4.1 miles. A third gate is passed at 4.5 miles **(O)**. Here, a strenuous final climb begins. At 4.8 miles the climb comes to an end, then it's smooth sailing back to the start at 5.2 miles.