

Hike: Ice Box Canyon – trail and route

Trailhead: Ice Box Canyon pulloff - marked

Distance: 2.5 miles – up and back

Elevation gain: 400 feet

Highest elevation: 4,700 feet

Time: 2 - 3 hours – up and back

Difficulty: 1

Danger level: 1

Class: 3 - if you scramble to the base of the waterfall, otherwise class 2

How easy to follow: 1

Children: Yes

Waypoints (WGS84): See Page

Fees: Red Rock Canyon Pass. \$7.00 per car; \$30 annually. All National Park Passes accepted.

Best season: Winter and spring

Driving directions: From the Mirage on Las Vegas Boulevard (the Strip) go north three miles and turn left (west) onto Charleston.

Drive 16 miles on Charleston to Red Rock Canyon. Drive past the fee booth and through the Scenic Loop gate.

The **signed** parking area for Ice Box Canyon is eight miles past Scenic Loop gate ([Waypoint 1](#)).

There are bathrooms at the trailhead.

Comments: The winter months offer the best chance to see the waterfall flowing; however, the water makes it more difficult to reach the waterfall. This popular hike can be done in the summer months, if you get an **early start**. Be careful not to twist an ankle on the numerous rocks on the trail. **Photo 1** shows Ice Box Canyon from the start of the trail.



Photo 1

The Hike: The trail heads SSW as it descends towards Red Rock Wash. As the trail crosses the wash it heads to the right, instead of going directly across the wash. Rocks mark the left boundary of the trail. Flat rocks are used as stairs as the trail climbs out of the wash. Just before reaching



Photo 2

the top of the bank, the trail goes off to the right and continues toward the mouth of the canyon. The incline becomes slight as the trail passes manzanita bushes and desert scrub oak. Although spur trails have developed, continue on any trail toward the mouth of the canyon. In the winter months the snowmelt from above fills the stream with rushing water. It is strange to hear water flowing as you walk through the middle of a desert.

The trail travels near the top of the wash. Huge ponderosa pines lie at the edge of the stream. There are numerous side paths heading down into the wash, but for faster travel stay on the trail. When the trail divides, take either fork as they rejoin in about 75 feet. As you near the mouth of the

canyon walls rise hundreds of feet into the air. The walls prevent the sun to shine in the canyon, hence the name Ice Box canyon.

The trail veers left and descends down into the wash ([Waypoint 2](#)). It is easy to miss this turnoff; however, if you do, the trail ends shortly after the turnoff. Just retrace your steps, about 30 yards, to the turnoff. Once in the wash, it is about a quarter mile of boulder hopping (class 2) to reach the waterfall. Many side paths **off to the left** have been created to avoid the water. These paths are not maintained by the BLM and are very brushy. Just head deeper into the canyon; you can't get lost.

Photo 2 shows the scramble to the base of the waterfall. These are class 3 friction moves. Sticky rubber shoes are recommended. The waterfall ranges from dry in the summer months to roaring in late winter and early spring.

To Descend: Retrace your steps. Look to your left for the official trail that leads out of the wash. It is **not** marked by the BLM!

