

Part 3 -Buckskin Gulch

Exploring the longest, darkest, deepest slot canyon in the world



“Wow, look at this! look at that! We all stood open-mouthed. Silent, then, “Oh, My God!” You have to stand here, see it and feel it. It is a sensuous place.

Perhaps, the best way to describe our journey to the Buckskin Gulch is to show you our pictures.

Wire Pass Trailhead - Wave & Buckskin Gulch



The Navajo sandstone formation was responsible for the most beautiful parts of the canyon here. The day we explored Buckskin Gulch, the sky was a flawless blue. High above, the early morning sunlight beat down on sandstone the color of dried blood.

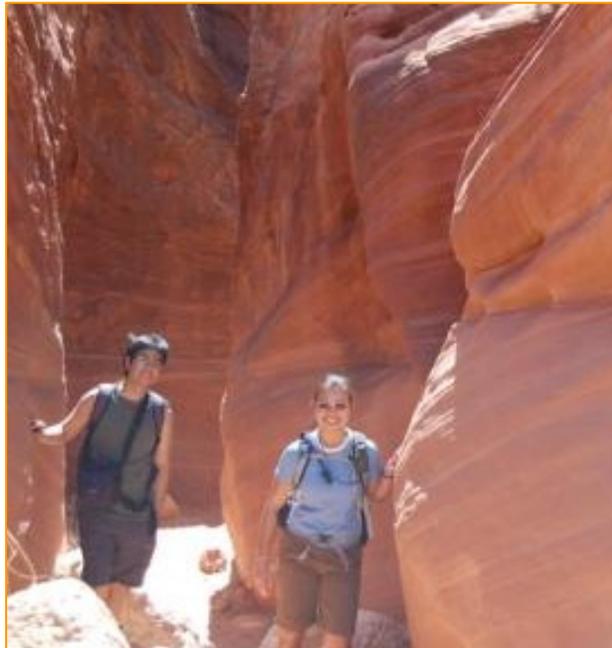
Wire Pass trailhead is the starting point for the two most famous walks in Utah; **“Buckskin Gulch”** and the **“Wave”**.

Even we did not have a chance to visit the “Wave”, here at the entrance, we caught a glimpse of its voluptuous curves and sumptuous rock formation.



Entrance to Buckskin

A short walk brought us to a small opening, which is no more than 18 inches wide. We removed our packs and half-walk, half crawl climbing down to this narrow passage.



Inside the constricted walls, we soon were captivated by the pure golden sunlight filtering to the deeps of the canyon like a 24-carat downpour.



The early walk was easy on a flat, sandy bottom. At one point there was a whole array of logs jammed between the walls high above us. Inside the Buckskin, it was cold, and dark.



Mud Pools



We encountered our first mud pool after a forty five minutes walk. It was the end of the dry season, the pool was no more than two feet deep, but the bottom of the pool were cobbles, which made the wading very difficult. The mud was ice cold, thick like chocolate, and had a foul smell. HY was the most courageous one. He first sank in the mud pool, and one by one, we followed.



This section of the walk was extremely dark and narrow. The carved walls were very tall and often formed a canopy overhead. We were all laughing and cheering, enjoying this spooky and surreal spectacle around us.

More Mud Pools



Where the Light Acted Upon You



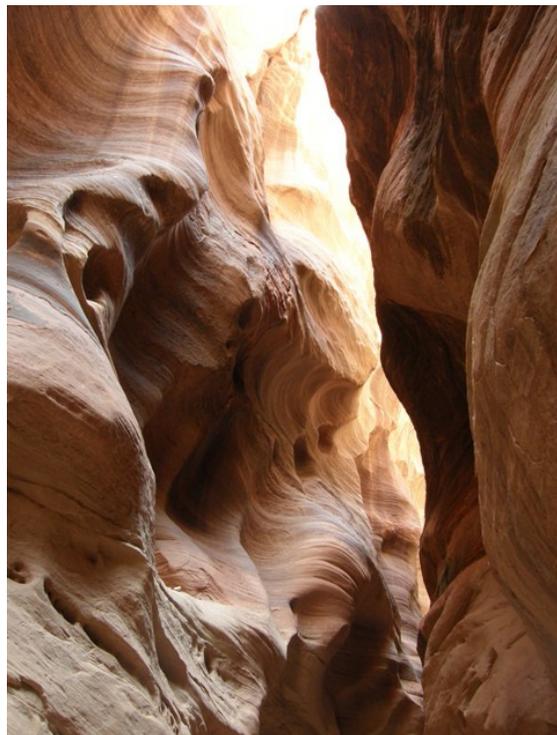
Inside the Buckskin, we did not just see color and shadow, the light acted upon you physically. The magical bullion of the sun penetrated through cracks and narrows, exploded the effulgent light on the canyon walls, gray, brown, yellow, reddish depending upon the hour. At certain times, light would come in and reflect back and forth off the walls, making everything glow a wonderful orange.

We crawled, climbed and walked through alternating air currents. Sometimes, it was cold and moist, then it changed to warm, and then hot and dry, but most of the time, it was comfortably cool.

We were surrounded by the most beautiful cross-bedded walls, fluted and carved. The walls were usually dry but cut by rushing floodwaters. Because there was no perennial water coming down these tributaries, they did not widen.

The canyon floors we walked on, some were wet, some were dry, some had mud pools, some had soft sand, some had nothing but rock.

Exploring the Buckskin Gulch was so unbelievably fascinating.



Confluence of Wire Pass and Buckskin



The canyon suddenly broadened as it turned right and we found ourselves in bright sunlight. A grand, red-walled canyon was on our left. Here marked the junction of Wire pass and Buckskin trails.

At the confluence, a panel of petroglyphs incised into the sandstone wall. It seemed very old petroglyphs because the edges were eroding, but we could still see the etchings of big horn sheep, there were also handprints.

After the confluence, the walls became narrow again. For the next 12 miles, the narrows extend almost uninterrupted with the width of the canyon seldom exceeding 20 feet.



The walk through this dark, narrow canyon was truly a unique hiking experience



End of Buckskin Gulch



Here marked the end of Buckskin Gulch but just the beginning of our Paria River Canyon adventure. (See part 1 journal)

Epilogue

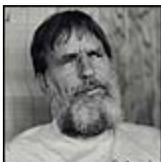
Nearly a year past since I started planning this trip. – “**the Place No One Knew**”. Organizing my own trip was fun, rewarding and also a very educational process.

As a result of the planning, I have come to know about myself much more. Suddenly I found myself looking forward with a new and knife-edge eagerness to the two years of simple living that lies ahead in Azerbaijan. I am no longer fear of the place that I know so little. It will be simply another backpacking trip, like this one I just took. I will be fine, my friends. See you all later. *Sag Olun, Helelik!*

For the wilderness and human emptiness of this land is not a source of fear but the greatest of its attractions. We would guard and defend and save it as a place for all who wish to rediscover the nearly lost pleasures of adventure

It is a place for the free... the earth, like the sun, like the air, belongs to everyone, and to no one.

Edward Abbey



The End - Part 3