

## CROWN BRIDGE

We stumbled across this bridge when hiking up the major wash just north of Funeral Slot Canyon. I had spotted an interesting looking narrow section in the upper portion of this wash from Google Earth when researching hikes for this trip. It turned out to be a very short narrow section with an impasse at the end, in the narrowest part. We bypassed this impasse on the south side of the canyon, then checked out the upper part of the canyon (which was not particularly narrow or deep). When returning along the ridge from bypassing this impasse, we spotted what appeared to be a bridge in a side wash of the canyon just to the south. Looking at our maps, we saw that this side wash where the bridge is located turned out to drop into the left fork of the northern fork (main slot) of Funeral Slot Canyon, and, from reading reports on this canyon and recollecting from our visit to it a few years ago, we saw that this fork does not appear to have been explored. We decided to name this bridge Crown Bridge because the kind of rock which forms the top of the bridge appears to be different from the rock below it (likely this upper rock is a bit harder, thus the rock below it eroded first, forming the bridge). After photographing the bridge and looking a short distance up and down canyon, we had to head back to the road as it was getting dark and this is not an area in which one should be trying to find the route back after sunset! Note that Crown Bridge is the 16th natural bridge to have been discovered in Death Valley National Park (and the second to be found in 2014).

Approaching the narrow section in the wash just to the north of Funeral Slot Canyon, which I had mapped out while researching hikes for this trip:



Looking back down towards the valley, past a bend in the canyon:



This is the entrance to this short narrower section of the canyon:



There was a small boulder pile to be climbed:



Up ahead we see an even narrower area, though it looks like we will almost certainly encounter a major impasse soon:



Looking back down towards the valley from here:



Looking up and out of this narrow section; we did indeed encounter a major dryfall, the top of which can be seen to the left in this photo. Unfortunately, the sun angle was such that none of my photos of the dryfall turned out to be viewable, but the fall was too tall to climb:



We exited the narrow section of this canyon and attained the ridge to the south to try to bypass the impasse; this view is looking into the upper portion of the left fork of the northern fork of Funeral Slot Canyon:



Another view into this canyon; from here, it certainly looked like a very interesting area:



There was a series of short dryfalls to scramble over on this workaround, which were more colorful than they appear in this photo:



Panorama looking down into the narrow section of this canyon to the north of Funeral Slot Canyon; we descended the wash to the right in the photo:



Looking down towards the valley from our viewpoint:



The canyon was rocky with short walls when we dropped into it:



This is just above the narrow section, where the major dryfall is located:



Looking down the dryfall from above; it has two stages, and the first drop we could have climbed down but there didn't appear to be any reason to:



Looking up-canyon, with the moon just above this prominent peak (which does not appear to have a name):



Looking back up the route we used to drop into this canyon:



Another photo of the moon above this peak:



From here, we decided to head down the ridge between this canyon and Funeral Slot Canyon; another panorama looking into this fork of Funeral Slot Canyon:



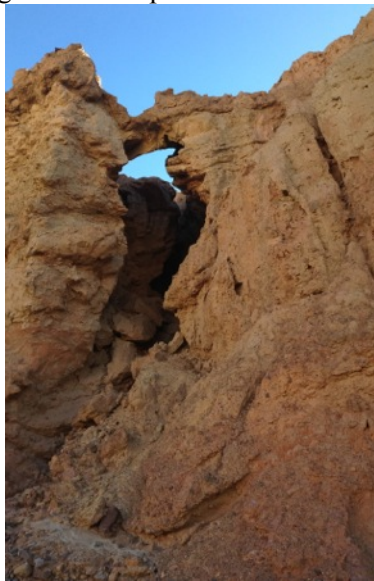
From the ridge, we spotted what appeared to be a natural bridge, located in a side wash dropping into this side canyon:



We hiked down the wash which drops us into the canyon right at the bridge; note that this wash appears to be the only way into the canyon, as all of the others cliff out:



Looking up at the bridge from below, we could see that the water must have eroded the softer rock underneath while the harder rock above was left, creating this bridge with its top sort of like a crown:



Looking down-canyon at some interesting-looking and colorful narrows:



This view from below of the bridge shows that it is indeed a solid rock formation crossing the canyon; we estimated the height of the bridge as approximately 25 feet:



This was another interesting formation nearby, just up-canyon of the bridge, which we tried to climb up into but it soon became too steep:



We checked out the upper part of this canyon briefly, but we knew that as we were quite some distance from the road we couldn't spend much time here if we didn't want to be hiking back in the dark:





The canyon continues for a while through this sort of terrain:



There was a bit of colorful red rock in this area:



This was a strange natural formation which we spotted in one of the washes coming down from the ridge; it didn't appear easy to get up to it:



From here, we headed down-canyon to see how far we could get before reaching a major impasse; we knew that, as we hadn't seen this side canyon dropping into the main Funeral Slot, there must be some major impasse further down-canyon:



Entering this vivid red narrow section, which was made even more spectacular with the afternoon sun angle:



The canyon went around this narrow bend, then opened up again; note that ascending any of the washes to the ridge seen in the photo is not a safe idea:



Hoodoo-like formation on the canyon wall similar to those seen in the main Funeral Slot Canyon:



Up ahead we could see that we were about to enter a very nice section of narrows:



There were a few short boulder dropoffs through here, which were easy to climb down:



Here the canyon appears to get even narrower, and we guessed that we would be reaching an impasse very soon:



This was a nice straight slot through reddish rock, but the lighting wasn't perfect to get a good photo this late in the day:



This is the view looking down the impasse which we knew we would eventually encounter; it is located at the very end of the slot in the last picture, and, as the canyon rounds a bend just after it, we were not able to get a view any further down the canyon:



Looking back up and out of this slot:



From here, we attained the ridge, with a failed attempt at taking a route up different from the one we had taken in:



We dropped back into the canyon to the north and followed it down; nice HDR photo of some of the rocks in this wash:



One final photo looking out of this canyon where it opens up:

