

Moonlight Canyon 3rd Side Canyon

Google Earth map of this area (note that the “What’s This?” pin marks the colorful section of the side canyon and is the reason I chose to check out this side canyon):



Looking up the main Moonlight Canyon to where it enters taller cliffs; the side canyon heads off on the right just before the main canyon enters these taller cliffs:



Two interesting side canyons on the north side of the wash:



Approaching the side canyon:



The side canyon as seen from the main Moonlight Canyon:



Continuing up the side canyon:



Up ahead, the side canyon appears to enter a narrower section, but we are unable to determine yet if it is passable or not:



The side canyon is passable, we just have to climb a steep scree slope:



The scree is steeper than it appears in this photo, but it is quite possible to climb, though hiking poles are a great help:



Around the corner, we encounter some more scree, and we can see that the side canyon continues through some very colorful rock:



Looking back down the scree slope:



Nice colors in this small boulder jam:



Continuing up-canyon, the walls get more colorful:



All too soon, we encounter an impasse; as the walls are crumbly, we are initially unsure if we will be able to continue, but it is possible to scramble up the left side of the impasse:



Looking back through this impressively colorful section of this side canyon:



Looking down from the top of this impasse:



Continuing up-canyon, it is not quite as colorful:



We continue up-canyon and encounter another narrow section, this one with a relatively easy-to-climb boulder jam at the beginning:



Beyond the boulder jam is a boulder pile:



The canyon rounds a sharp turn:



Then, the canyon opens back up for a ways, as can be seen in the next four photos:





Finally, it reaches a sort of amphitheater, so we decide to ascend the ridge to see if we can get a good view:



Looking out towards the main valley and the Cottonwood Mountains from here:



Looking down into the amphitheater-like area from our route to the ridge:



View into Moonlight's 2nd Side Canyon from the ridge:



View looking down the ridge we would follow back down to the main canyon, which runs between Moonlight's 3rd side canyon and a shorter side canyon between the 2nd and 3rd major side canyons (side canyon 2.5?):



Two more panoramas before heading down the ridge:



Looking back up towards the ridge we came down; we cut across underneath the small peak shown in the center of the photo, rather than going over it:

