

Ice Cream Cone Loop - 2011

Long Canyon Trailhead

6.6 mi

Cumulative Elevation Change: 960 ft

3 h 17 min travel time

5 h 30 min total

This route ascends from the Forest Service Long Canyon Trail to a formation resembling an ice cream cone. After a short descent it joins a trail that leads northwest to meet the Long Canyon Loop Trail (described in another table entry), returning to the FS trail via a groups of alcoves. The initial climb is steep and demanding.

The Ice Cream Cone formation is clearly visible to the northeast as you approach on the Long Canyon trailhead. The large red cone with a white swirl on top juts out from the main canyon wall and is flanked on its right side by a tall thin red rock formation that also juts out from the wall. From certain angles you can see that this latter formation is composed of three fingers. As you travel along the Long Canyon trail you will be able to see the cone through the trees getting closer and closer. Walk along Long Canyon trail a distance just under 2 miles until you are just about under the Ice Cream Cone. The trail will be down along the wash at that point and you will be very close to the high red rock buttes that contain the Ice Cream cone. The far side of the wash will be lined with a red rock butte just beyond your turn off. Cross the wash and look for a trail leading through the brush **(1)**.

Your trail will now head toward the red beehive rock outcropping that lies ahead of you. You should find a trail that leads up the beehive all the way to the white lined rocks under an overhang that you can see near the top. Climb up to these white rocks, turn left to walk along the overhang, and continue to climb until you are on the top of the beehive. Some of the climbing will have high steps. At the top of the beehive you will see a trail which goes all along the top edge **(2)**. Turn right here. (You will take the left fork to complete the loop on your downward journey.)

The right fork will turn left immediately and wind its way up the scree until you are between the Ice Cream Cone and the tall red rock butte which consists of three separate but close fingers. Work your way up the rocks along the base of the fingers. Some tough climbing here! Continue to work your way in that direction through the brush staying close to the bottom of the Cone for most of the way until finally you see a small flat area between two buttes **(3)**. Good lunch spot.

For the return journey, work your way back down to the top of the beehive and this time continue along the trail and do not turn to climb down the beehive. The trail will work its way along a fairly level area along the curve of the mountain. Continue to work your way across the level, staying high to avoid being caught by rock outcroppings. Near the end the trail will follow the contours close to the rim. Eventually a red capstan rock will be visible above you and the curve ahead of you is the Long Canyon Loop trail working its

way down to the alcoves below you. Turn left on the Long Canyon Loop trail and then turn to the left to climb down to the dwellings level **(4)**. Continue past the alcoves and turn down on the trail just in front of the last which is slightly separate from the others. This trail will parallel the main Long Canyon trail for a while until it finally rises to rejoin it **(5)**. (Note: some strong winds have toppled several trees and branches recently to make this part of the trail rather difficult.) Turn left on the main trail and head back to your car.