



Golden Canyon/Gower Gulch



Death Valley National Park

- Always carry water, even in winter. One liter per person per hour is a good rule of thumb, but more water is needed in hot temperatures.
- Avoid hiking in canyons during heavy rains because of flash flood danger.
- Watch your step. Biological soil crust also known as cryptobiotic soil is a living groundcover. To avoid damaging these living crusts and causing unsightly scars on the soft badlands, please stay either on main trails or in drainage bottoms.
- Hiking at low elevations when it is hot is not recommended. If you must, plan for an early morning hike when it is coolest.
- Do not remove any natural or cultural features from the park.

Hiking trails

Golden Canyon Trail

One mile to upper Golden Canyon, plus ¼ mile to explore Red Cathedral.

The hike into Golden Canyon is one of the most popular in Death Valley. Hikers enter through rocky narrows into a hidden area of colorful badlands capped by the fluted headwall of Red Cathedral and towering Manly Beacon. Watch for ripple marks in the tilted strata, a hint of the ancient lakebed that was the source of the badland's geologic deposits. From the Golden Canyon trailhead, follow the gravel wash on a gradual but steady uphill grade. Return the way you came, or continue on the Gower Gulch Loop.

Gower Gulch Loop

4-mile loop hike that begins and ends at the Golden Canyon trailhead.

For a more adventurous hike, take the side trail at the signed junction in upper Golden Canyon. The trail steeply climbs steeply 350 feet to a divide just below the cliff-face of Manly Beacon, where the view over the badlands is a worthy goal in itself.

From the divide, hike down to another signed junction. To complete the Loop, turn right at the signed junction and walk ¼ mile down to join Gower Gulch.

Darker colored gravel in the wash bottom is a good indication you've joined the main drainage of Gower Gulch.

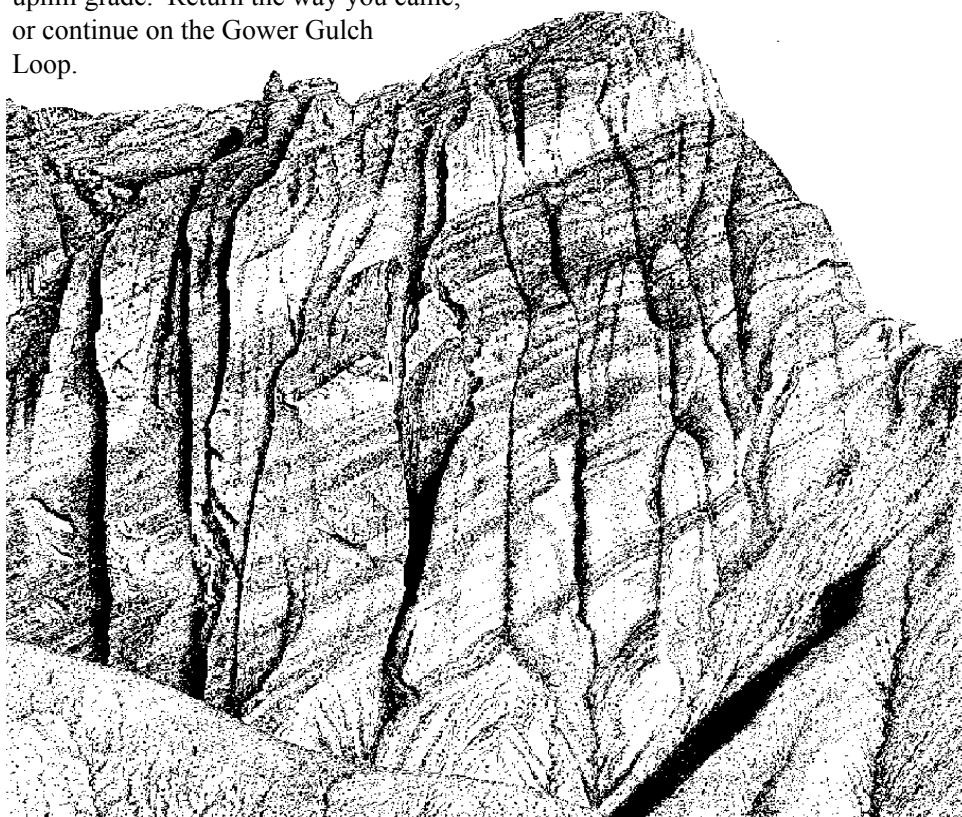
There is no formal trail here, just follow the wash down toward the valley for 1¼ miles. Some rock scrambling is required to climb down small drop-offs. A final 25-foot dry fall at the mouth of Gower Gulch may be easily passed by following a narrow path to the right. From the canyon mouth, a path heads north along the base of the hills for ¾ mile back to the Golden Canyon trailhead.

Badlands Loop

An expanded version of the Gower Gulch Loop for a total of 5 miles round trip.

Zabriskie Point and the area around it are closed to all access while it goes through a much needed rehabilitation to repair unstable support walls and improve safety conditions. Although the trail is closed to Zabriskie Point and parking area, you can still hike the Badlands Loop in the area below it.

Extend the Gower Gulch Loop by turning left at the junction after Manly Beacon instead of right. Cross over rolling badlands for ½ mile to a marked junction below Zabriskie Point, then turn right and follow Gower Gulch downstream ¾ mile to rejoin the Gower Gulch Loop.



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