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Hiking Darby Canyon Wind Cave, Driggs, ID

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Accessed from Driggs, Idaho, in the Teton Valley, the Darby Canyon Wind Cave hike offers stunning views minus the crowds. The moderately strenuous round-trip hike is 5.4 miles with about 1,800 feet of elevation gain; it's best if hikers have hiking experience and stamina. To reach the trailhead, drive south from Driggs on Highway 33. Three miles south of town,

turn east onto 3000 South. Drive 3.2 miles and turn right at the T-intersection. Follow signs to the South Darby trailhead.

From the trailhead, hike up the path and cross a footbridge. The trail will begin to ascend through trees to the east after this bridge, and in a short while, you will cross the Jedediah Smith Wilderness boundary. It gets a little steeper at this point, ascending more than 1,200 feet in 1.5 miles. Summer festoons the trailside with wildflowers and autumn brings colorful foliage.

About halfway through the hike, you can spy the Wind Cave across the canyon. About 2.5 miles in, the trail splits. Stay right to reach the Wind Cave, crossing the creek and heading up the switchbacks.

You'll come across a memorial to five hikers from Darby Girls Camp who were killed by lightning in the canyon. Dangerous weather can roll in quickly here, so if the weather looks threatening, make a speedy retreat.

Getting up to the cave itself is a wet, slippery scramble and can be dangerous. If you do head up to the mouth of the cave, don't venture too far inside unless you're an experienced spelunker with full caving equipment. Inside, the highly technical cave has steep drop-offs and deep, cold water. It connects through this passageway to the nearby Ice Cave, producing a cold wind (hence the name Wind Cave). But hikers will enjoy plenty of fantastic views of the cave from just below its mouth without having to negotiate any treacherous cavern terrain.

After you're done soaking up the views, retrace your steps back to the parking area. As with any hike in the Tetons, be bear aware, carry bear spray, travel in groups and make noise while hiking.

For more information about hiking to Darby Canyon Wind Cave, visit the Caribou-Targhee National Forest website at fs.usda.gov/ctnf. For more information about visiting the Teton Valley region, go to visitidaho.org/community/teton-valley.



Darby Canyon Wind Cave

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