

Western Road Trip Newsletter



I love the old rusty mining cars

Day 20
Thursday
November 14th
Spent the Day
In
Arches National Park
Stats

? miles today
? total miles this trip

Weather
High Temp: 54
Low Temp: 30's
Conditions: Sunny

"No name, just
found it
interesting."

Hello to My Family and Friends

Well, I did get to sleep in, I was up by 7:00. I took my time doing things around camp and taping up my toe, then headed over to the Sand Dune and Broken Arch Trails. They are fairly short, near the campground and I didn't think they would tax the bandage. There was a good breeze today keeping things cool.

Sand Dune & Broken Arch Trail

This trail forks up ahead and the choice is yours. The different settings, the amount of shade, and the time you have available can help you select a route.

Sand Dune Arch Trail
is an easy stroll through a sandy area. Well-concealed between two sandstone fins, the shady area around the arch is a great spot for young children on hot days.

Devils Garden Trailhead



Broken Arch Trail
winds through open blackbrush and grassland flats; you can see the arch in the distance from here. It's not really broken, but a crack through the top gives it that appearance. Look for migrating birds in spring and fall.

To get to the campground, you have two choices. Walk through the opening of Broken Arch for the easiest route OR return to the last junction, and proceed on the westerly loop through a narrow canyon to reach the campground.

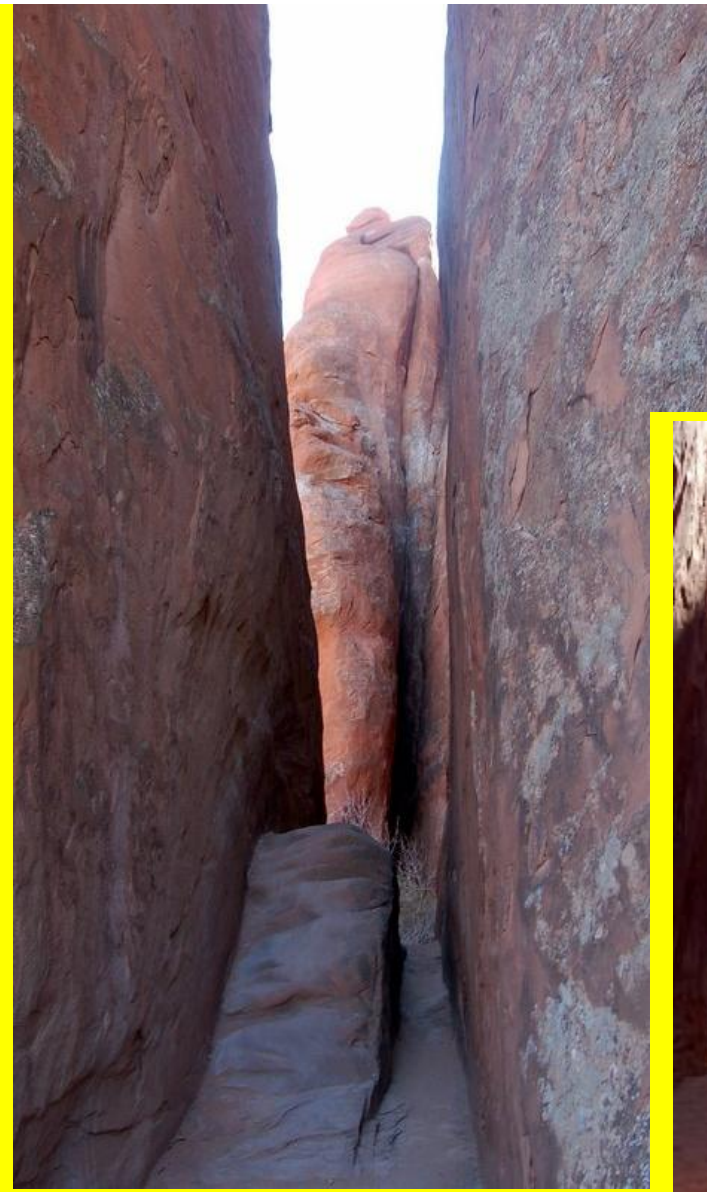
Trail Data

Be prepared

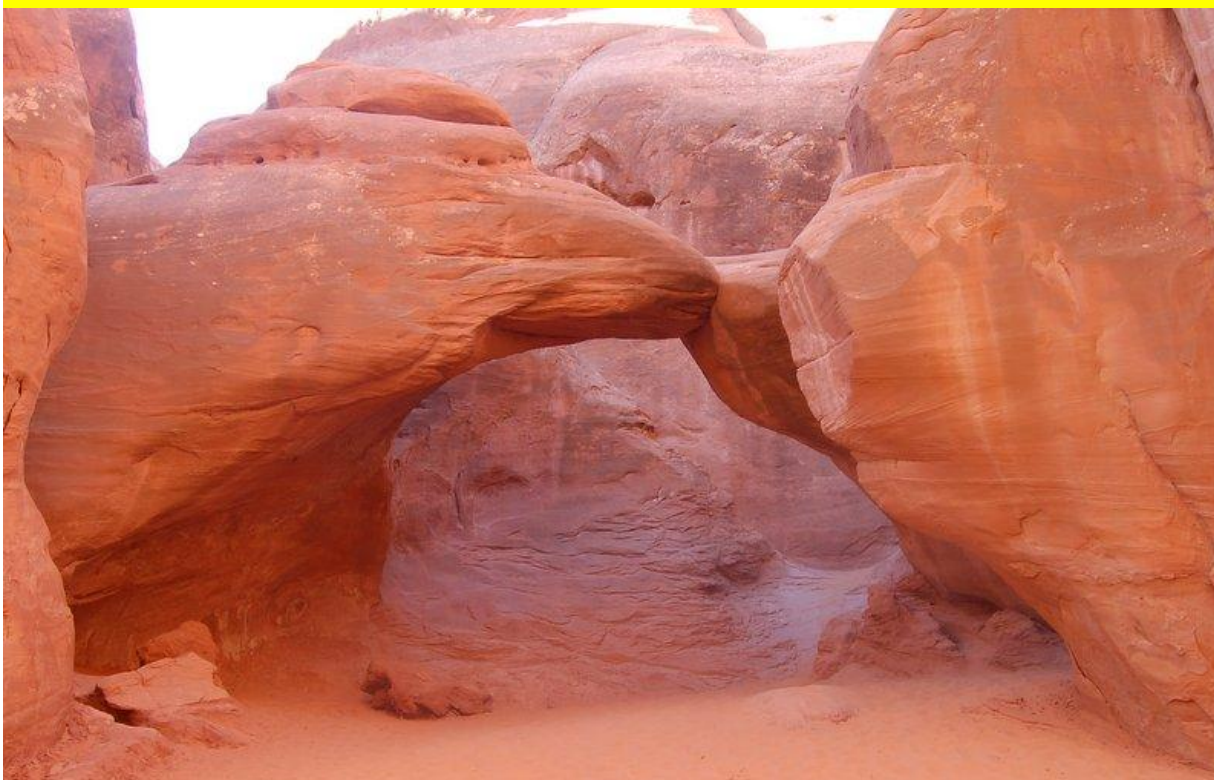
Trail Rules



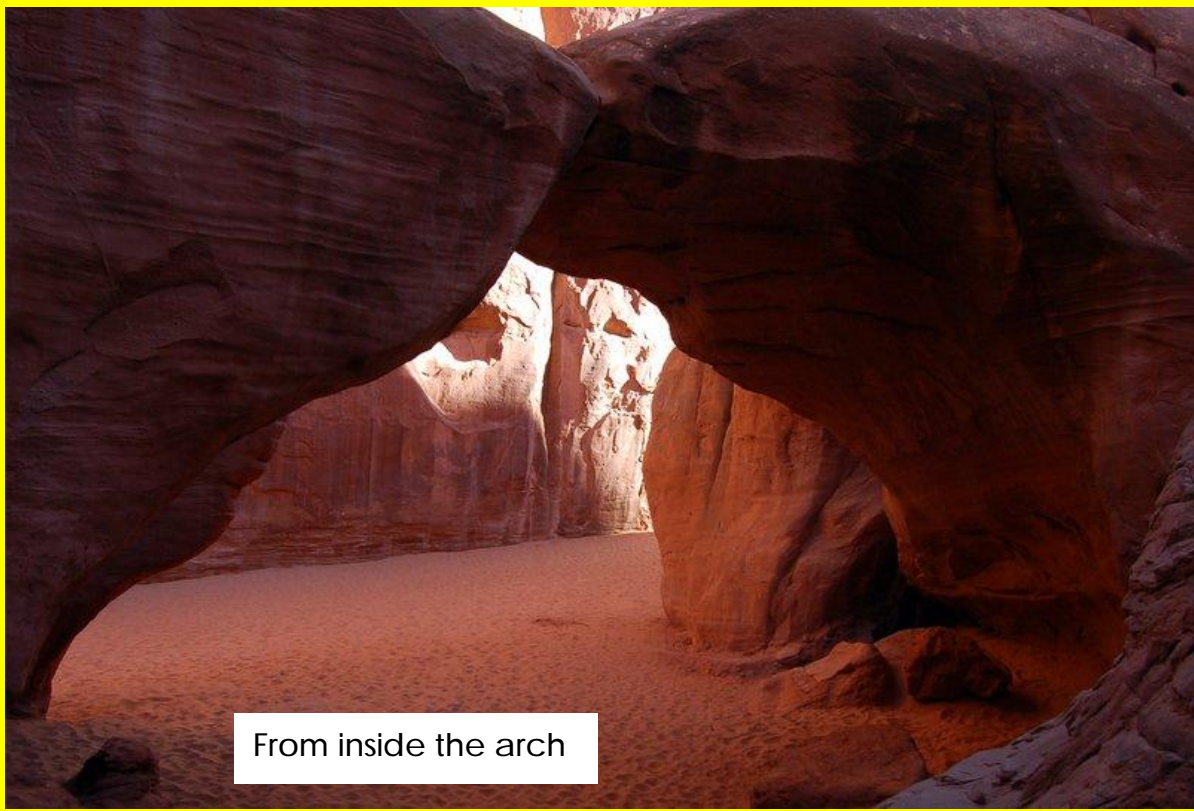
Balanced Rock
from inside The
FieryFurnace



The path to Sand Dune Arch matched its name – sand, very loose sand. It is a neat trail leading right between some of the large fins.



Sand Dune Arch is right in the middle of the fins. It would be fun to have the job of exploring the rock formations and being the first to discover an arch. There are currently over 2500 known arches in the park.



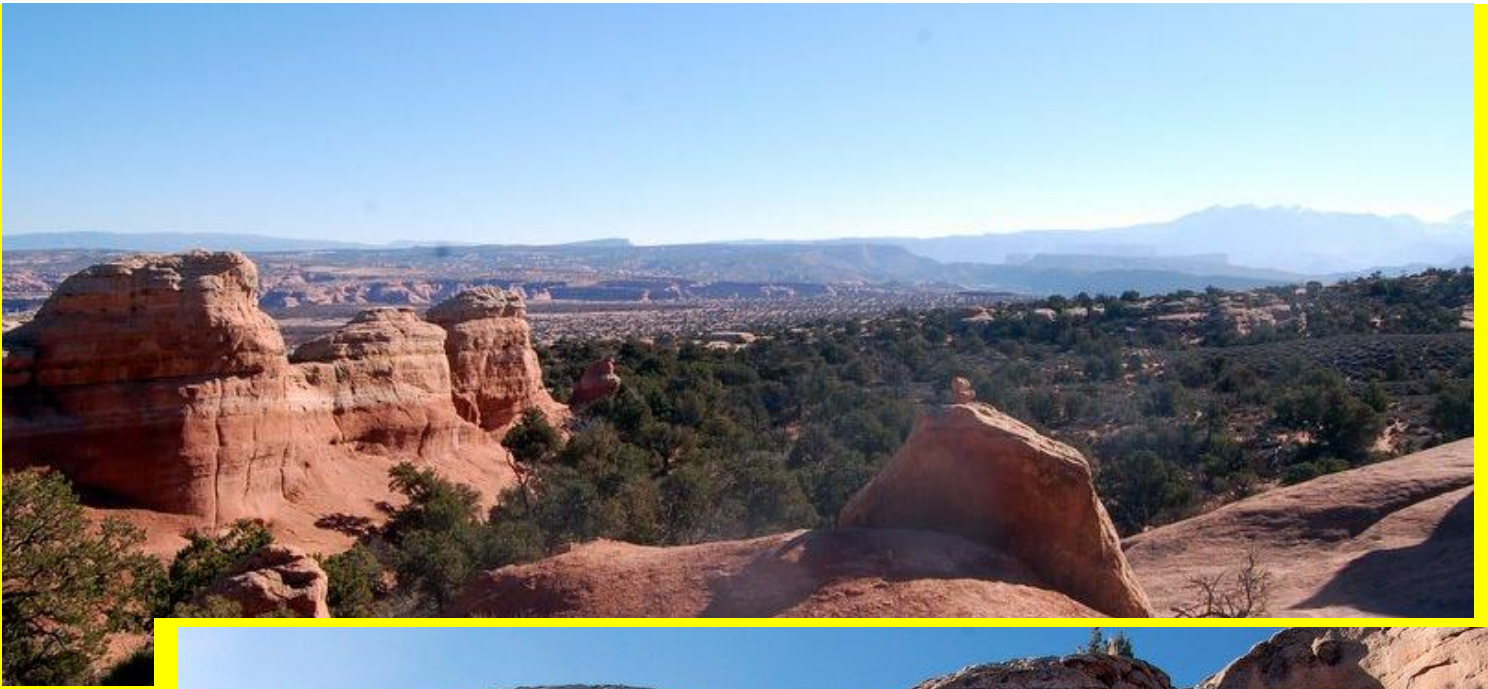
From inside the arch

They say little kids love to play in the sand under the arch.

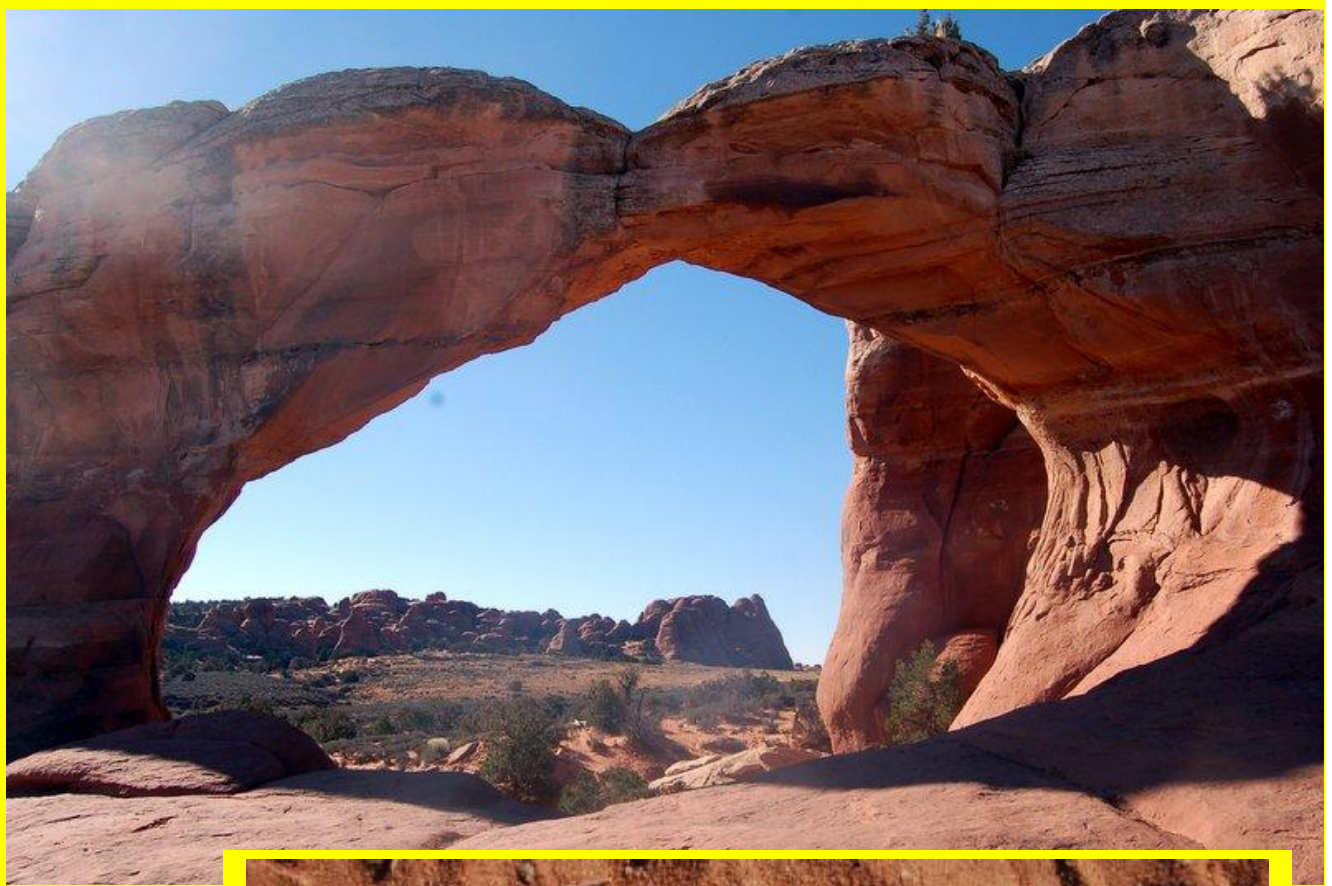


Broken Arch

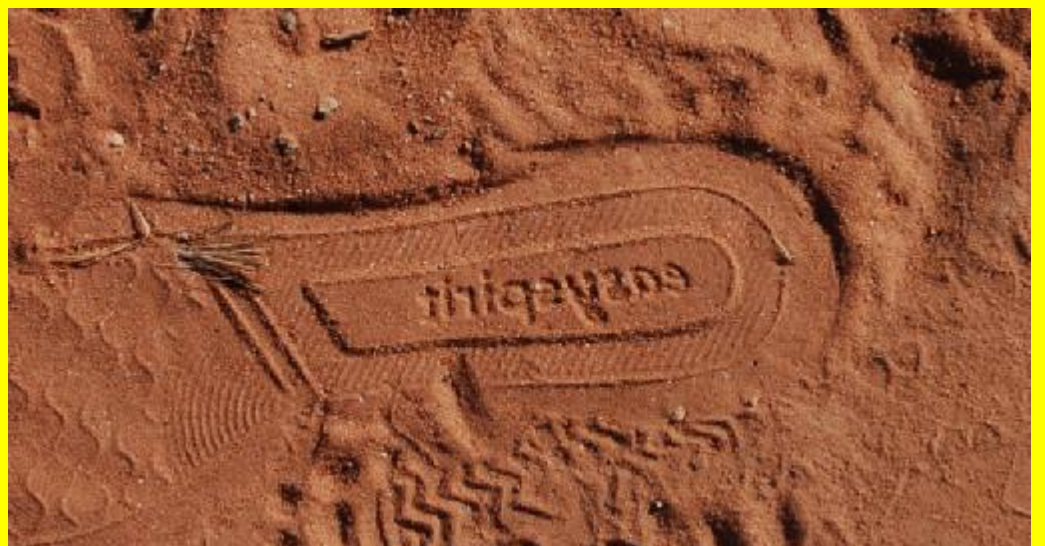
It's not really broken, its just that the large crack makes it look that way.



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The sand is so fine here that every minute detail of a tennis shoe tread can be seen. This person was wearing Easyspirit shoes. They should sell this stuff to golf courses for sand traps.



I still had plenty of time to kill before the 1:00 Fiery Furnace tour, so I drove into Moab for gas. While I was at the station I picked up lunch, mostly because they had a self-serve shake machine (I have been seeing more and more of these) and I chose a Mint Chocolate Chip shake to go with my hotdog. Moab is also where I took the mining car photo at the start. That place had all sorts of old rusty stuff sitting around. Driving into Moab and back also gave me a chance to charge up the laptop. I parked in The Fiery Furnace parking lot a little after noon and worked on the previous days newsletter until 12:50. The Ranger was there and people were gathering. I used the facilities, tied on some water and joined the group. There were 19 of us. At this time of year they only offer one tour per day. From May to October they do two per day. During the busiest times reservations have to be made weeks in advance.



Our Ranger guide Alice, originally from Seattle, made sure we all had proper footwear and some water.



We start our descent into The Fiery Furnace.

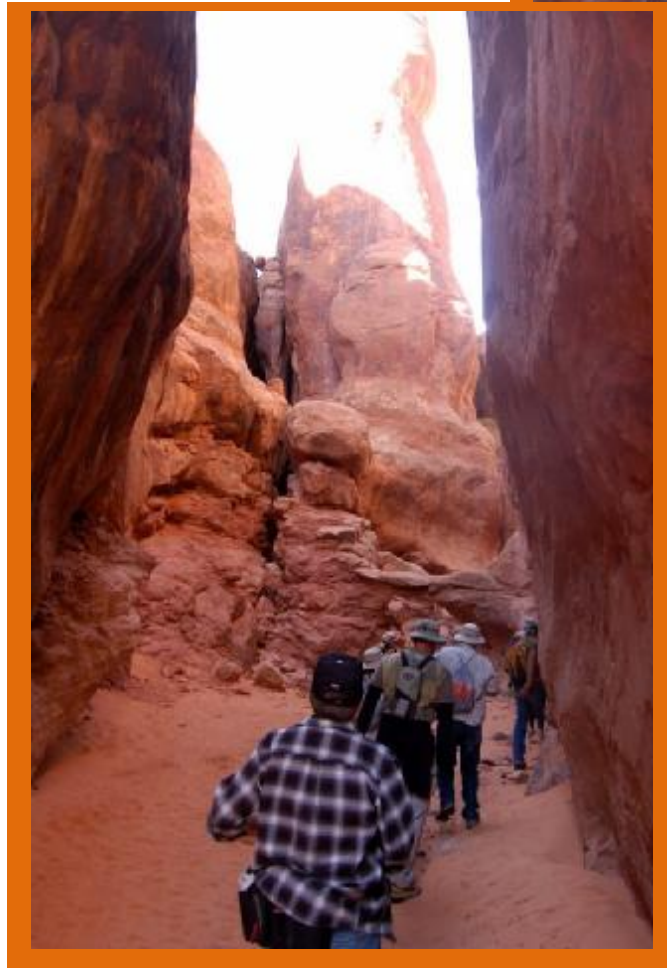




Obviously I can't take pictures of myself going through all the obstacles on the tour, so you get to watch other people do it.

We had to keep single file so as not to damage any of the fragile soil of the area.

Alice will take us on a 2.2 mile, three hour hike that winds through terrain requiring scrambling up and through narrow cracks and along narrow ledges above drop-offs.



You can tell this is the off-season, no children and only one person under 30 in our group.

The Fiery Furnace is named for the colors the afternoon sun brings out of the rocks, not for the temperature.

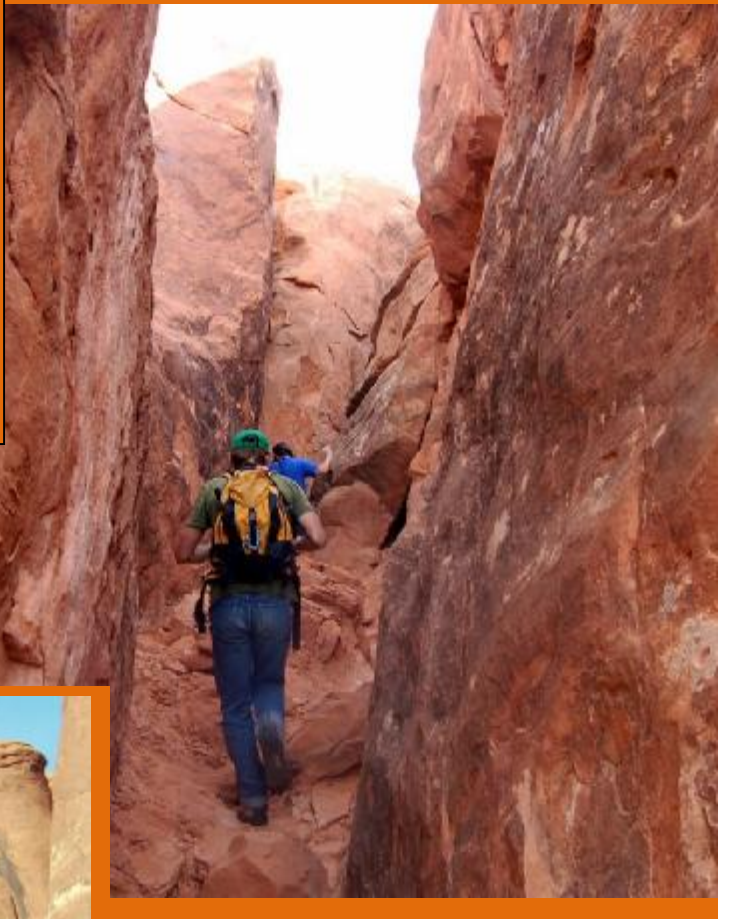
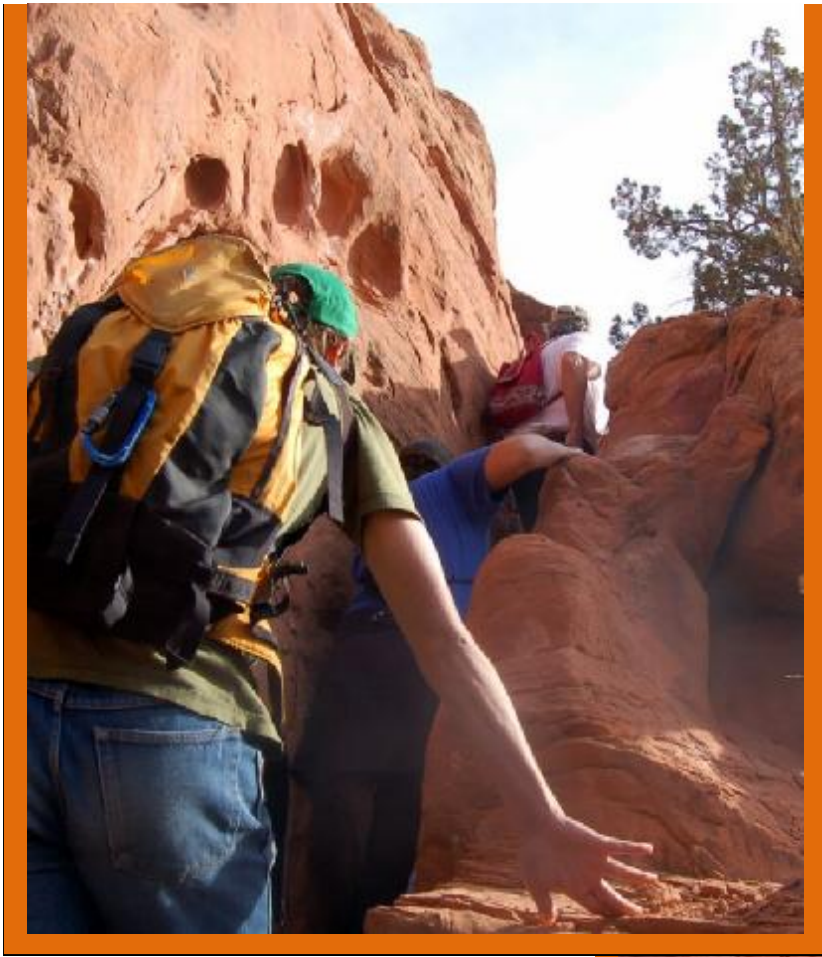
Right: Doorway Arch

We all got to walk through the doorway to the chamber beyond where Alice talked a little about erosion. Then, if anyone wanted to, they could crawl through Dog Bone Arch pictured below.

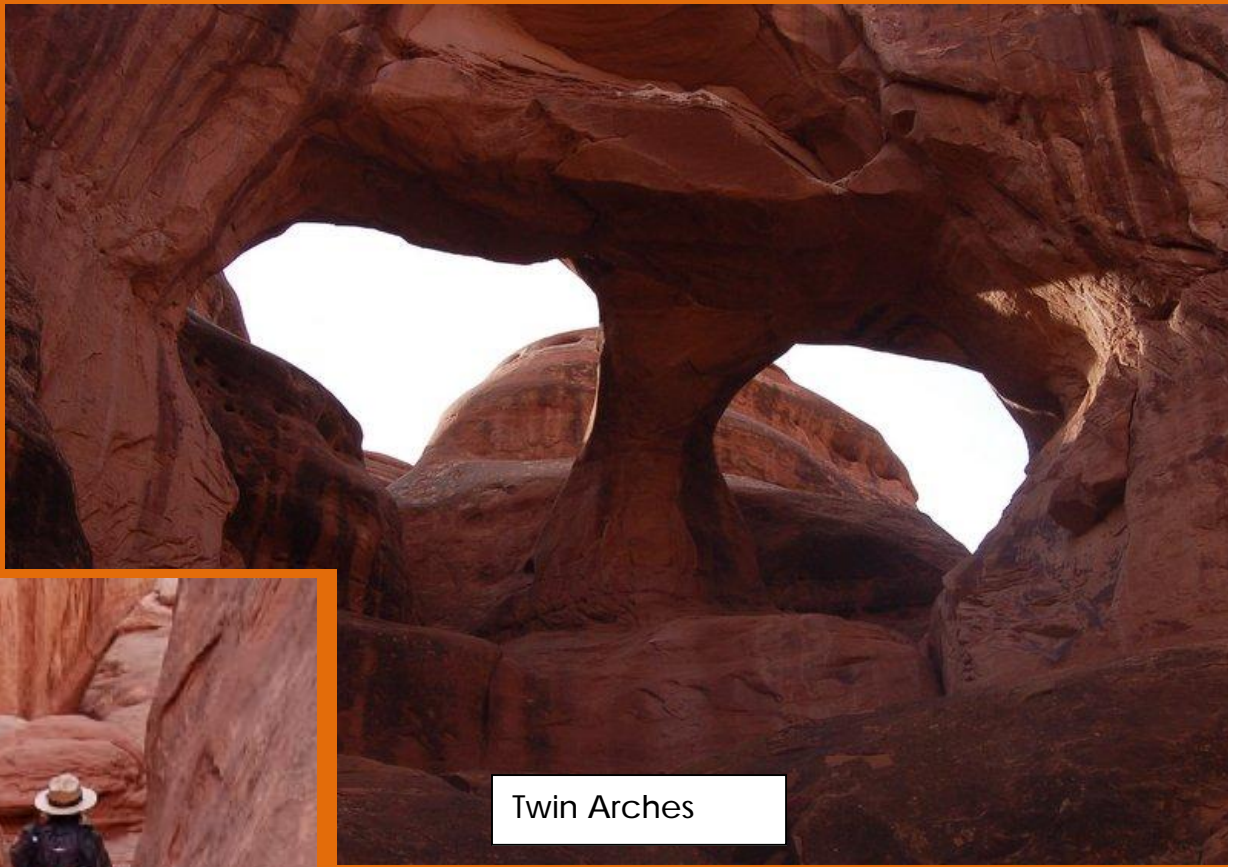
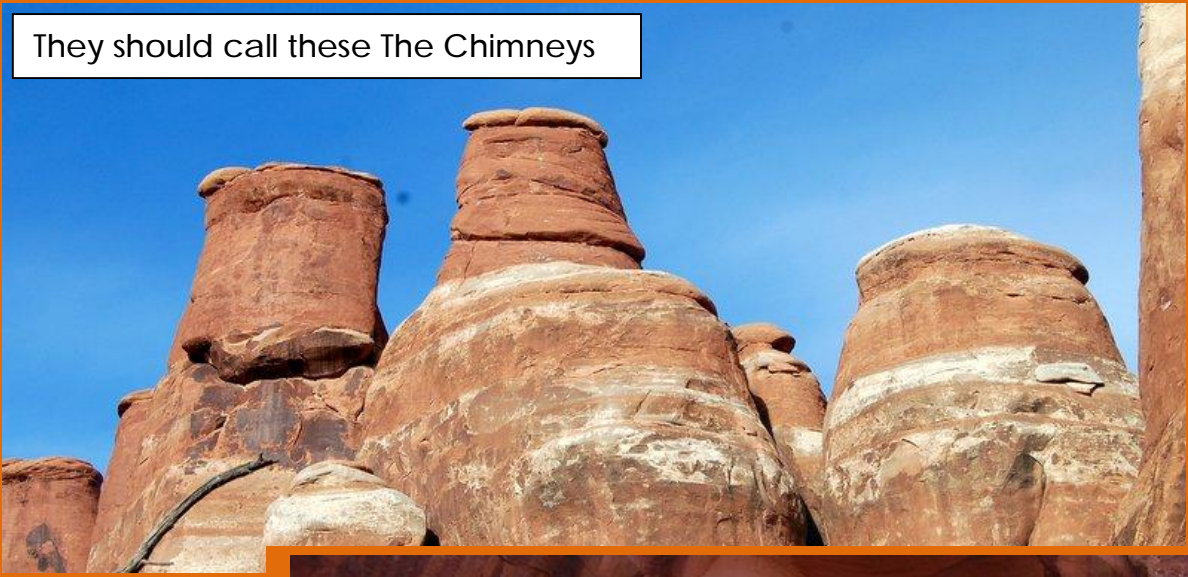


Doing my impression of Atlas holding up the World.

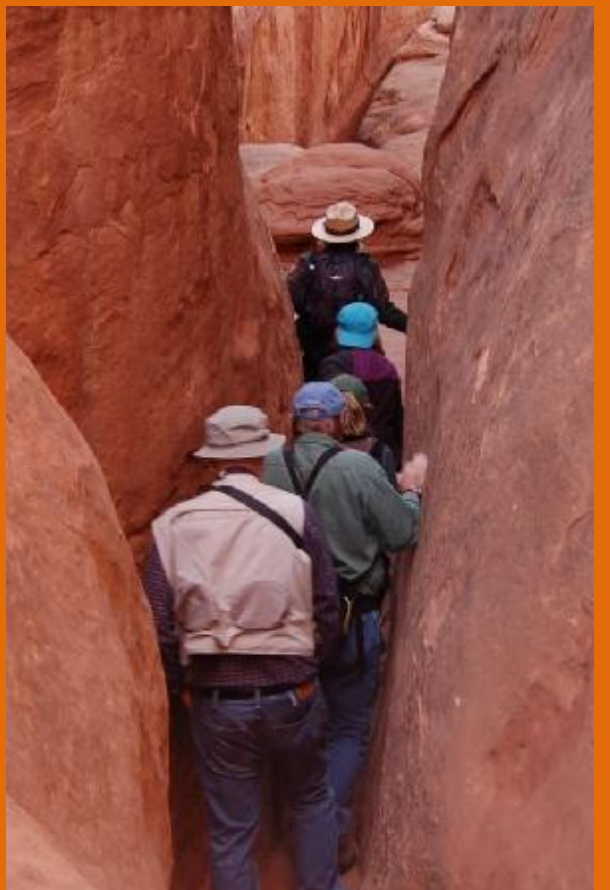




They should call these The Chimneys

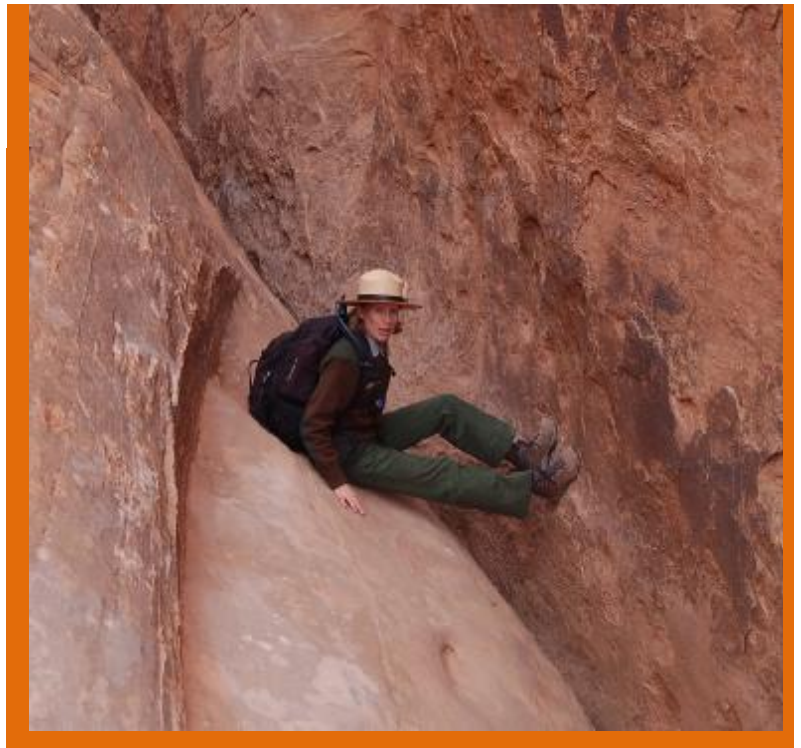


Twin Arches

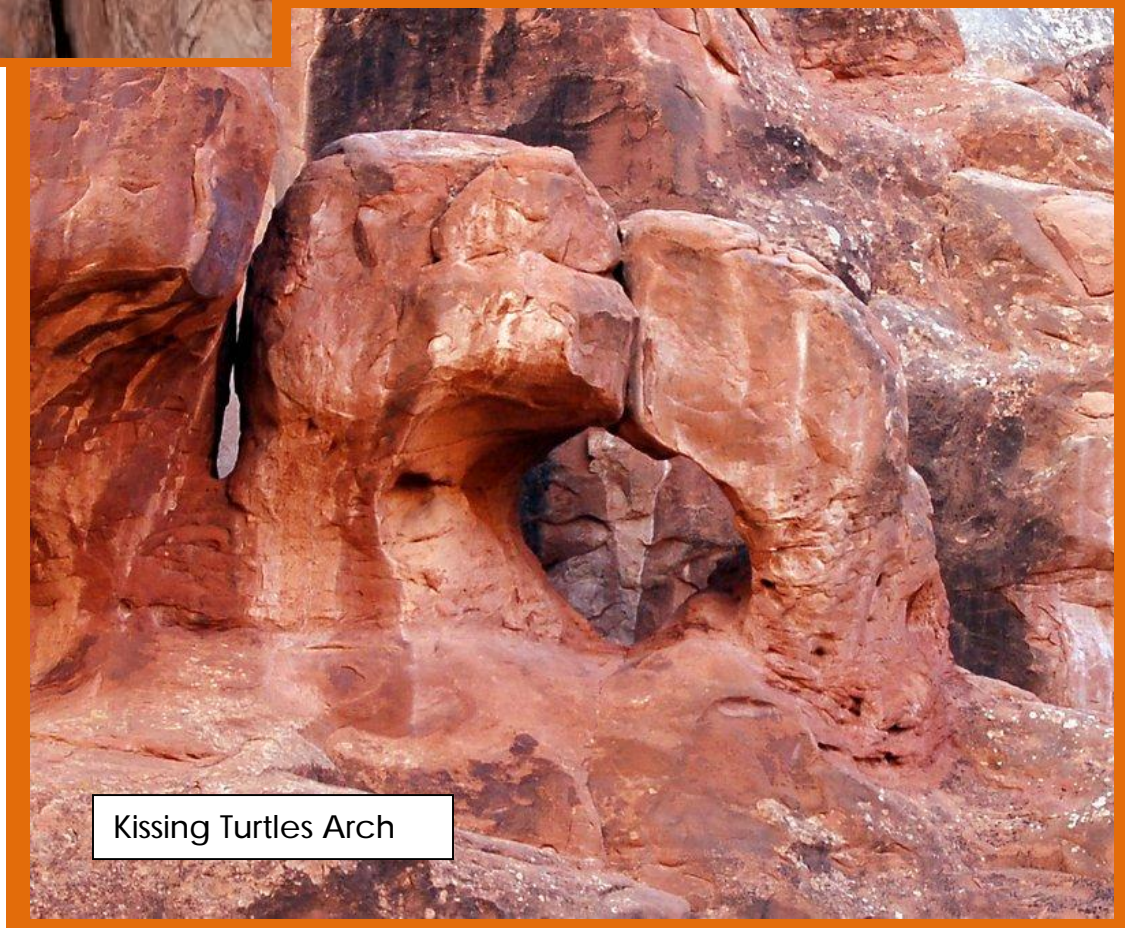


I said it should be The Lone Ranger's Mask. Alice then said if you look at it upside down it's called The Skull

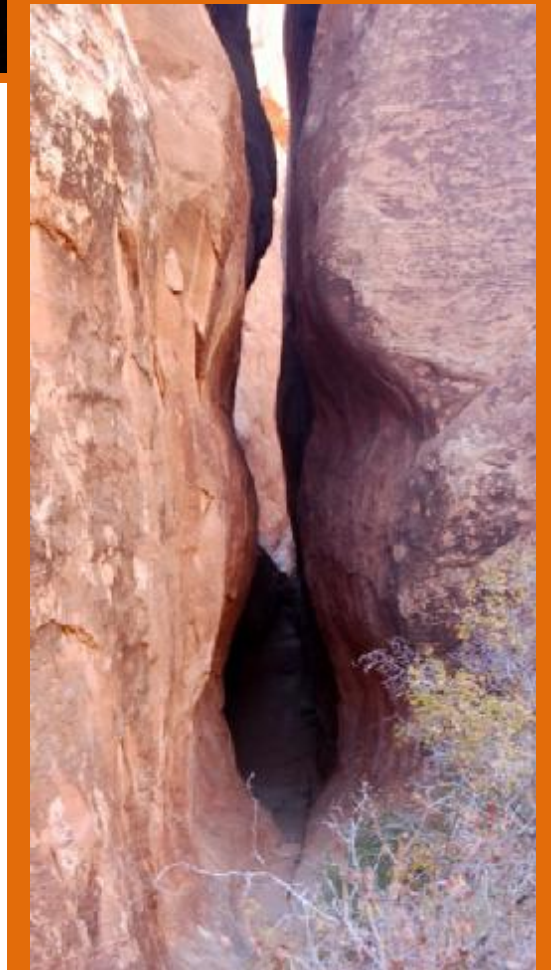
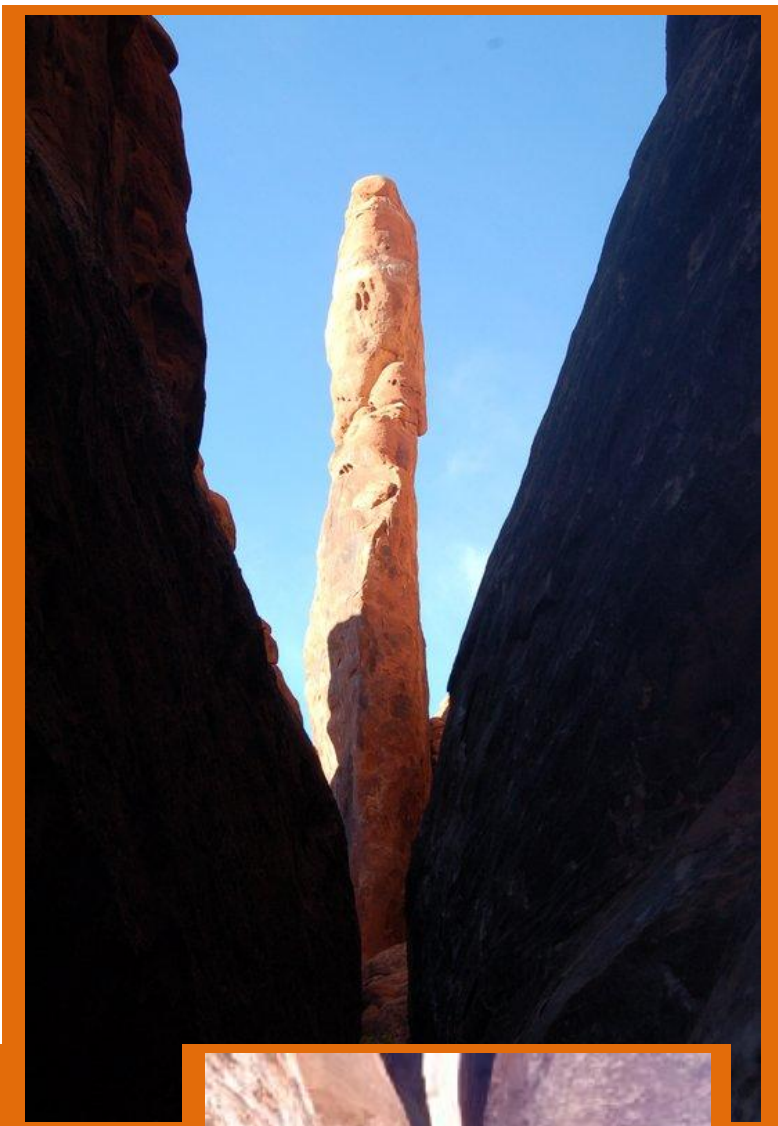
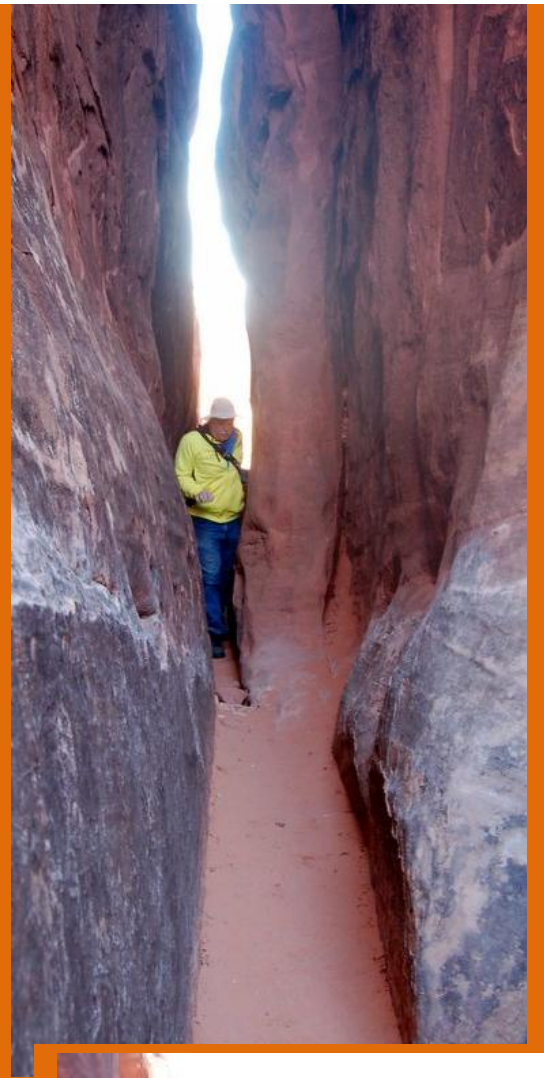
Alice is demonstrating the "L" method of how to negotiate that narrow crack and get to the other side.



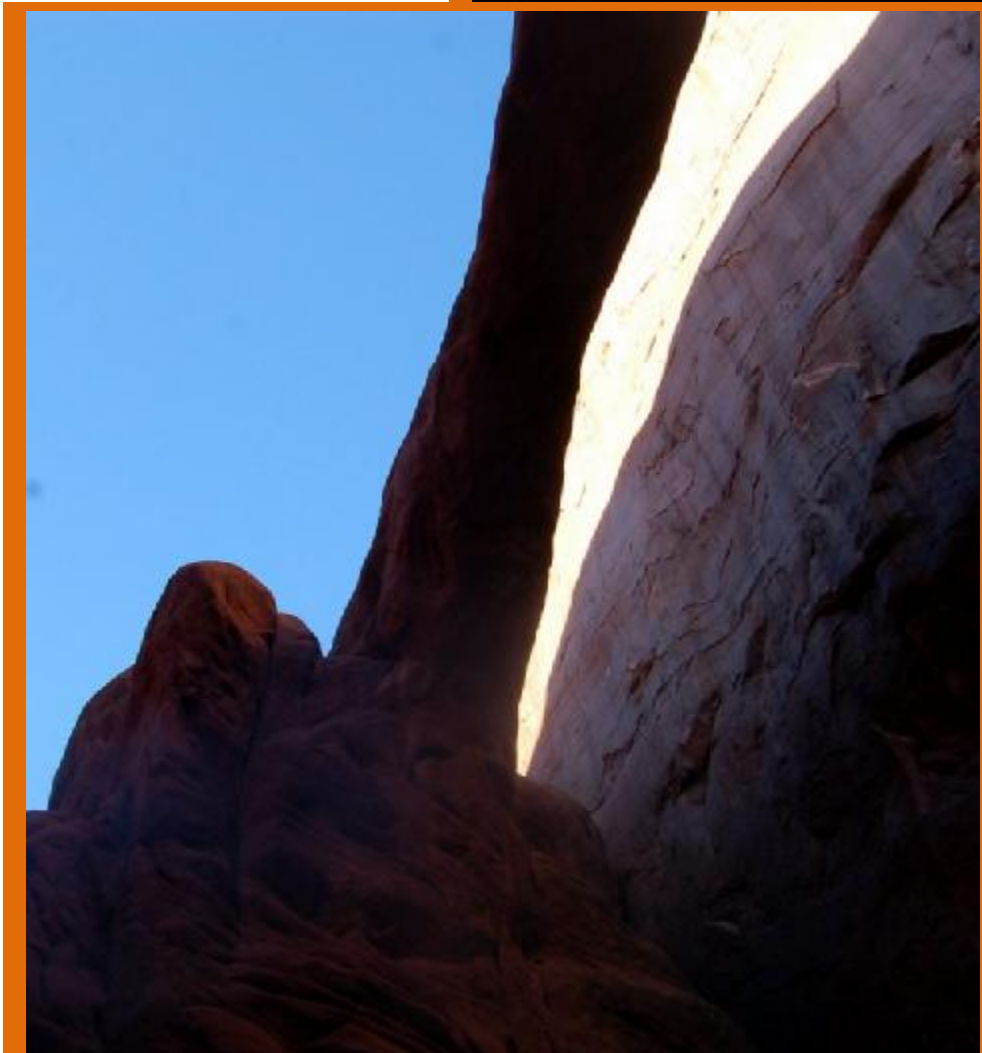
Most people chose the "X" method - one hand and one foot on each side.



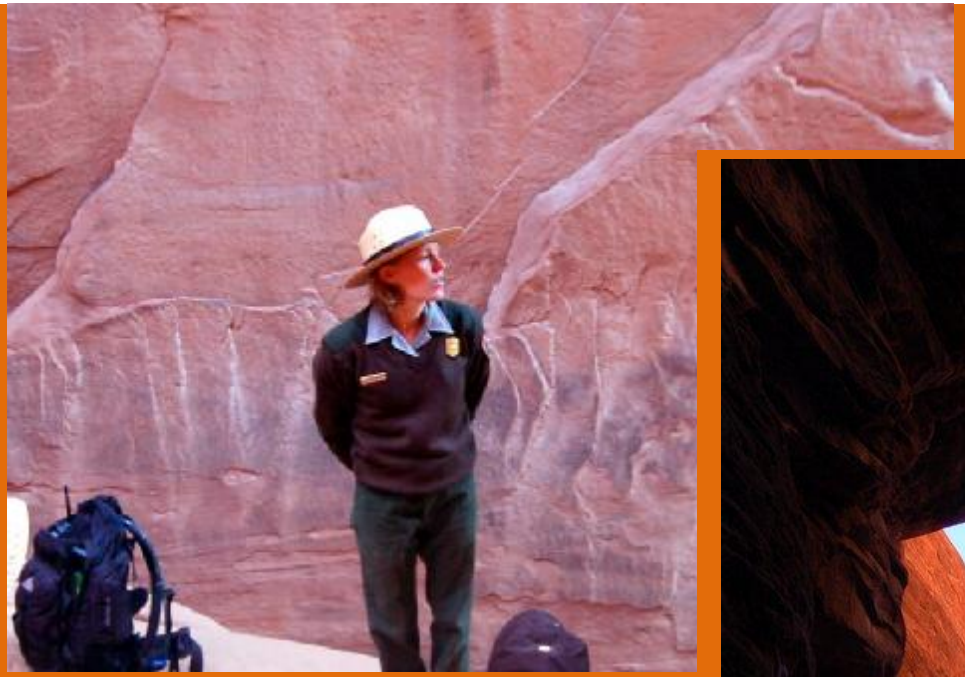
Kissing Turtles Arch



After walking along the narrow ledge to the left, we came upon Surprise Arch. So named because 1) it is a surprise to find it in the middle of the fins and 2) because you are looking down at where you are walking, and when you look up... Surprise!



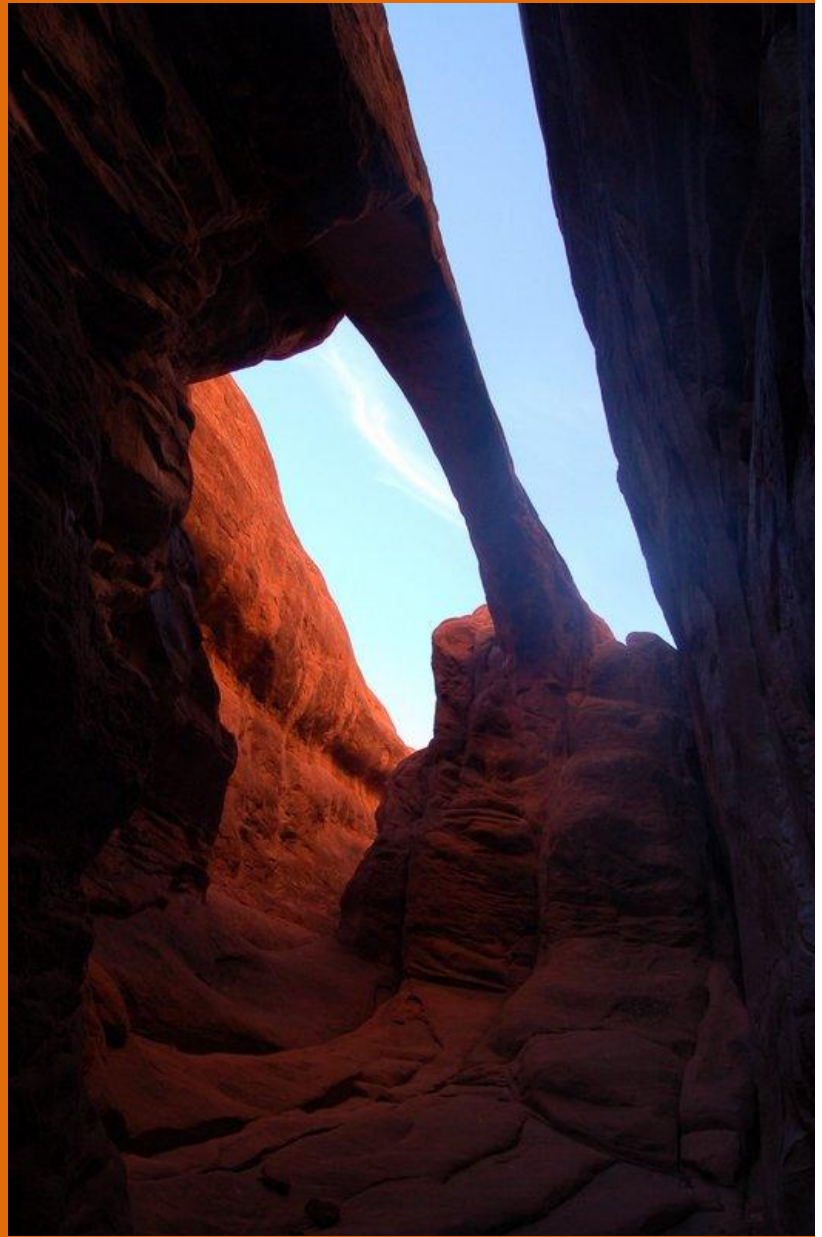
It is so narrow here that it is hard to get a good picture, but the black is the arch. I did get a better picture, below, as we left the grotto.



Above: Alice telling us about how we can make a difference to the damage being done to natural features in all National Parks by conserving energy, not polluting, etc, etc.

Right: The best shot of Surprise Arch.

Below: Making our way out of The Fiery Furnace.



By the end of the tour it was getting close to sunset. I drove around a little to further charge the laptop, then went back to camp and made my dinner while it was still light out for a change.

I worked on the newsletter until the laptop died. I checked the fire with plans of making a s'more, but there weren't even any coals. It was only 9:07 but, since I wanted to get an early start in the morning, as I intended to spend the day in Canyonlands – Island in the Sky and hopefully hit Dead Horse Point State Park for sunset, I decided to hit the hay.

Sometime in the night the propane heater gave out as the 20LB tank ran out of fuel. I had anticipated this and had the 7LB tank standing by. A quick changeover and I was back to sleep.