

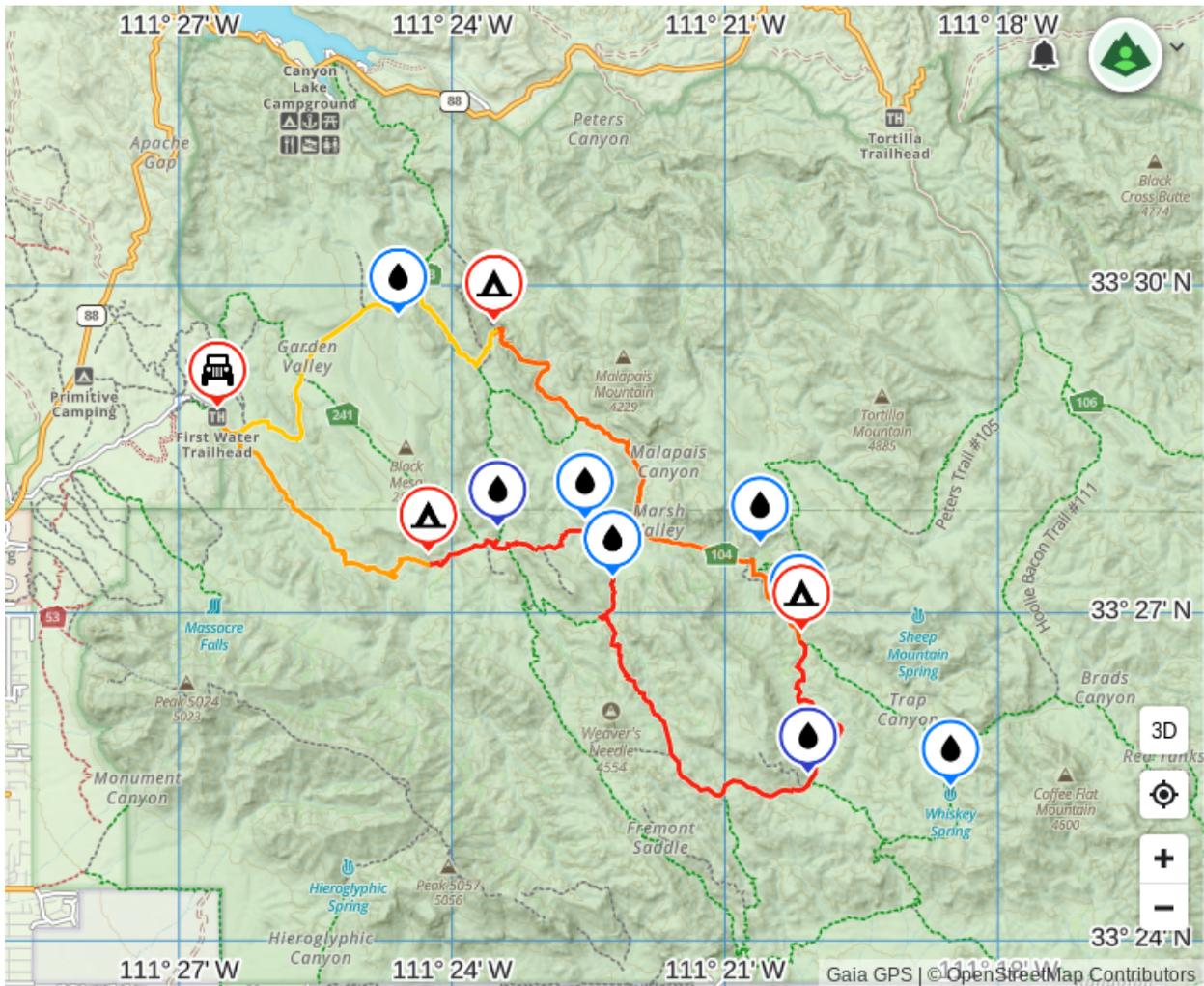


Superstition Wilderness Backpacking

11/19/22 to 11/22/22

24.6 Mile Loop

[GPX Files](#)



***This is the land of the Akimel O'dhem, O'dham Jewed, and Hahakam

Trip Summary

I did this trip the weekend before Thanksgiving. We started the loop on Saturday afternoon and finished on Tuesday morning, so everyone could get to their respective places for the holiday - hence, the short first day and short last day. You could easily add on more miles to this loop to make it longer. The GPX folder linked at the top has our trail routes, pins for water sources, and pins for our campsites.

Much of this route follows trails that are in canyons, which means the trails get a little less sun. This can be a good or a bad thing depending on the season. The route takes you to the narrows of Le Barge Canyon and later on gives you some superb views of the Weaver's Needle. And even though you are just an hour outside of Phoenix, you will feel like you are worlds further away. There is no cell service, and many of the trails are desolate. Expect to see folks closer to trailheads, but once you are 4+ miles from a trail head, there is little traffic. Some trails are a little overgrown (especially in the fall) and require careful eyes with some route finding skills.

The weather was pretty perfect, but could have been a tad warmer. Lows ranged from 40's more days down to the 30's one morning. Highs were in the 60's. The trail is very exposed, so I got a lot of sun, and it could easily become a hot hike during the warmer months. Winds were strong from sun up to sun down but luckily died down overnight. There was daylight from around 7am to around 6pm. This year was also a fairly wet monsoon season, so there will be less water along the trail during drier years.

Day by Day Breakdown

Day One

Starting location: Second Water Trailhead

Ending Location: Upper Le Barge Canyon

Hike Length: 5.1 miles

Ascent: 559 ft

Route: Second Water #236, right on Boulder Canyon #103, left on a user trail going to Le Barge Canyon

Water Sources: Second Water Spring and Le Barge Canyon Pools

Summary: This day went by quickly. I think we started hiking around 1:30pm and arrived at our campsite around 5pm. We passed a couple day hikers early on while on the Second Water Trail. One group warned us that parts of the trail coming down Bull Pass were quite overgrown due to the tall grass at this time of year. We did not stop at Second Water Spring to filter water, since we had plenty for the day.

To access Le Barge Canyon, look for a user trail on the left hand side about a mile down Boulder Canyon trail. There was a small cairn at the turn off. The trail goes up and over Battleship Mountain and is faint in some areas. There was a great campsite just after the trail

started to go down, but it was occupied. If you continue down to the canyon bottom, there is another great spot, which is where we camped. The pools of water we filtered were located next to this campsite.

This night was also the first night I tried rehydrating my dinner in a 'Stasher' bag, and it worked! I have been using some reusable ziplocs for a while now, but not all of them are able to hold hot liquids. So, I simply added hot water to my dehydrated meal and waited about 20 minutes. Some of the beans were still a little crunchy, but everything else was perfect. It was super easy, convenient, and easy to clean up.

Day Two

Starting Location: Upper Le Barge Canyon

Ending Location: Wash near Le Barge Spring

Hike Length: 6.2 miles

Ascent: 648 ft

Route: Traveled up Le Barge Canyon until it met Cavalry Trail #239, then went left. And turned left on Dutchman Trail #104.

Water Sources: Charlebois Spring, Oak Spring, Le Barge Spring

Summary: This day, I traveled off-trail to explore Le Barge Canyon a little bit. It required some pack-passing, scrambling, and route finding. I only recommend this route for the adventurous and experienced backpacker. However, some of the coolest parts of the canyon are in the beginning, so it's easy to explore without doing the whole shindig. If you are not experienced, leave your packs at the campsite and explore the canyon a little bit. Then, hike out the way you came and continue down Boulder Canyon #103 and turn right on Cavalry Trail #239. You will meet up with my route on Cavalry Trail.

This day was short mileage, but took us a long time. I think it took about 3 hours to travel the first 2 miles up the canyon. Once we were back on the trail, it was pretty smooth sailing. This is the day I regretted wearing shorts. There were a lot of pokey things in the canyon, and (surprise!) they were along the trail too. I filtered water in the morning in Le Barge Canyon, and again near camp at Oak Spring. Oak Spring was just a small pool on the left of the trail. There is supposed to be a trough at Le Barge Spring, but we didn't look for it.

Day Three

Starting Location: Wash near Le Barge Spring

Ending Location: Campsite past West Boulder Canyon

Hike Length: 9.8 miles

Ascent: 1,269 ft

Route: Dutchman Trail #104 to Bluff Spring #235. Right on Terrapin Trail #234. Right on Dutchman Trail #104. Left on Bull Pass #129. Continue straight onto Dutchman Trail #104.

Water Sources: Crystal Spring, Pools of water off Dutchman Trail, Stream before Bull Pass, Little Boulder Canyon (some small pools)

Summary: Previously, I had learned my lesson about shorts, so I wore my long pants. I also tore a hole in my pants and got lots of pricks in them, so don't wear your favorite pants, because they will get destroyed. The hiking today had a lot of climbing but also provided some amazing views. We passed many water sources, but goofed because we thought there would be one near where we wanted to camp. And there was, but it was a pretty tiny pool and made filtering a tad difficult. I highly recommend topping off water as you go during this section.

If you want a longer hike out the next day, there is a left hand turn off Bull Pass #129 that takes you to the top of Black Top Mesa. It would be .7 miles each way, and the views on top are supposed to be breathtaking.

Once we hit the Dutchman trail for the last time, there were a ton of good campsites around trail junctions. After some discussion with our group, we decided to push a little further, so we could have a shorter hike the next day. Our spot was a little tight for 3 people, but we made it work. There was another spot about a half mile further that we passed the next day that would have also been nice.

Day Four

Starting Location: Campsite past West Boulder Canyon

Ending Location: Second Water Trailhead

Hike Length: 3.5 miles

Ascent: 250 ft

Route: Dutchman Trail #104

Water Sources: N/A

Summary: This day was super short and sweet! We started hiking just after 7am and reached the trailhead just before 9am. We didn't have to filter any water either. It was a great way to end a weekend of backpacking.

Packing List

Gear

1 Tarp (Stoic tent Footprint)	Titanium Spork
3 meters P-cord	Stasher Snack Bag (for rehydrating meals)
2 ft duct tape	4L Dromedary
Z Lite Pad	2.5 L Hydration Bladder
Klymit Static V Short	Tiny Nalgene (for electrolytes and hot drinks)
Klymit XL Pillow	GSI Outdoors Trowel
Osprey Ariel AG 65L	Toilet Paper
Black Diamond Revolt 350 Headlamp	First Aid Kit
Snow Peak Gigapower Stove	1 small pocket knife
1 3.9oz Isopro Fuel Canister	Garmin InReach
1 lighter	Iphone (with gaia maps downloaded)
MSR Alpine Stowaway 1.1L Pot	
GSI Outdoors Compact Scraper	

**Another person in the group had paper maps of the area*

**I didn't bring a water filter but the group had a Platypus GravityWorks 2.0 and a Katadyn 1.0 BeFree*

**I didn't sleep in a tent, because no rain was forecasted, temps were mild, and I enjoy sleeping without a tent.*

Clothing

1 Sunhat	1 Sports Bra
1 pair Shorts	2 Underwear
1 pair Hiking Pants	2 pair Hiking Socks
1 pair lightweight Smartwool Long Underwear	1 pair warm lounge socks
1 Patagonia Puffy	1 merino wool beanie
1 Hooded heavyweight Baselayer	1 pair Smartwool Gloves
1 Sunhoodie	1 buff
1 T-Shirt	1 pair Newton Trail Shoes
	1 pair Teva Sandals

Food

12 Bars (3 per day)	Oatmeal
Dried Mango	Sunflower Seedbutter
1 Apple	Vita Coconut Water Powder
Cashews	3+ Homemade Dehydrated Meals
Siete "Queso" Potato Chips	(Chickpea Curry with Rice, Rice & Beans,
Chocolate Chips	Quinoa with Sweet Potato & Kale)

Personal

Toothbrush & Toothpaste

Spray Bottle

Dr. Bronners Lavender Soap

Chapstick

Hand sanitizer

Sunscreen

Vaseline

Snot Bandana

Pee Bandana