

# Golden Canyon/Gower Gulch

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## **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 potential flash flood danger.

Watch your step. Biological soil crust also know 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

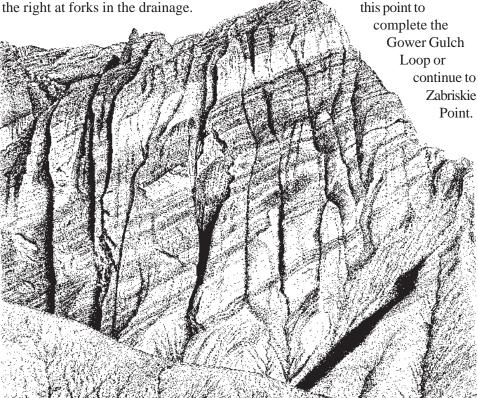
From the Golden Canyon trailhead, enter the canyon and follow the gravel wash on a gradual but steady uphill grade. Numbered markers you see along the way correspond to the Golden Canyon Interpretive Trail pamphlet available for purchase at the trailhead or the visitor center. The Golden Canyon trail ends at a signed trail junction one mile from the trailhead. For the best view of Red Cathedral's fluted walls, hike ¼ mile further up the main wash, keeping to the right at forks in the drainage.

#### Beyond Golden Canyon

If you would like to hike 1½ miles more to Zabriskie Point or to complete the 4 mile Gower Gulch Loop, take the side trail at the signed junction in Golden Canyon. To avoid confusion, follow the brown trail markers with reflective arrows. The trail climbs steeply to a divide just below Manly Beacon where the view over the badlands is a worthy goal in itself.

The trail continues over the divide to another junction at a fork in a wash.

You have the option at



#### Gower Gulch Loop

To complete the loop, leave the marked trail at the fork and go down the wash. 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 drainage down to the valley. Some rock scrambling is required to climb down a small dry falls. A final 25-foot drop-off may be uncomfortable for some hikers. It can be passed on the right (north) side by following the narrow path around the dry falls. From the canyon mouth, a path heads north along the base of the hills back to the Golden Canyon parking lot.

#### Zabriskie Point

If you goal is Zabriskie Point rather than the loop, continue on the marked trail at the fork in the wash. The trail follow the other fork up and over badland hills to a signed junction below Zabriskie Point. Following up a side wash, the trail joins what was once an old road. At a cut in the hills just north of Zabriskie Point the trail tops out and ends at the parking lot.

An option for returning to the Golden Canyon trailhead is to retrace your steps to the last signed trail junction and follow the Gower Gulch drainage back to the valley. This will make a longer (5½ miles) version of the Gower Gulch Loop.

