

## VIRGIN SPRINGS RIDE (SAN RAFAEL CANYON)



Virgin Springs

**Description:** This route follows the beautiful San Rafael River part way through the high cliffs and narrow river bottom of the San Rafael Canyon. It culminates at the Virgin Spring. Most of the ride is in the Sids Mountain Wilderness Study Area. The trail crosses the San Rafael River at least eight times and passes an old copper mine. If you keep an eye on the west cliffs on the ride up Virgin Spring Canyon you will see a pictograph panel about head high to a horse rider.



San Rafael Canyon

**Directions:** This fourteen mile round trip ride starts at the Fuller Bottom trail head and goes down the upper portion of the San Rafael Canyon (Box) to where the Virgin River Canyon enters. From the trail head ride across the river and stay on the two track as it swings east and south and goes through a wire gate. Stay on this two track

as it climbs out of river bottom until a fence that is paralleling the way turns to the east. Follow the fence to a well used trail that goes down a steep hill. This trail will take you to the river bottom.

Riding the San Rafael River you need to keep a watch for the cattle trails as they show the best river crossings. As you ride the river keep an eye out for the Sorrel Mule Mine on the south side of the river. This is an old copper mine that does not go too deep but has a noticeable waste rock slide on the side of the hill. The trail will cross some slick rock and drop off a small rock ledge. This ledge drops off into the North Salt Wash which you will cross. Continue following the San Rafael River watch for a large canyon with a narrow mouth coming in from the south with several cottonwood trees in the mouth. This is Virgin Spring Canyon.



The crossing in to Virgin Springs Canyon is the most difficult crossing. There is a nice gravel bar about 20 feet west of where the drainage comes into the river. We only commit one horse at a time because if you miss the gravel bar the bottom can be very soft. Once across just follow the trail up the canyon. Keep a watch on the west side of the canyon for some Indian writing about head high for a rider on horseback. The lower canyon ends about ½ mile from the river with a large pool of water under a pour off.