

Wade's Walkabout

## Snow Hiking:

# Better Amidst Red Rock

By Mark Wade



Thoughts of winter or early spring can conjure scenes of skiing and snowboarding, but it's also a great time for walking or hiking, even in snowy conditions. While the St. George area occasionally receives some snow, southwestern Utah has some excellent higher elevation destinations where snow is more common. These areas include Pine Valley Mountain, the Kolob Terrace, the mountains east of Cedar City and Beaver and along the high plateaus around Bryce Canyon. Our preference is to find any location amidst the colorful red rock where the snow is deep.

### Getting Out There

One recent adventure—the day after a snowstorm—led us to a series of rock outcroppings where we could explore in and around large crevices of rust colored sandstone. From a parking area near the road, we circled through stands of sage, following a naturally eroded passageway until we reached the base of the nearby formations. Bob Grove and I, with our wives Susan and Denise, traipsed below the rock contours, ducking beneath snow-laden scrub oak branches while attempting to avoid cold gifts of moisture inside our collars and down our backs.



#### About the Author

*Mark Wade is active in hiking, writing, photography, and videography. He works as a tourism marketing consultant, for which he has won numerous awards. He is a weekly guest on the KSL Outdoors radio show. Mark is the former Director of Tourism for southwestern Utah and has served on the board of directors for various tourism associations.*



Along the way we spotted icicles, like monster teeth, with their sun-warmed water droplets darkening the red rock along sandstone shelves. Normally rough terrain was smoothed by the nearly twelve inches of fresh powder, and we enjoyed trying to find footholds and grips under the snow as we ascended stair stepping ledges into a slot canyon. The narrow chamber of the slot provided hollow echoes of our snow-crunching steps, heavy breathing, and occasional verbal expressions of delight at what we were discovering.

We pressed into dark narrow passageways where sunlight could not easily reach. On a waist-high ledge, my wife compacted small balls of snow to create a ten-inch snowman. The snowball concept caught on with the rest of us, and soon, we were embattled in the best slot-canyon snowball fight imaginable. Bob and I were quickly reminded that our wives still had the athletic touch as we were continuously pelted by fastballs that would have impressed any major league scout.

Rising to higher vantage points, we took in the surrounding views where a heavy blanket of snow had pressed the open space foliage close to the ground. The red rocks simply protruded upward, undaunted, proudly displaying their winter coats and reflecting the cloud-filtered rays of the sun.

#### Preparation

Bear in mind that these kinds of adventures are most enjoyable when you are dressed warm and prepared with appropriate gear and supplies. Waterproof boots are a must for trekking in snow, and comfortable pants, jackets, gloves, and hats round out the general clothing necessities. Bring layers of clothing that can be removed or added, depending on conditions. Trekking poles are always helpful, and snowshoes may be needed for deeper snow. Bring along other usual hiking items (snacks, water, camera, etc.), and you're ready for a great winter or early spring excursion.



Wade's Walkabout  
Finding Meaning and Healing in the Outdoors

For destination ideas, visit ..  
[www.RoadTrippinWithBobAndMark.com](http://www.RoadTrippinWithBobAndMark.com)

 Also on Facebook and Instagram 