

## Steinbeck Trail Escondido, Jan. 6



Ever since the first time I came to Puerto Escondido 8 years ago on another trip with Enosis, I had wanted to check out an amazing oasis canyon in the high Sierra Gigante Mountains to the west of Escondido, Canyon Tabor. These mountains rise from the sea level desert floor to their precipitous peaks a few miles inland. The moisture from the Pacific is rung out of the clouds as they pile up on the 5,000 foot peaks of this mountain range. The rain then finds it way over the cliffs and faults to carve out a steep-sided green oasis in these desert mountains. What I love about these types of canyon hikes in the desert is the contrast of plants, animals and micro climes making each environment sharper and more interesting to the eye and all your senses as you transition

from one to the other and back. This trail through the gorge is popularly known as the Steinbeck Canyon Trail, and I was determined not to let this opportunity go by once more. Don from Second Safari was also very eager to go hiking there so we gathered what we needed for a day hike and set off for the trail head a couple miles away. The hike can be rugged, and there would be a few challenges but heck, what can't a couple of determined 60 something guys not do?







We worked our way up the canyon where it was obvious there had been massive floods in ancient times. Boulders as big as houses were deposited at random in the canyon sometimes almost blocking it. Sometimes the bottom of this winding cleft between steep solid rock cliffs was gravel and cobbles, other times water-worn smooth rock, or huge boulders. For scale find Don in the picture at left. As we continued into the canyon the plants changed from coastal desert cactus and dry desert scrub, to flowering plants and substantial banyan trees, even palm trees. The force of the floods would scour this narrow canyon and only the most tenacious of

trees clinging to the rocks could survive. After a short scramble, we began to see signs of recent water and soon after we could hear water splashing over rocks even though the streambed was dry. We came around a bend and in front of us was a beautiful little waterfall that dropped down a smooth ledge into a coarse sandy patch and disappeared into the ground.

**Click here or cut and paste to see the waterfall.**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxSfC27Ri0Z\\_dnVoVU9LRFJqaVE/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxSfC27Ri0Z_dnVoVU9LRFJqaVE/view?usp=sharing)

From that point forward we were treated with greater water flow, new waterfalls, pools, and dramatic vistas. If it had just been a bit later in the year, some of the sculpted smooth pools would be a wonderful place to spend a hot spring day in the mountains of Baja California. If it held true as it did for us the whole day, one would have the entire canyon t

As we worked our way deeper into the ever more convoluted canyon, we were confronted with increasingly challenging climbs and work-arounds as the canyon became steeper, narrower and clogged with massive bus size boulders and flash flood debris. Because of the scale, it was sometimes hard to photograph a scene and capture the size of the boulders and rock structures. Along the way we were treated



to glimpses of different and unusual birds and even tiny colorful toads. **Click here or cut and paste to see another video of the canyon.** . [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxSfC27Ri0Z\\_Q1ZNSIZxdVNRWGs/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxSfC27Ri0Z_Q1ZNSIZxdVNRWGs/view?usp=sharing)





Finally, after several hours we were stymied by a wall of giant boulders. Without proper rock climbing equipment we could go no further. Still, what we did see made the tough hike well worth it. Though tired, the return hike was just as interesting and beautiful. Next time I will return with the right equipment to get past the road block and explore more of this amazing place; hopefully before I have to back pack in my walker.



A little inhabitant of the canyon



Not a little inhabitant of the canyon