

You've made it to the land of strange and stunning rock formations known as Red Pockets. A garden of oddly-shaped boulders and fins awaits your exploration! This vivid, red-brown sandstone is called Esplanade Sandstone. It was deposited in the Permian period, over 250 million years ago. The environment was drastically different at this time. Where you now see desert sprinkled with Joshua trees and cactus, in the Permian, you would have seen large, muddy rivers and swampy territory.

Take a stroll through the rock formations to see examples of cross-bedded sandstone, evidence of the river that once flowed here. Cross-bedding occurs when sediments are transported downstream and are deposited in waves. As the current carries sand grains downstream, they are pushed up into hills that reach a tipping point and eventually avalanche down the other side. This creates a wave-like pattern on the river bed. As sediments continue to be deposited, the "waves" stack up. The lines you see in cross-bedded sandstone can indicate how fast the current was moving and which way it was flowing!

Parashant, unlike many of the surrounding landscapes, is relatively devoid of the rich red sandstone so synonymous with the American Southwest. Here at Red Pockets, however, is one of the few chances you'll get to see red sandstone on the Monument. As the sandstone erodes under the pressures of wind and water, it gets broken down smaller and smaller until it becomes the sand beneath your feet. Try as you might, it is awfully difficult to keep that sand from getting in to everything. When you get home, it's likely there will be a little bit of Red Pockets stuck in your socks.

Don't open until you arrive

1. Sand In Your Shoes

Take a picture!

N 36° 37' 13.3"
W 113° 58' 12.0"

You can try to leave the desert, but the desert goes with you.

Turn off the main County Rd. 242, find safe place to park away from any blind corners or hills. Short walk is required, distance dependent on where you park.

Difficulty: ♦♦♦ -

#FindItAtParashant