

# Zion National Park

## 1-Day Deluxe Itinerary

### Editor's Note

Zion is one of the most spectacular national parks in the entire country. There are actually several sections, but by far the most popular area is Zion Canyon. The scenery is breathtaking, and the park is home to two of the most iconic hikes in the world. It's easy to see why this is also one of the most popular parks in the United States.

With popularity comes people. It can be difficult to know the best way to beat the crowds, when to do the hikes (and what to do if you prefer not to hike), where to see the best views, and what else the park has to offer.

This is what this itinerary planner is here for.

Follow this detailed plan, while making choices along the way, and you will have the perfect 1-day itinerary tailored to your needs but without the stress and hassle of planning from scratch.

Have an amazing trip to Zion!

*James*

**James Ian**  
Founder



**Parks Collecting**

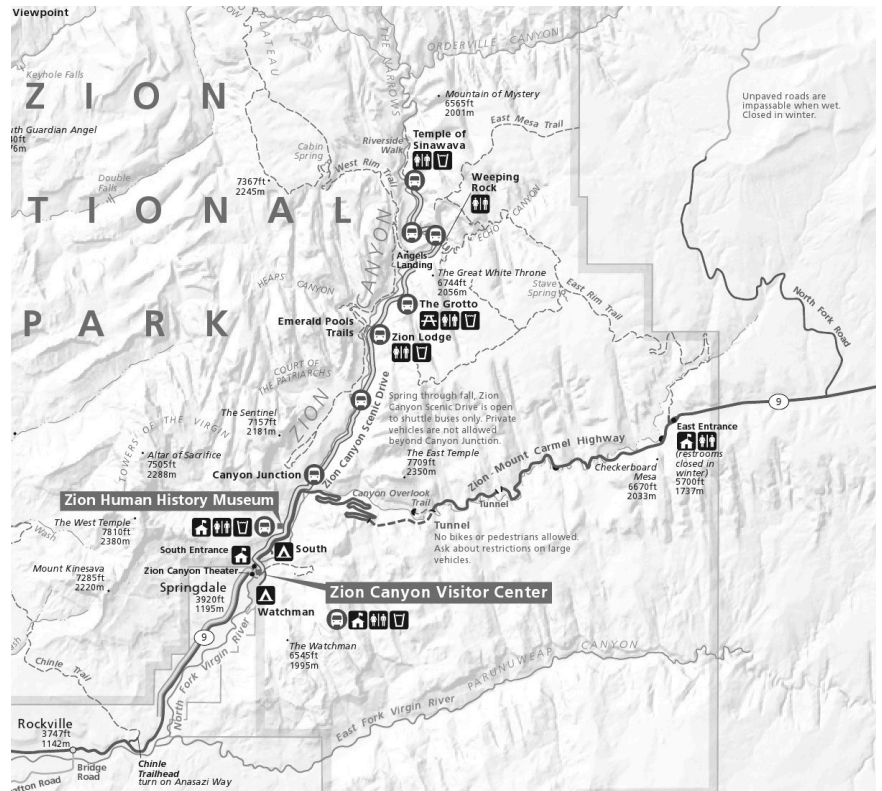


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# PARK OVERVIEW

## Getting Your Bearings

There are actually four main sections to Zion National Park. The section that most people visit - and where you'll spend your day on this itinerary - is **Zion Canyon**. This is the main canyon. A free [shuttle bus](#) runs along the floor of the canyon for most of the year, and it's closed to regular traffic whenever the shuttle is operating.

There is also the **Upper East Canyon** (East Section), which is atop the main canyon. Another area is **Kolob Terrace**. This is much less visited. The fourth section is **Kolob Canyons**, located in the isolated northwestern section of Zion National Park, 40 miles from the main canyon and accessed via a separate entrance.

The town of **Springdale** is just outside the main South Entrance, and most people stay there, although there are other places to stay nearby and inside the park, too.



# TIPS FOR VISITING

## Entrance Fee

Visit the [NPS website](#) for the latest fees. If you plan to visit more than a couple of parks in a year, I recommend buying an [America The Beautiful Pass](#).

## Getting There

The major gateway city is **Springdale**, and this is where this itinerary assumes you are based. There's a small regional airport in St George, an hour away, but the nearest major airport is Las Vegas Harry Reid International Airport, about 3 hours' drive away.

[>>> Click here to book your flights](#)

[>>> Click here to book your rental car](#)

Due to its proximity to **Bryce Canyon National Park**, most people combine a trip to both parks, which I recommend. I suggest starting in Bryce Canyon National Park - you can get there from Las Vegas or include the two parks in an epic road trip around Utah's Big Five national parks. From Bryce Canyon, drive south to Zion and enter the park at the East Entrance. At the end of your trip to Zion, you can drive to Las Vegas or even the Grand Canyon. The same airports service Bryce Canyon.

If you are visiting Bryce Canyon as well, you can get my [Bryce Canyon Itinerary](#) at a 20% with discount code ZNNP.

If you come from Bryce Canyon National Park, or go there after, you'll go through Zion's East Entrance. This means you'll go through the **Zion- Mt. Carmel Tunnel**. When this was built in the 1920's, it was an engineering marvel; however, large vehicles were also less common, and it wasn't created to accommodate large RVs. If your vehicle is 11'4" -13'1" tall or 7'10" wide or wider, you'll need one-way traffic control.



# TIPS FOR VISITING

The NPS will close the tunnel to two-way traffic to allow large vehicles to proceed through the tunnel by themselves so they can successfully navigate the turns. The hours vary throughout the year (you can't go through the tunnel outside those hours, so make sure you enter/ exit during that window of time) and there is a fee. You can arrange this at the Entrance Gates. Check the [NPS website](#) for times and fees.

If you're coming straight from, or going to, Bryce Canyon National Park, see the **Adjusting Your Schedule** section for how to do this.

## Getting Around

You'll take the free and mandatory **shuttle** along Zion Canyon for most of the year. This leaves from the Visitor Center near the South Entrance. There is parking at the Visitor Center near the south gate and in Springdale.

The Visitor Center parking lots are usually full by 8:00AM in summer, so if you get a late start, park in Springdale (or leave it at your accommodation if you're staying there) and catch the free Springdale town shuttle to the Visitor Center.

There are often long lines for the national park shuttle, so get there as early as possible. They are frequent and lines do move pretty quickly. Read more details in the [Shuttle Guide](#).



# HOW TO USE THIS ITINERARY

This itinerary planner is designed to balance taking away the overwhelm with still giving you the freedom to **create an itinerary that suits your interests** and comfort level.

Please read all this information carefully so you can take full advantage of the itinerary planner.



## Hikes

Where appropriate, several hike options are given, based on varying levels of difficulty and interest. In this case, you can **choose the hike** that best suits you.



## Description

Includes **don't-miss sights and sites**. Where this includes wildlife, keep in mind that although these are common places to see wildlife, wild animals don't always show up on cue, so I can't promise you will see any animals.



## Meals

**Meal suggestions or times** are given. Detailed options are provided in the [Dining Guide](#).



## Driving Directions

Detailed **driving directions** are provided for each day. I have indicated where a road is closed to RVs and/ or trailers.



## Things To Note

Includes any warnings, **important information**, considerations or closures.



## Highlights

There are great views throughout the park, but these are especially **famous viewpoints and/ or sights**.



## Less-Active Options

To really get the most out of the national parks, you need to leave the roads, but that doesn't mean you can't have an awesome time if you can't or prefer not to hike.

Non-hiking options are great for those with **limited mobility or fitness**.

Some of these suggestions involve no walking at all, while others may involve short distances on flat or mostly flat paths.



## Accommodations

This itinerary is based around you staying in nearby **Springdale**. Accommodation options in Springdale are provided in the [Accommodations Guide](#). However, I recommend staying inside the park if possible and you will also find all of the national park lodges and campgrounds in the [Accommodations Guide](#). I also list some places to stay nearby.

If you do stay somewhere other than Springdale, read the **Adjusting Your Schedule** section so you can easily adapt your schedule based on where you stay.



## Recommended

This symbol indicates that this is my **recommended choice**. However, you can still choose whichever option best suits your comfort level and interests.



# HOW TO USE THIS ITINERARY

The itinerary is **timed** for the best hiking conditions, the best chance of getting a parking space, and the best chance of shorter lines at the shuttle.

Consequently, the itinerary has you **getting up early** in the morning. Zion is extremely popular and by getting into the park early, you will avoid having to wait in line to get through the park entrance and minimize your chances of long lines for the shuttle. This is also the best light for photos. The national parks are more popular than ever, so the earlier you get there, the better.

If you're coming straight from, or going to, Bryce Canyon National Park, see the **Adjusting Your Schedule** section for how to do this.

The itinerary has a detailed breakdown of suggested **activities**, with **alternatives** or **flexible options** in the morning and afternoon. Each of the alternate options take about the same length of time, so you can choose one, then move on to the next activity no matter which option you chose.

I strongly suggest **sticking to the order of events** in the schedule. They are arranged and timed intentionally so that you get the most out of your trip.

Note that the **maps** here are designed to give you an overview of the park and where to go, but are no replacement for a detailed map, especially of the hiking trails. You can pick up maps at a Visitor Center or buy a very detailed printed topographic map there or before you go.



# ITINERARY UPDATES

This itinerary is reviewed annually, but is not updated in real time, throughout each year. However, I want you to have the best trip possible and for this itinerary to be as useful as possible. So, I do provide updates on changing conditions such as road works, facilities closures, trail closures, etc. that may affect part of this itinerary.

## [CHECK FOR ITINERARY UPDATES HERE](#)

I update this regularly, so I recommend checking frequently, especially as your trip gets closer.

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## THE DAY BEFORE



You will arrive in Springdale (or wherever your accommodation is).

Check the [Accommodation Guide](#) to find a place to stay in Springdale or another nearby area, including inside the national park.



Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find somewhere for dinner.



If you're going to hike **The Narrows**, check at Visitor Center if The Narrows is expected to be open tomorrow + double check time of first shuttle. Pick up rental gear if you rented any equipment for the hike.



# DAY AT A GLANCE

You'll start your day with a hike. Choose from the iconic Angels Landing or The Narrows hikes, or if you prefer some less intense, there are a couple of easy and very pleasant walks. In the afternoon, you'll explore Emerald Pools at your own comfort level.

## OPTION A Angels Landing Trail

### OPTION A1 Angels Landing [P.9,10-12]

6:15AM: Park Visitor Center  
7:00AM: Catch shuttle to Grotto \*  
7:30AM: Start **Angels Landing hike\*\***  
12:00PM: End Angels Landing hike. Lunch in Grotto picnic area or catch shuttle to Lodge  
12:15PM: Lunch

### OPTION A2 Scout Landing [P.9,3-14]

7:00AM: Park Visitor Center  
7:30AM: Catch shuttle to Grotto \*  
8:00AM: Start hike to **Scout Lookout**  
11:00AM: End Scout Lookout hike.  
11:30AM: **Grotto Trail** to Lodge  
12:00PM: Lunch

## OPTION B The Narrows [P.15-18]

6:15AM: Park Visitor Center  
7:00AM: Catch shuttle to Temple of Sinawava  
8:00AM: Start **Riverside Walk**  
8:30AM: Start **The Narrows** hike  
12:00PM: End Narrows hike. Riverside Walk  
12:30PM: Shuttle to Zion Lodge  
12:45PM: Lunch

## OPTION C Easy Trails [P.19-21]

7:30AM: Park Visitor Center. Visit outside section of Visitor Center  
8:00AM: Inside Visitor Center  
8:30AM: Walk **Pa'Rus Trail**  
9:30AM: Canyon Junction Bridge. Take next shuttle to **Big Bend**  
10:00AM: Big Bend  
10:05AM: Walk to **Menu Falls**  
10:25AM: Menu Falls  
10:35AM: Walk to Temple of Sinawava  
10:50AM: Arrive Temple of Sinawava.  
**Riverside Walk**  
12:00PM: Shuttle to Zion Lodge  
12:15PM: Lunch

## Emerald Pools

### OPTION A [P.22-24,25]

1:30PM: **Lower Emerald Pools Trail**  
2:10PM: Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools**  
2:30PM: **Upper Emerald Pools Trail** (round-trip)  
3:45PM: **Kayenta Trail**  
4:30PM: Arrive Grotto. Take shuttle back to Springdale  
5:00PM: Arrive Springdale

### OPTION B [P.22-24, 26]

1:30PM: **Lower Emerald Pools Trail**  
2:10PM: Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools**  
2:30PM: **Upper Emerald Pools Trail** (round-trip)  
3:45PM: **Middle Emerald Pools Trail**  
4:30PM: Arrive Zion Lodge. Take shuttle to Springdale  
5:00PM: Arrive Springdale

### OPTION C [P.22-24,27-28]

1:30PM: **Lower Emerald Pools Trail**  
2:10PM: Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools**  
2:30PM: **Middle Emerald Pools Trail**  
3:15PM: Arrive Zion Lodge. Shuttle to **Museum of Human History**  
3:35PM: Museum of Human History  
4:30PM: Shuttle to Springdale  
4:45PM: Arrive Springdale

### OPTION D [P.22-24,29]

1:30PM: **Lower Emerald Pools Trail**  
2:10PM: Return on **Lower Emerald Pools Trail**  
2:45PM: Arrive Zion Lodge  
3:15PM: Shuttle to **Museum of Human History**  
3:35PM: Museum of Human History  
4:30PM: Shuttle to Springdale  
4:45PM: Arrive Springdale



5:30 PM: Dinner

\*Or rent a bicycle or e-bike and skip the shuttle

\*\*You need to have a permit for the full Angels Landing hike





# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM

### OPTION A: Angels Landing



With this option, you'll hike all or part of the famous Angels Landing trail, the most popular hike in the park. The views are sensational. The entire hike is 2.7 miles each way (out and back). The last 0.5 miles (each way) from Scout Lookout to Angels Landing involves hiking along a **narrow ridge with steep drop offs** on both sides. There is a **chain** to hold on to. This section could get very congested and be dangerous, so the National Park Service implemented a **permit lottery system** for this section of the hike.

Read my [Guide to Angels Landing Permits](#) for more details about how and when to get them. Most permits are issued in advance, but some are kept for a 'day-before' lottery.



#### What can you do if you can't get a permit in advance?

- 1) Try each day to get a permit in the 'day-before' lottery.
- 2) If you try but can't get a permit, you can choose Option A2 and hike to Scout Landing. This is 2.2 miles of the 2.7-mile (each way) hike and includes the whole trail except the narrow ridge with chains. The views are still amazing. You do NOT need a permit for this part of the hike.

#### What should you do if you're afraid of heights or have very young children?

The hike to Scout Landing is also a great option if you're like me and are afraid of heights and are freaked out by the chained section. There are still drop offs on this part of the hike, but the path is wide, and it isn't uncommon for young kids - under careful parental control - to hike this section.



#### DIRECTIONS: Springdale - Zion Visitor Center - Shuttle

Drive east along the main road through Springdale (State Route 9). Enter the park and almost immediately after, turn right into the Visitor Center parking area. Park in the main lot. Walk to the shuttle stop.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM



### OPTION A1: The entire Angels Landing Trail



#### Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



#### Adjusting for different permit timeslots

Try to get a permit for the **early morning timeslot** if you can. There will be fewer people on the trail when you start, you'll skip the worst of the heat if you're hiking in summer, and the light is best for photos (mid-afternoon is the worst time for photos).

However, if you can only get a **later morning slot**, start the day's schedule a little later, aiming to be at the trailhead at 9:00AM. Arrive at the Visitor Center parking lot before 8:00AM or it may be full and spend some time in the Visitor Center if need be.

If you get an **afternoon timeslot**, reverse the AM/ PM schedule and hike to Emerald Pools in the morning. Aim to start the Angels Landing hike around 2:00PM.



#### Shuttle (or cycle) to Grotto 7:00AM

You want to try to get on the **first shuttle** of the day. Lines start to form at least 30 minutes beforehand in the busy summer months. I recommend getting in line by no later than 6:30AM. You will need to stand in line for about half an hour, but it will be worth it when you're on the trail with only a handful of people.

Get off at the Grotto stop.



An alternative to the shuttle is to **rent a bicycle or e-bike** in Springdale and ride to the trailhead. This way, you can skip the lines and even get on the trail before the first shuttle arrives! There are several operators in Springdale offering bike rental. One is **Zion Cycles**. They do half-day and full-day rentals, and, for an additional fee, you can pick the bike up at 6:30PM the day before, so you can get an early start!



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM

### Angels Landing hike 7:30AM



There is a waterfill station, restrooms and picnic tables at the Grotto. There are also restrooms at Scout Landing, but they're not very nice.



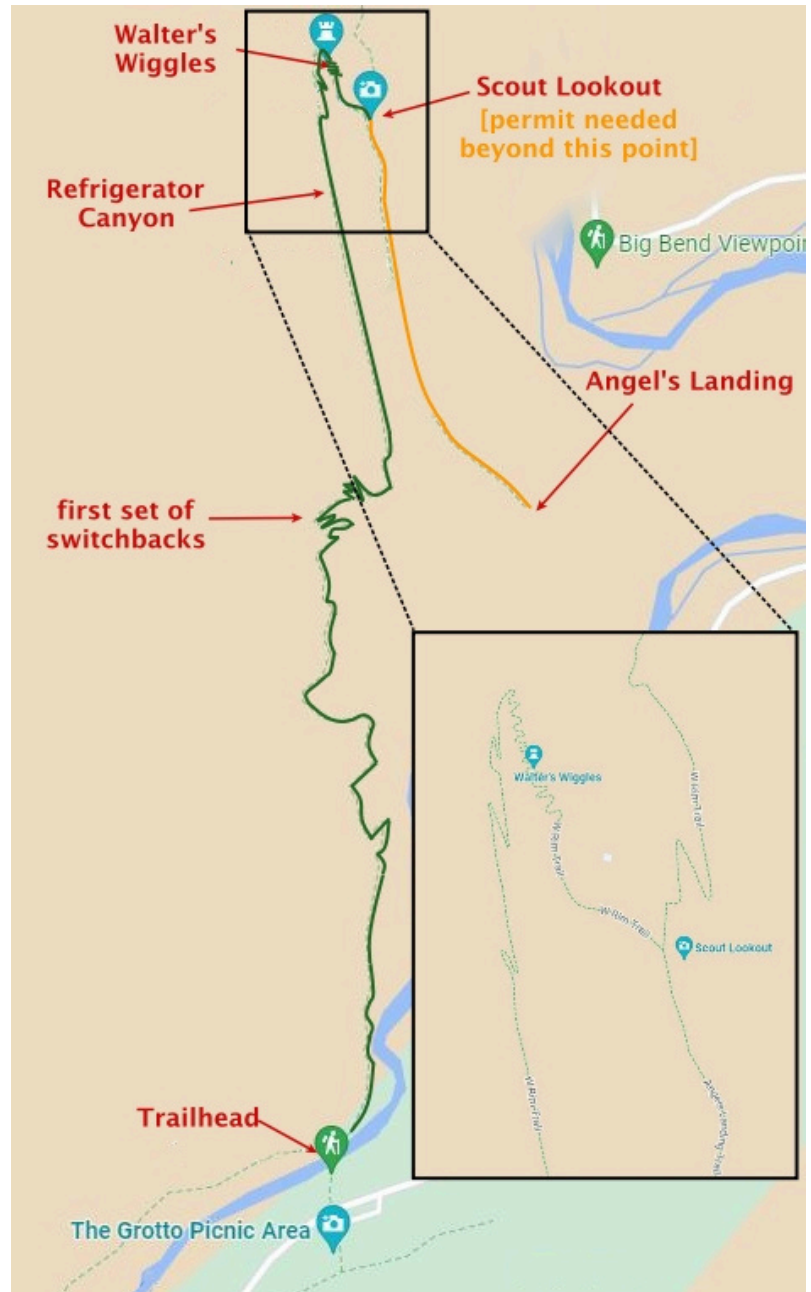
The entire trail is 5.4 miles round trip.

The hike starts flat and easy on the West Rim Trail along the Virgin River. It then heads away from the river. About one mile in, you head up the first set of switchbacks. You'll arrive in Refrigerator Canyon, where there is an easy, flat - and appropriately cool - section. This is a good place to rest from the heat if you're hiking in summer.

The trail then heads up a very steep series of 21 short switchbacks called

Walter's Wiggles. This ends at a flat area called Scout Landing. There are (not very nice) restrooms and great views.

This is the start of the section of the trail that you need a permit for.





# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM



### Angels Landing hike

This last section is 0.5 miles each way. The trail goes along the top of a very narrow ridge with steep drop offs on both sides. There is a chain to hold on to for most of the way, but people are going in both directions and there is only one chain.



Practice caution. People have died on this trail!



When you arrive at Angels Landing, there is an area to sit down and enjoy the breathtaking views down Zion Canyon.

When you're ready, return the way you came.



### Lunch 12:15PM

There is a picnic area at the Grotto area, near the trailhead. Have a picnic here or catch the shuttle to Zion Lodge. Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options at Zion Lodge.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 7:00AM - 1:30PM

### OPTION A2: Angels Landing Trail to Scout Lookout

If you're choosing this option because you missed out on a permit for the Angels Landing chained section, you may initially feel like this is a consolation prize. But, as consolations go, it's pretty great. It is actually most of the trail - you just miss the last 0.5 miles - and the views are still incredible by any standards.



#### Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



#### Shuttle (or cycle) to Grotto 7:30AM

Aim to get the 7:30AM shuttle. You will miss the initial first shuttle crowds and not have to get up quite so early but will still miss the worst crowds (it may not feel it - at the height of summer, there will still be lots of people even at this time of the morning). If you can get an even earlier start, then I recommend that, as the crowds will only grow throughout the day.

Get off at the Grotto stop.



An alternative to the shuttle is to **rent a bicycle or e-bike** in Springdale and ride to the trailhead. This way, you can skip the lines and even get on the trail before the first shuttle arrives! There are several operators in Springdale offering bike rental. One is **Zion Cycles**. They do half-day and full-day rentals, and, for an additional fee, you can pick the bike up at 6:30PM the day before, so you can get an early start!



#### Scout Lookout hike 8:00AM



There is a waterfill station, restrooms and picnic tables at the Grotto. There are also restrooms at Scout Landing, but they're not very nice.

The entire trail is 4.4 miles roundtrip.



The hike starts flat and easy on the West Rim Trail along the Virgin River. It then heads away from the river.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 7:00AM - 1:30PM



### Scout Lookout hike

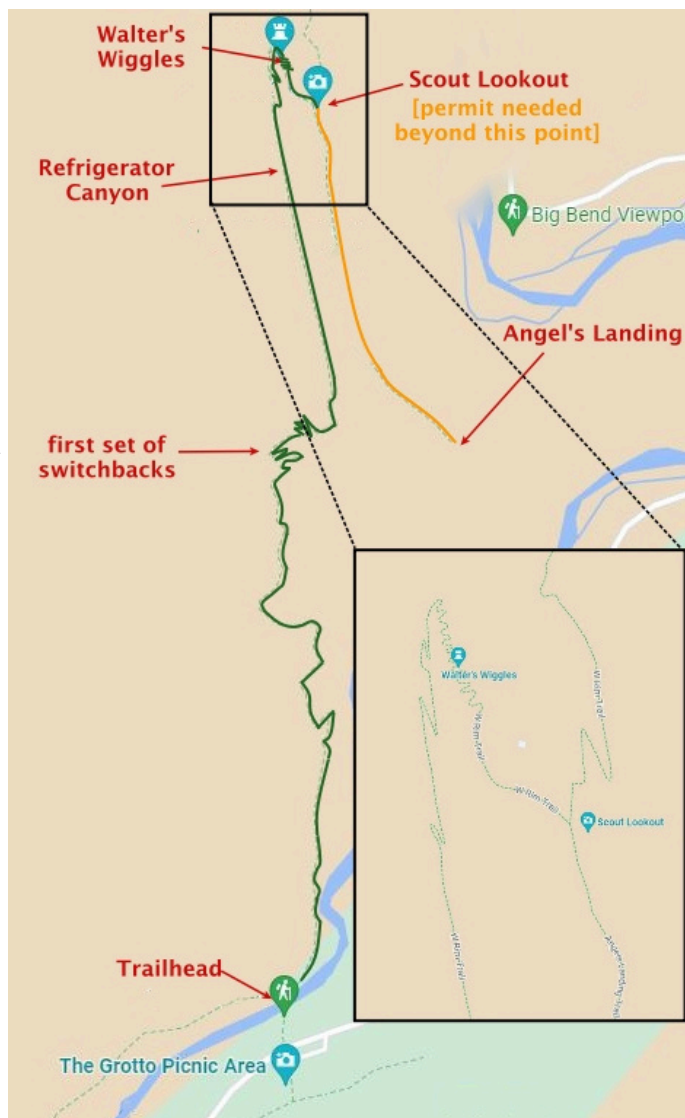
About one mile in, you head up the first set of switchbacks. You'll arrive in Refrigerator Canyon, where there is an easy, flat - and appropriately cool - section. This is a good place to rest from the heat if you're hiking in summer.

The trail then heads up a very steep series of 21 short switchbacks called Walter's Wiggles. This ends at a flat area, which is your destination, Scout Landing.



There are (not very nice) restrooms and great views. You can see the ridge and trail leading to Angels Landing and you also have a view down Zion Canyon.

When you're ready, return the same way.



### Grotto Trail 11:30AM

If you still have some energy, take the Grotto Trail to Zion Lodge (if you prefer, just hop on the shuttle). The Grotto Trail is a flat trail that is near the road for most of the way. It's not uncommon to see wildlife on this trail.



### Lunch 12:00PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options at Zion Lodge.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM



### OPTION B: The Narrows



The Narrows is the other super famous hike in Zion. You'll hike through a narrow slot canyon with a river running through it and will spend most of the hike wading through the river. Surrounded by towering canyon walls just yards apart, and with the novelty of hiking in a river, it's a super fun experience. But there are some things to know.



### Trail Closures

The hike is closed by the NPS when:

1. the river level is too high. It's closed when the **flow rate** is over 150 cubic feet per second (CFS) and during spring snowmelt (typically March-April). Check the current flow rate on [this website](#) before heading out.
2. when a **Flash Flood Warning** is issued by the National Weather Service. It remains closed for two hours after the warning is lifted. Always check the weather and possibility of flash floods before you head out.

I recommend checking at the Visitor Center the day before and check the two websites above the morning of your planned hike, to make sure.



### Do you need special equipment?

You will be hiking in a river. The water is flowing, and the riverbed is uneven. The water level varies. In summer, the water temperature is generally pleasant. The rest of the year, it's cold.

I recommend a **stick** to help stabilize you, and good **shoes** that are comfortable when wet. If you're hiking any time other than summer, **neoprene socks** will help keep you warm. In winter, a **dry suit** will help keep you warm. A **dry bag** will keep your stuff (phone, camera, etc.) dry if you accidentally slip and end up under water.

All of these things can be rented from outfitters in Springdale. One outfitter (there are several, but this who I used) is [Zion Adventures](#). You need to decide what equipment will make you comfortable. However, I



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM

### The Narrows



think that at the very minimum, a stick is a BIG help. You can often find spare ones discarded at the trailhead, though if you plan on this and then you don't find one, you'll be without.



There are actually two ways to do the hike. The Top-Down hike requires a permit and a drop off at the far end of the slot canyon. Then you hike the entire length of the canyon, most often camping overnight along the way, ending at Riverside Walk.

On this itinerary, you'll do what most people do - the **Bottom-Up hike**, which is an out-and-back hike that goes through the most spectacular parts of the canyon.

You will typically crisscross from side to side, finding small sections where there is land along the side which makes it easier to walk. There are occasional small beaches where you can rest and have a snack or lunch.

It typically takes less time to hike back (with the current). For example, if you hiked for 2 hours to go upstream it will generally take about 1.5 hours to go downstream.



### DIRECTIONS: Springdale - Zion Visitor Center - Shuttle

Drive east along the main road through Springdale (State Route 9). Enter the park and almost immediately after, turn right into the Visitor Center parking area. Park in the main lot. Walk to the shuttle stop.



### Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.





# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM



### Shuttle (or cycle) to Temple of Sinawava 7:00AM

You want to try to get on the **first shuttle** of the day. Lines start to form at least 30 minutes beforehand in the busy summer months. I recommend getting in line by no later than 6:30AM. You will need to stand in line for about half an hour, but it will be worth it when you're on the trail (in the river) with only a handful of people.

Get off at the Temple of Sinawava stop, the last stop on the shuttle route. It takes 45 minutes to get there.



An alternative to the shuttle is to **rent a bicycle or e-bike** in Springdale and ride to the trailhead. This way, you can skip the lines and even get on the trail before the first shuttle arrives! There are several operators in Springdale offering bike rental. One is **Zion Cycles**. They do half-day and full-day rentals, and, for an additional fee, you can pick the bike up at 6:30PM the day before, so you can get an early start!



### Riverside Walk 8:00AM

The hike starts at the end of the Riverside Walk.

This is an easy, paved and flat 1.0-mile trail that runs alongside the Virgin River, passing hanging gardens along the way. From the last shuttle stop, take the trail along the river, deeper into the canyon. There are ferns, moss and trees all around you. It is a lovely, relaxing walk that makes a pleasant start to your day.



### The Narrows 8:30AM

At the end of the Riverside Walk, kit up if you are wearing anything special and enter the river, walking deeper into the canyon. The canyon is fairly wide and the river shallow to start.

About 0.4 miles into the hike, you'll pass **Mystery Falls**, a 110-foot waterfall that is often not much more than a trickle down the side of the canyon. From here, the canyon walls start to close in. After another 0.3 miles, you'll pass a dramatic alcove on your left, The **Narrows Alcove**



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

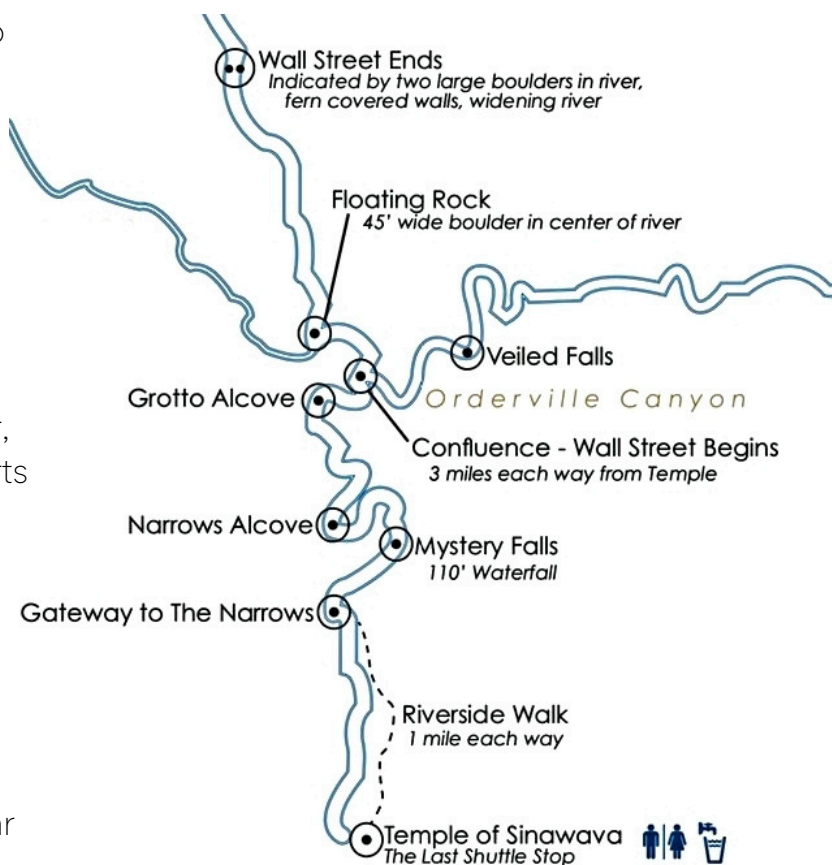
## MORNING: 6:15AM - 1:30PM



then, another 0.7 miles in, **Grotto Alcove**. Just past this is **Orderville Canyon** on your right. You can explore this side canyon for a while if you like, up to **Veiled Falls**, another small waterfall. Orderville Canyon is the start of the most dramatic section, **Wall Street**. The canyon narrows even more, at times just a few yards across, and the canyon walls tower hundreds of feet high above you.

You'll soon come to a large rock in the middle of the river, 'floating rock'. Wall Street is about 0.5 miles long. The end of the Wall Street section is indicated by two large boulders in the river, and the canyon starts to widen again.

Turn around after 2 hours. You will typically make it to Wall Street in this timeframe, but may not make it to the far end.



### Lunch 12:45PM

Take the shuttle to Zion Lodge. Use the [Dining Guide](#) to choose a place for lunch in Zion Lodge.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:30PM

### OPTION C: Pa'Rus Trail & Museum of Human History

If a 4+-mile hike doesn't rock your boat, then this option is for you. You'll spend some time at the Visitor Center, walk the lovely - and easy - Pa'Rus Trail and Riverside Walk and discover Menu Falls. If you prefer not to walk, you can take the shuttle from stop to stop and relax more at each location.



#### Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



#### DIRECTIONS: Springdale - Zion Visitor Center - Shuttle

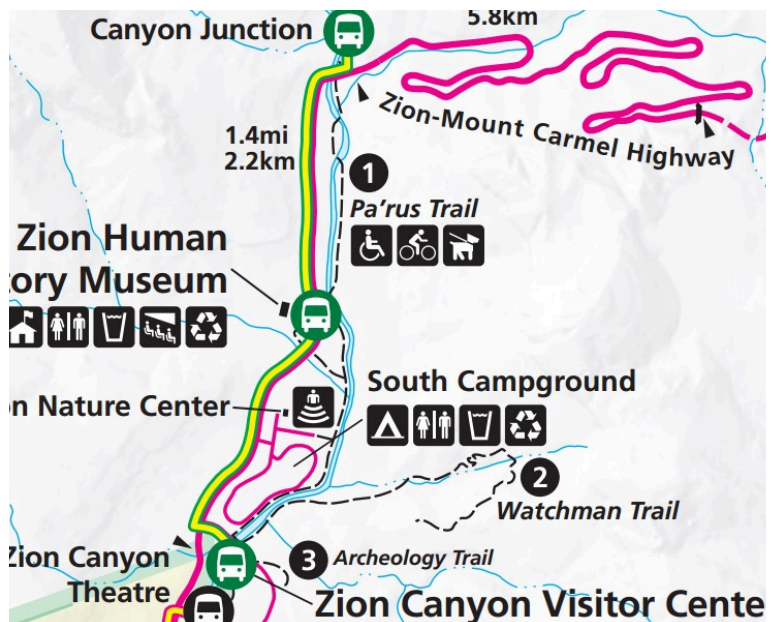
Drive east along the main road through Springdale (State Route 9). Enter the park and almost immediately after, turn right into the Visitor Center parking area. Park in the main lot. Walk to the shuttle stop.



#### Visitor Center 7:30AM

The Visitor Center doesn't open until 8:00AM, but the parking lot is often full by then in summer, so I recommend getting there earlier.

There are outdoor panels with information exhibits. When the center opens, go inside. There are more interpretive displays, and a store.



#### Pa'Rus Trail 8:30AM

This is very easy, flat, paved trail that is wheelchair accessible. It's the only trail in the park that allows pets and bicycles.

From the Visitor Center, head north and cross a footbridge over the Virgin River. The wide path follows alongside the Virgin River, crossing



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:30PM



### Pa'Rus Trail 8:30AM

the river over footbridges a couple of times. In the spring, the surrounding area is often filled with wildflowers. You may see mule deer, foxes and coyotes along the way.

After 1.8 miles, you come to the end at Canyon Junction. This is the intersection between Zion Canyon Scenic Drive and Route 9, and the start of the section of the canyon that you can't drive (except in winter when the shuttle doesn't run). The views here are pretty great.

Take the next shuttle into the canyon and get off at Big Bend, the second last stop.



### Big Bend 10:00AM

The views at Big Bend, a wide bend in the Virgin River, are superb. You can see the Great White Throne to the south and other dramatic cliff faces (keep an eye out for rock climbers). There is a viewpoint, but it's also one of the few places that can get access to the Virgin River. There's a sandy 'beach', and the cottonwood trees are a blaze of gold in the fall. Wild turkeys and California condors are often seen here.



### Menu Falls walk 10:05AM

If you've had enough walking for now, you can take the shuttle to the Temple of Sinawava, but it's an easy walk, and you can stop off at a small waterfall that few people see.

From Big Bend, walk along the road (keep an eye out for shuttle buses!) towards the end of the canyon (away from Springdale) for about half a mile. Look to your right (east) for a short path that leads to an alcove in the forest. There is a small wooden viewing deck from where you can see Menu Falls.



Menu Falls was given its name because a picture of it was included on the cover of the first Zion Lodge menu. The small waterfall is just 10 feet high and has a small flow, but it's a lovely cool spot that is rarely crowded.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:30PM



### Menu Falls walk 10:35AM

Continue walking to the Temple of Sinawava. You can walk along the road, but there is also a small trail of use along the Virgin River that's a little nicer.



### Riverside Walk 10:50AM

This is an easy, wheelchair accessible, paved and flat trail that runs alongside the Virgin River, passing hanging gardens along the way. It's the starting point for the Narrows but is worth hiking in and of itself. It starts from the last shuttle stop and the canyon narrows, so, although it's not a super narrow slot canyon, you are surrounded by tall canyon walls on both sides. There are ferns, moss and trees all around you. It is a lovely, relaxing walk.

When you arrive at the end, find a spot to relax and spend a few minutes watching people start The Narrows hike.

Return the way you came.

Take the next shuttle from the Temple of Sinawava to Zion Lodge.



### Lunch 12:15PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options at Zion Lodge.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM

### Emerald Pools



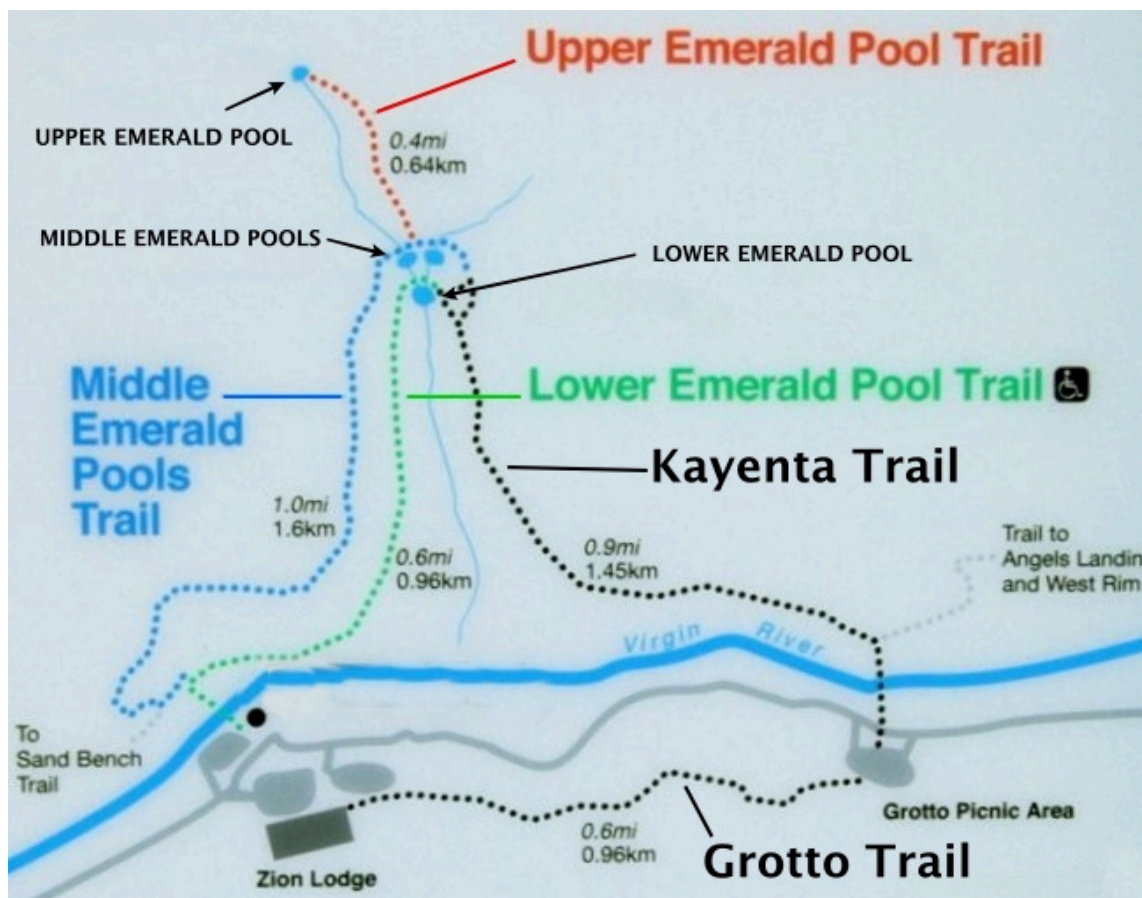
The Emerald Pools are several beautiful emerald green pools surrounded by lush vegetation and connected by a couple of tall waterfalls.



There is water in the pools year-round, and they are always beautiful, but the waterfalls are often reduced to a trickle in summer, and the stream that the Lower Emerald Pool Trail goes along is often dried up in the hottest summer months. No swimming is allowed at any time of year because the environment is fragile, and the pools are an essential source of water for wildlife.

The pools are reached by a network of trails, and you can choose which one(s) to hike, depending on your level of fitness and interest.

The main starting point is Zion Lodge.





# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM



### Lower Emerald Pool

**Lower Emerald Pool** is a lush oasis with some plants even growing on the cliff face, forming a beautiful hanging garden. There's an alcove below a rock overhang where a waterfall drops (or drips) down from the middle pools above, forming the lower pool. The trail actually crosses this alcove.



The **Lower Emerald Pool Trail** is the easiest of the Emerald Pool trails and goes to the bottom pool. It's paved and wheelchair accessible. From the Zion Lodge shuttle stop, head to your right and follow the signs to the Emerald Pools Trailhead. Cross the footbridge to the trailhead.

The trail starts alongside the banks of the Virgin River for a short distance before turning left and entering pinyon-juniper woodland, following a stream the rest of the way.

You can return the way you came (Option D) or continue up the **connector trail** to the Middle Emerald Pools above (Options A-C). You'll pass the junction with the Kayenta Trail (which you'll take to return after you've been to the Upper Emerald Pool if you choose Option A) on the right. The connector trail is dirt, sand, more rugged and rock covered.



### Middle Emerald Pools

The **Middle Emerald Pools** can be reached via the short connector trail from the Lower Emerald Pool below, or from the Lodge via the Middle Emerald Pool Trail.

Using the Connector Trail, you'll arrive at the top of the cliff you just walked under and see the beautiful pools that form the start of the waterfall that drops down to the Lower Emerald Pool, which you saw below. In turn, they are pools here are fed from the Upper Emerald Pool above it. It's a beautiful area.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM



### Middle Emerald Pools

You can take the **Middle Emerald Pool Trail** back to the Lodge (Options B and C). The trail is an unpaved sandstone ledge that runs above and parallel to the Lower Emerald Pool trail. There are moderate drop offs and there's a somewhat steep descent at the end near the Lodge trailhead.



### Upper Emerald Pool

From the Middle Emerald Pools, there's a side trail (out-and-back) that climbs to the **Upper Emerald Pool**. This is the largest of the pools. It's located at the bottom of steep 300-foot-high cliff that surround the area on three sides, forming a dramatic natural amphitheater. Water drops (or drips) down a vertical canyon wall from the mouth of Heaps Canyon far above.



The **Upper Emerald Pool Trail** (Options A and B) is more challenging and is a fairly steep climb up a sandy and rocky trail. There's a 200 feet elevation change in 0.5 miles.

Return the same way back to the Middle Emerald Pools. You can then return to the Lodge via the Middle Emerald Pools Trail (Option B) or take the Kayenta Trail to the Grotto (Option A).



### Kayenta Trail

The unpaved **Kayenta Trail** leaves from the connector trail between the Middle and Lower Pools and heads out to the Grotto (0.9 miles). There are moderate drop offs. There are restrooms and water filling stations at the Grotto.

From the Grotto, you can take the shuttle back to Springdale.





# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM



### OPTION A: Up to 2 hours 55 minutes | 3.5 miles | Moderate Lower-Middle-Upper Emerald Pools Hike 1:30PM

- + **Lower Emerald Pool Trail** (30 minutes/ 0.7 miles)
- + Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools** (10 minutes/ 0.2 miles)
- + **Upper Emerald Pools Trail** round trip (60 minutes/ 1.0 miles)
- + **Kayenta Trail** to Grotto shuttle stop (45 minutes/ 1.0 mile)

This, together with Option B, is the most energetic option, but you get to visit all the pools. This route doesn't return to the lodge - you just take the shuttle back to Springdale.

From Zion Lodge, take the Lower Emerald Pool Trail. Spend about 10 minutes there, then take the connector trail up to the Middle Emerald Pools. After another 10 minutes or so there, climb up to the Upper Emerald Pool. This is a particularly lovely spot, so hang out for about 15 minutes before returning to the Middle Pools. Start back down to the Lower Pool but take the Kayenta Trail off the connector trail. When you get to the Grotto, take the shuttle back to Springdale.



### Dinner 5:30PM

Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find a place for dinner in Springdale, or near your accommodation.

### Evening



If you are staying at Zion tonight, check at the Visitor Center for any **evening ranger programs**. If you want to the **sunset**, a popular place is Canyon Junction Bridge. There's a lovely view of Watchman Tower and the Virgin River.



### That's the end of your Zion National Park itinerary!

From here, it's :

- 1 hour 50 minutes to Bryce Canyon National Park
- 2 hours 30 minutes to Las Vegas
- 4 hours 30 minutes Salt Lake City
- 4 hours 45 minutes to Grand Canyon Village (South Rim)



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM



### OPTION B: 2 hours 25 minutes | 3.1 miles | Moderate

#### Lower-Middle-Upper Emerald Pools Hike 1:30PM

- + **Lower Emerald Pool Trail** (30 minutes/ 0.7 miles)
- + Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools** (10 minutes/ 0.2 miles)
- + **Upper Emerald Pools Trail** round trip (60 minutes/ 1.0 mile)
- + return to Lodge via **Middle Emerald Pools Trail** (45 minutes/ 1.1 miles)

This, together with Option A, is the most energetic option, but you get to visit all the pools. This route returns to the lodge via a different route.

From Zion Lodge, take the Lower Emerald Pool Trail. Spend about 10 minutes there, then take the connector trail up to the Middle Emerald Pools. After another 10 minutes or so there, climb up to the Upper Emerald Pool. This is a particularly lovely spot, so hang out for about 15 minutes before returning to the Middle Pools. Return to Zion Lodge via the Middle Emerald Pools Trail. Then take the shuttle to Springdale or have dinner at Zion Lodge.



### Dinner 5:30PM

Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find a place for dinner in Springdale or Zion Lodge, or near your accommodation.

### Evening



If you are staying at Zion tonight, check at the Visitor Center for any **evening ranger programs**. If you want to see the **sunset**, a popular place is Canyon Junction Bridge. There's a lovely view of Watchman Tower and the Virgin River.



### That's the end of your Zion National Park itinerary!

From here, it's :

- 1 hour 50 minutes to Bryce Canyon National Park
- 2 hours 30 minutes to Las Vegas
- 4 hours 30 minutes Salt Lake City
- 4 hours 45 minutes to Grand Canyon Village (South Rim)



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM

### OPTION C: 1 hours 25 minutes | 2.0 miles | Moderate



#### Lower-Middle Emerald Pools Hike 1:30PM

- + **Lower Emerald Pool Trail** (30 minutes/ 0.7 miles)
- + Connector Trail to **Middle Emerald Pools** (10 minutes/ 0.2 miles)
- + return via **Middle Emerald Pools Trail** (45 minutes/ 1.1 miles)

This option cuts out the steep climb to the Upper Pools, but still takes in the Lower and Middle Pools. For variety, you return to Zion Lodge via the Middle Emerald Pools Trail, which is rated as moderate mostly because of the descent at the end.

From Zion Lodge, take the Lower Emerald Pool Trail. Spend about 10 minutes there, then take the connector trail up to the Middle Emerald Pools. After another 10 minutes or so there, return to Zion Lodge via the Middle Emerald Pools Trail.



#### Zion Human History Museum 3:35PM

This small museum has permanent and temporary exhibits showcasing the human history of Zion National Park, including Native American life and culture, and historic pioneer settlement in the area. On the hour and half hour, there's a free 22-minute film that gives a great overview of the park. There's also a small store run by the Zion National Park Forever Project.



The museum is closed November - February. If you visit during those months, you can relax in Springdale or drive up to the East Entrance to see Checkerboard Mesa. If you do this, be mindful of vehicle size restrictions (see **Getting There** section on P3.)



#### Dinner 5:30PM

Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find a place for dinner in Springdale, or near your accommodation.



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM

### Evening



If you are staying at Zion tonight, check at the Visitor Center for any **evening ranger programs**. If you want to see the **sunset**, a popular place is Canyon Junction Bridge. There's a lovely view of Watchman Tower and the Virgin River.

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### **That's the end of your Zion National Park itinerary!**

From here, it's :

- 1 hour 50 minutes to Bryce Canyon National Park
- 2 hours 30 minutes to Las Vegas
- 4 hours 30 minutes to Salt Lake City
- 4 hours 45 minutes to Grand Canyon Village (South Rim)



# 1-DAY ITINERARY

## AFTERNOON: 1:30PM - 5:00PM



### OPTION D: 60 minutes | 1.4 miles | Easy

#### Lower Emerald Pools Hike 1:30PM

+ **Lower Emerald Pool Trail** (return same way) (30 minutes/ 0.7 miles)  
+ return the same way (30 minutes/ 0.7 miles)

This is the easiest option and is ideal if you have limited mobility, have a stroller, or are just too tired to walk much. You'll get to see the Lower Pool, spending about 10 minutes there before returning on the same trail. The trail is easy, mostly flat, and wheelchair accessible.



#### Zion Human History Museum 3:35PM

This small museum has permanent and temporary exhibits showcasing the human history of Zion National Park, including Native American life and culture, and historic pioneer settlement in the area. On the hour and half hour, there's a free 22-minute film that gives a great overview of the park. There's also a small store run by the Zion National Park Forever Project.



The museum is closed November - February. If you visit during those months, you can relax in Springdale or drive up to the East Entrance to see Checkerboard Mesa. If you do this, be mindful of vehicle size restrictions (see **Getting There** section on P3.)



#### Dinner 5:30PM

Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find a place for dinner in Springdale, or near your accommodation.

#### Evening



If you are staying at Zion tonight, check at the Visitor Center for any **evening ranger programs**. If you want to see the **sunset**, a popular place is Canyon Junction Bridge. There's a lovely view of Watchman Tower and the Virgin River.



### That's the end of your Zion National Park itinerary!

From here, it's :

- 1 hour 50 minutes to Bryce Canyon National Park
- 2 hours 30 minutes to Las Vegas
- 4 hours 30 minutes Salt Lake City
- 4 hours 45 minutes to Grand Canyon Village (South Rim)



# ADJUSTING YOUR SCHEDULE

The schedule is based on a stay in **Springdale**. Springdale has the most accommodation options and is close to the main park entrance but there are other places to stay in and around the park. If you stay in or near these places, adjust the schedule as follows:

## INSIDE THE PARK

### Zion Lodge

Options A&B: Catch shuttle 15-20 minutes later | Option C: Catch shuttle around 7:45AM

### Watchman & South Campgrounds

Keep the same

### Lava Point Campground (Kolob Terraces)

I don't recommend staying here for this itinerary because of the distance to the entrance to the main section of Zion National Park. However, if you do, start 1 hour 15 minutes earlier

## SOUTH ENTRANCE

### Virgin

Start 20 minutes earlier

### La Verkin

Start 25 minutes earlier

### Hurricane

Start 30 minutes earlier

### St. George

Start 1 hour earlier

## EAST ENTRANCE

### Zion Ponderosa Ranch Resort | Mt. Carmel | Orderville

Start 45 minutes earlier

## KOLOB CANYONS ENTRANCE

I don't recommend staying here with this itinerary, as this section of Zion National Park has a separate entrance and is not connected to the main Zion Canyon. If you want to visit Kolob Canyons, I'd recommend visiting there before or after this itinerary. However, if you decide to stay there and use this itinerary:

### New Harmony | Kanarrville

Start 1 hour earlier

### Cedar City

Start 1 hour 15 minutes earlier



# ADJUSTING YOUR SCHEDULE

## BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK

This itinerary can be easily combined with a [Bryce Canyon itinerary](#).

### Going to Bryce Canyon after Zion

If you plan to leave directly for Bryce Canyon, you could easily leave at 5:00PM and get there in time for (a latish) dinner. If you'd rather get there a bit earlier, choose Option C or D in the afternoon and skip the museum.

### Coming from Bryce Canyon before Zion

You can easily leave Bryce Canyon at the end of that itinerary and arrive in Springdale in time for dinner, then start this Zion itinerary seamlessly on the next day.

## GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

This itinerary can also be combined with a [Grand Canyon itinerary](#).

### Going to Grand Canyon after Zion

To give yourself time to drive to Grand Canyon Village on the south rim, choose Option C or D in the afternoon and skip the museum. If you want to do the full itinerary, you can - but you'd get to Grand Canyon late at night.

### Coming from Grand Canyon before Zion

Leave Grand Canyon at the end of the structured activity, skipping the *Create Your Own Adventure* at the Grand Canyon and using this time to drive to Zion. You'll arrive in time for a latish dinner, then start this Zion itinerary seamlessly on the next day.



# USEFUL LINKS

These links are all available in the actual itinerary, but here they are all together as a useful planning and preparation resource.

## **Bonus extras (Accommodation Guide, Dining Guide, Shuttle Guide)**

<https://parkscollecting.com/zion-bonus-extras-sf41v9oz/>

## **Itinerary Updates**

<https://parkscollecting.com/itinerary-updates-f6x9m2/>

## **Zion National Park Entrance Fee**

<https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/fees.htm>

**Annual Pass:** [America The Beautiful Pass](#)

**Bryce Canyon National Park Itineraries** (use code ZNNP for a 20% discount)

<https://parkscollecting.com/bryce-canyon-itinerary/>

## **Angel's Landing Permits**

<https://parkscollecting.com/how-to-get-angels-landing-permits/>

## **Bicycle Rentals**

<https://www.zioncycles.com/bike-rentals/>

## **Cycling Information**

<https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/bicycling.htm>

## **The Narrows Equipment Rental**

<https://www.zionadventures.com/rent-narrows-equipment.html>

## **The Narrows Flow Rate**

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ut/nwis/uv/?>

[site\\_no=09405500&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060,00010,00095,72020](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ut/nwis/uv/?site_no=09405500&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060,00010,00095,72020)

## **The Narrows Flash Flood Warnings**

<https://www.weather.gov/slc/flashflood>

## **Zion - Mt. Carmel Tunnel Information**

<https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/the-zion-mount-carmel-tunnel.htm>

## **Zion Current Conditions**

<https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

**Book Flights:** [Skyscanner](#)

**Camper Van Rentals:** [Escape Campervans](#)

## **Accommodations**

[Hotels and motels](#)

[Vacation rentals](#)

[Campspot](#)

[Campnab](#)

**Travel Insurance:** [Travelix](#)

**Packing Lists:** <https://parkscollecting.com/packing-lists/>





# TRIP NOTES

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This itinerary is meant to be used as a planning guide only. All information in this itinerary is provided in good faith and every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is as accurate and complete as possible and free from errors; however, the creator assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or contrary interpretation, and makes no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, adequacy, relevance, validity, reliability, availability, timeliness or completeness of any information in the itinerary or on parkscollecting.com. Under no circumstance shall we be held liable for any injury, loss or damage of any kind incurred as a result of the use of this itinerary or reliance on any information provided. You accept full personal responsibility for any harm or damage you suffer as a result of your actions arising out of or in connection with the use of this itinerary. See [Privacy Policy](#) and [Legal](#) on parkscollecting.com