

zion

"Nothing can exceed the wonderful beauty of Zion. . . . In the nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison. . . . There is an eloquence to their forms which stirs the imagination with a singular power, and kindles in the mind a glowing response."

—Clarence E. Dutton, geologist 1882

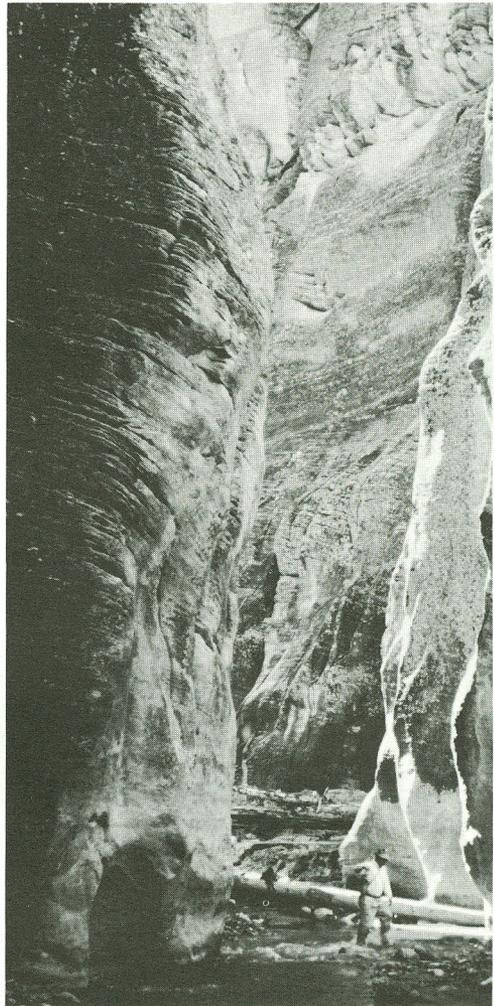
Early Explorers and Settlers

When people of European origin first discovered and explored this area, Indians of the Paiute tribe were claiming the region. Prehistoric Indians once lived here, but had moved on before the Paiute people arrived.

The Escalante-Dominguez party of Spanish padres was the first group of Europeans to explore this part of southern Utah. Skirting the great canyons, they crossed the Virgin River near Hurrricane, Utah, in 1776, and beheld the glories of this area, which was inhabited then by Indians of the Paiute tribe.

Fifty years passed before trappers and fur traders reached the Zion region. Jedediah Smith, one of the most daring, led a party of 16 men from Great Salt Lake south through the valleys to the Virgin River in search of pelts. Through this and a later expedition down the Virgin River, Smith provided information to guide other exploring parties to the area in the next few years. However, only meager observations and descriptions were reported.

It was Capt. John C. Fremont who, from his 1843–44 explorations, supplied the detailed data which led the Mormon pioneers to a mass migration into the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Within little more than a decade, the Mormons had established small settlements as far south as the Virgin River and had discovered Zion Canyon.



The quick waters of the Virgin River pass

From that time to the present, the story parallels, to a marked degree, the settling and development of Utah by the Mormons and others. The colorful canyons, first thought of as obstacles to be avoided, soon became choice places for retreat and relaxation.

Geology, the Key to Zion

Like so many pages of a book, rock layers of the towering cliffs and slopes in the Zion region tell a fascinating geologic story of natural forces operating through more than 200 million years. These layers reveal that successive occurrences of vast inland seas, flat lands, raging rivers, tropical lowlands, tremendous earth upheavals, and the constant forces of erosion have all played a part in forming this region.

Over these millions of years, in ever-changing cycles, oceans moved in and out several times, and finally deposited more than a vertical mile of sediment on top of the highest of the great sand dunes that you see today as sandstone walls.

About 60 million years ago, when the Zion country was again near sea level, a very gradual uplift of the entire region began. Eventually, the land was lifted thousands of feet and because of the tremendous stresses, the land mass broke into great blocks. Their lines of cleavage are known as faults. Some blocks lifted vertically, some tended to "dome," and others tilted at varying angles, creating different forms and heights, to be carved by erosion.

The tilting of the Markagunt Plateau, of which the Kolob Terrace of Zion National Park is a part, permitted development of fast-moving streams along the south and west margins of the plateau. These rushing waters rapidly carved their way into the terrace's rock layers, constantly deepening their crooked channels.

Billions of tons of rock were ground up and carried away, finally exposing the remains of that great ancient desert, now called Navajo sandstone. Thus, the major features you see here, including the deep perpendicular-walled Zion Canyon, are the product of these upheavals, the erosive forces of restless streams, wind, rain, and frost.

Landscape Influences Plants and Animals

The varieties of plants and animals in the park provide a pleasing change from the impact of great stone masses that form the walls of the canyon. It is these very walls, though, that create diverse environments for the plants and animals.

The Virgin River, running down the center of Zion Canyon, has a narrow corridor of riparian woodland where broadleaved trees, birds, and small mammals abound.

On narrow ledges above the river are dryer, more open areas of pinyon-juniper woodland. These thickets of short evergreens and oaks are interrupted by open sage flats. These ledges are preferred for nesting by many birds, and by deer for browse.

The high country is predominantly ponderosa pine, quaking aspen, white fir, Douglas-fir, and more sage flats. Many of the resident birds in the park migrate from the valley to the high country in the summer, then back when the snow falls.

Many side canyons cut back into the walls of the valley. These offer shade and moisture from springs, providing an ideal environment for many of the high country birds and other animals to live at much lower elevations. Pines and firs also grow in these side canyons, providing food and protection for the small animals associated with them. If there is enough moisture, some of the stream species also will be present. Around the mouths of these canyons is more pinyon-juniper woodland. This association of environments allows you to enjoy all three in a small area without climbing 600 to 900 meters (2,000 to 3,000 feet) from the floor of Zion Canyon to the plateau top.

From December to March, snow may fall intermittently but usually lasts only a day or two on the canyon floor. Winter maximum temperatures average 15°C (60°F); the minimum average is -9°C (15°F).

May to October daytime temperatures may range from 29°C (85°F) to 41°C (105°F); nighttime, from 18°C (65°F) to 21°C (70°F).

What to See and Do

The visitor center, your headquarters while in the park, is open daily. Here, you can obtain information that will help you plan your visit, see exhibits on the natural history of the park, study a relief map of Zion Canyon, and learn about the park through orientation programs.

Interpretive program schedules are posted throughout the park.

Illustrated talks about the park are presented by park rangers each evening in summer at Zion Lodge and at the campground amphitheaters.

Guided trips are conducted daily in summer over well-maintained trails; in spring and autumn, several times a week.

Drives. On a 19.3-kilometer (12-mile) round trip drive through Zion Canyon, you can see the shapes of Zion: The Sentinel, Court of the Patriarchs, Mountain of the Sun, and Great White Throne.

Kolob Canyons Road, in the Kolob Canyons section, is a paved 8.4-kilometer (5.2-mile) spur leading into the northwest corner of the park from I-15 near Kanarrville. This road is closed from late autumn to spring.

The Kolob Reservoir road from Utah 15 at the town of Virgin leads northward through private ranch country to the Lava Point Fire Lookout on the Kolob Terrace highlands and beyond. Steep, winding, and unimproved, it crosses the terrace and descends to Utah 14 near Cedar City. This road should only be traveled in good weather.

Park roads are designed for your enjoyment of the scenery—not for speed. Maximum speed is 55 kilometers (35 miles) an hour. Keep to the right of the center stripe. Do not park on curves. Watch for deer.

Your car's lights must be in good working order; they are essential in traveling through the 1.6-kilometer (1-mile) tunnel on the East Entrance road.

Walks and hikes. The trails of Zion complement the park's striking views and are almost as famous.

Experienced hikers take such commonsense precautions as the following: Obtain detailed information from a park ranger on back-country trails before attempting to hike them. Seek the advice of a park ranger before attempting the more difficult trails; tell him where you plan to go and when you plan to return. Do not hike alone. Stay on established trails; taking short-cuts may endanger yourself and others.

Overnight back-country camping requires a camping permit, available at the visitor center. All unburnable trash must be packed out. Dogs are not allowed on the trails.

The most popular trail, a 1.6-kilometer (1-mile) footpath from the road's end at the Temple of Sinawava, winds near the east wall of the canyon, past cliffs trickling with streams, to the Gateway to The Narrows. On this walk you can see the Hanging Gardens of Zion, luxuriant verdure, and wildlife.

Self-guiding trips may be made throughout most of the year on the trails to Weeping Rock and to Canyon Overlook.

Other trails reach such places as Emerald Pools and Hidden Canyon. More strenuous but well worth your effort are the West Rim Trail that leads to Angels Landing and views of the Great West Canyon, and East Rim Trail with its unequalled view of Zion Canyon.

In the Kolob Canyon section, the trail from Lee Pass to Kolob Arch is a 19-kilometer (12-mile) round trip. All persons who plan to make technical rock climbs are required to register at park headquarters. Climbing alone is not recommended.

Hardy hikers who seek the unusual should enjoy the river bed route through the Zion Narrows, a 19-kilometer (12-mile) trip beginning north of the park and ending at the Temple of Sinawava. Special permits issued at the visitor center are required.

Please leave the animals, trees, wildflowers, rocks and geological formations undisturbed so that other people, too, may enjoy them.

Wheeled devices, except wheelchairs and strollers, are not allowed on park trails.

Horseback trips. Arrangements for guided horseback trips within the park may be made at Zion Lodge. Schedules are posted throughout the park.

Fishing is allowed all year in the Virgin River below Zion Narrows, but it is marginal because of frequent flooding and seasonal fluctuations in water levels. A Utah fishing license is required.

The park is a sanctuary for wildlife; hunting and the use or display of firearms are not allowed.

Pets are prohibited on trails or in public buildings, and they must be kept under physical control at all times.



How to Reach the Park

I-15 passes west of Zion and connects with Utah 15 and 17 to the park. U.S. 89 passes east and connects with Utah 15 to the park. In the summer, Color Country Tours, Inc., (P.O. Box 1032, Cedar City, Utah 84720) makes scheduled tours from Cedar City. The nearest scheduled air service is through Cedar City and St. George, Utah, where rental cars are available.

Accommodations and Services

Campgrounds. Either South or Watchman Campground is open all year; both are open in summer. Camping limit is 14 days; campsites are not reserved. Camping is permitted only in designated campsites.

Both campgrounds are equipped with individual campsites, fire grates, tables, tap water, restrooms, and a sanitary disposal station for travel trailers and campers. Utility hook-ups are not available.

Collect only dead and down firewood. Be careful with fire at all times. Keep your campfire small and under control. Build fires only in fireplaces. Break your match and hold it until it is cold before throwing it away; crush your cigarette, and be sure that no embers remain.

Picnic sites are available at the Grotto Picnic Area (near Zion Lodge) and at the end of Kolob Canyons Road.

Lodging. The Utah Parks Division of TWAS (4045 So. Spencer St., Suite A43, Las Vegas, NV, 89109) operates Zion Lodge.

Zion Lodge has cabin accommodations within the park. Reservations are advisable in the summer. Contact Utah Parks Division of TWAS for information on other seasons of the year. Communities in the vicinity offer year-round accommodations.

In-Canyon Tours. TWAS provides scheduled open-air tram tours of the canyon floor several times daily during the summer. The tours leave from Zion Lodge.

Food. Zion Lodge has a dining room and soda fountain. Nearby communities have year-round eating facilities.

Medical services. A registered nurse is on duty at Zion Lodge in summer. A physician is available in Hurricane, 39 kilometers (24 miles) west of the park. Hospitals are in St. George, 72 kilometers (45 miles) west of the park, Cedar City, 97 kilometers (60 miles) north, and Kanab, 68 kilometers (42 miles) east.

Religious services. Protestant (interdenominational), Latter-day Saints, and Roman Catholic services are held in summer. See posted schedules.

Public telephones are at the visitor center, Zion Lodge, and the campgrounds.

Automobile service. At Springdale and Mt. Carmel Junction service stations with towing service are operated all year. Springdale has a garage.

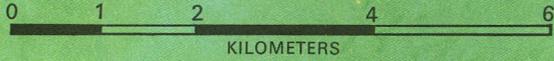
Have a Safe and Pleasant Visit

Your visit to this national park can be most pleasurable and rewarding, or it can be a time of distress, or even tragedy. Much depends on how you and your family observe the simple rules of the wilderness. The safeguards are yours—please use them. If in doubt, ask a park ranger.

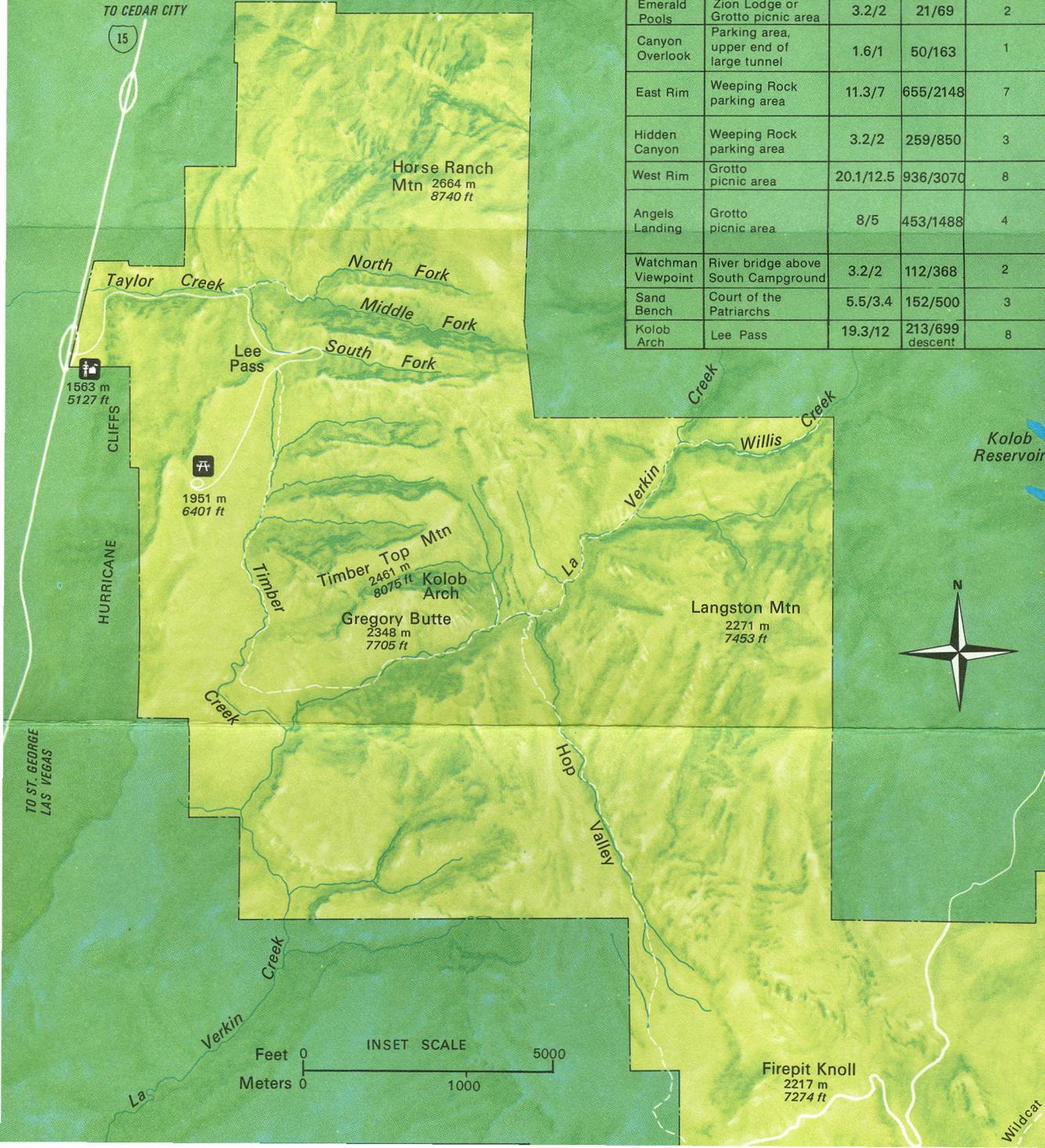
Park rangers are here to enforce regulations and to help you if you have any questions or difficulties. Park naturalists help you to understand the geology and other natural history of the park. All park personnel welcome your observations and inquiries.

Down the canyon at a lofty distance, the Great White Throne and Angels Landing keep watch over this pleasant amphitheater called the Temple of Sinawava, here at the end of the Zion Canyon scenic drive.

ZION NATIONAL PARK

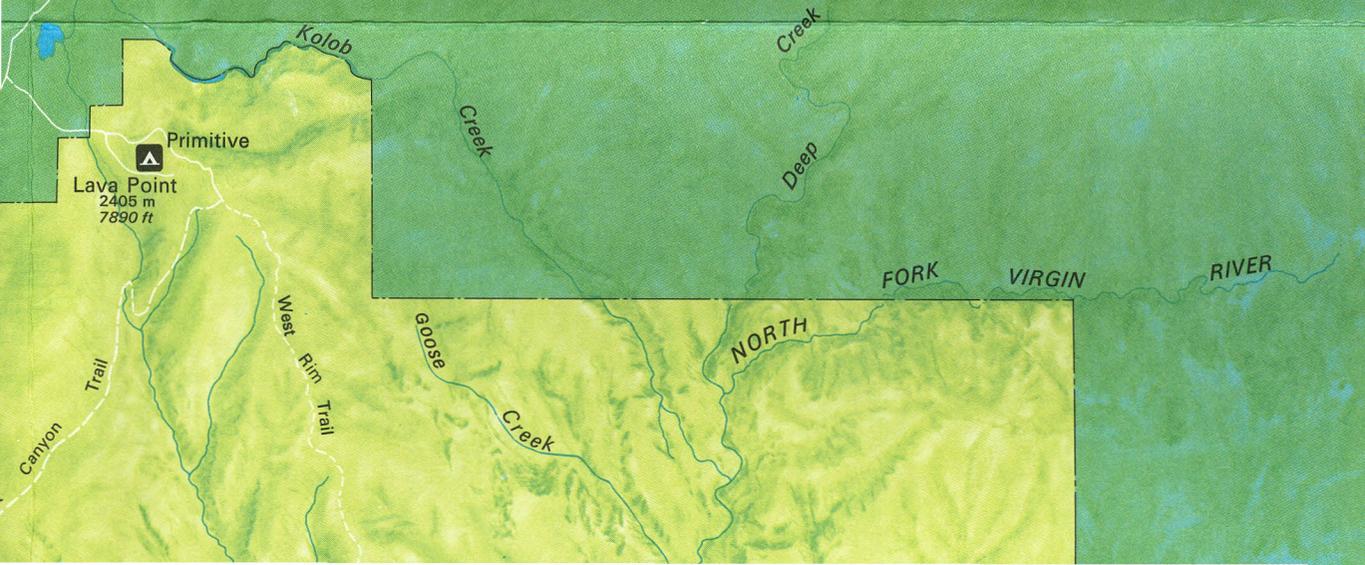
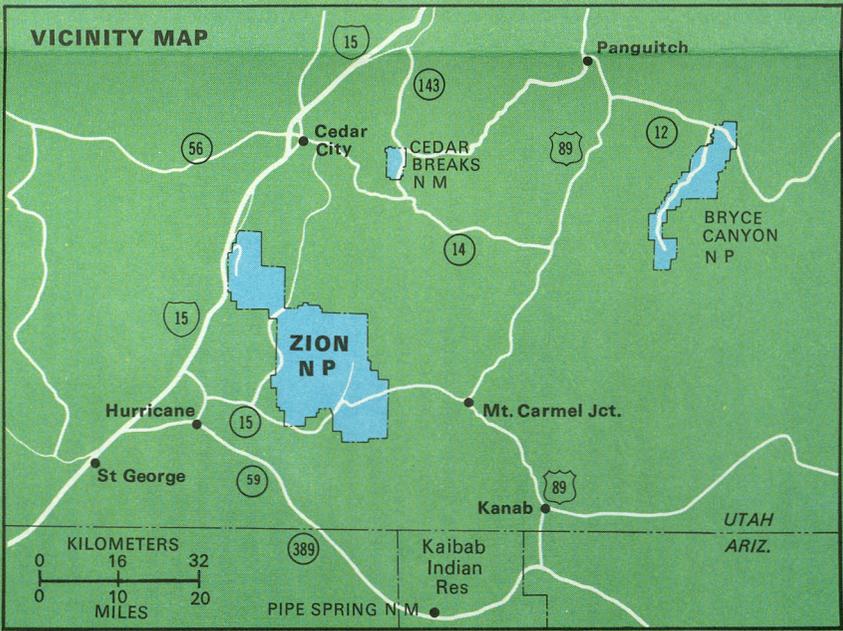


Park trails	Starting point	Round trip (km/mi)	Ascent (m/ft)	Round trip (avg. hours)
Gateway to The Narrows	Temple of Sinawava	3.2/2	17/57	2
Weeping Rock	Weeping Rock parking area	0.8/0.5	30/98	½
Emerald Pools	Zion Lodge or Grotto picnic area	3.2/2	21/69	2
Canyon Overlook	Parking area, upper end of large tunnel	1.6/1	50/163	1
East Rim	Weeping Rock parking area	11.3/7	655/2148	7
Hidden Canyon	Weeping Rock parking area	3.2/2	259/850	3
West Rim	Grotto picnic area	20.1/12.5	936/3070	8
Angels Landing	Grotto picnic area	8/5	453/1488	4
Watchman Viewpoint	River bridge above South Campground	3.2/2	112/368	2
Sand Bench	Court of the Patriarchs	5.5/3.4	152/500	3
Kolob Arch	Lee Pass	19.3/12	213/699 descent	8



Remarks
Easy, no steep grades. All-weather trail. Fine view of river flood plain. Trailside exhibit near Temple of Sinawava.
Easy, surfaced, self-guiding trail. Water drips from overhanging cliff; springs issue from it. Hanging gardens; travertine deposits.
Cross river on footbridges. Small pool formed by two falls. Loop or one-way trail.
A self-guiding trail. Mostly easy walking to top of Great Arch. Excellent view of Pine Creek Canyon and west side of Zion Canyon.
Fairly strenuous foot and horse trail. Carry water, lunch. Cross footbridge and climb to East Rim Trail sign.
Fairly strenuous. Hidden Canyon represents the many narrow hanging valleys that develop along fracture joints.
Strenuous foot/horse trail. Carry water, lunch. Cross river on footbridge. 1/2 distance to Lava Pt.
Strenuous foot trail; experienced hikers only; steep climb. Half of trail hard-surfaced. Cross footbridge over river. Excellent view of Zion Canyon.
View of The Watchman, Springdale, and Zion and Oak Creek Canyons. Changing vegetation.
Good view down canyon, and also of the Three Patriarchs. Horses.
Fairly strenuous foot and horse trail. Carry water, lunch.

- Paved Road
- Gravel, Dirt Road
- Self-guiding Nature Trail
- Amphitheater
- Ranger Station
- Trail
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Lodging
- Campground



ZION CANYON SECTION

Temple of Sinawava
1344 m
4411 ft

Spendlove Knoll
2101 m
6893 ft

North Guardian Angel
2258 m
7408 ft



West Rim Trail

East Rim Trail

Observation Point
1984 m
6508 ft

Weeping Rock

The Organ
1554 m
5100 ft

Cable Mtn
1980 m
6496 ft

Angels Landing
1763 m
5785 ft

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE
2056 m
6744 ft

Hidden Canyon

Tabernacle Dome
1966 m
6451 ft

South Guardian Angel
2184 m
7164 ft

Emerald Pools
1436 m
4708 ft

VIRGIN CANYON

Grotto

TO VIRGIN North

Left Fork
Right Fork
Creek

Lady Mtn
2115 m
6940 ft

ZION LODGE

Deertrap Mtn

THREE PATRIARCHS

Mountain of the Sun
2049 m
6723 ft

Court of the Patriarchs

FORK DRIVE

Trail

The Sentinel
2181 m
7157 ft

The East Temple
2167 m
7110 ft

Crater Hill
1587 m
5207 ft

The Beehives
2077 m
6825 ft

Sand Bench

ZION SCENIC DRIVE

TO VIRGIN, ST. GEORGE AND CEDAR CITY

COUGAR MOUNTAIN

Huber Wash

VISITOR CENTER

Bridge Mtn
2076 m
6814 ft

VIRGIN

15

RIVER

SOUTH ENTRANCE

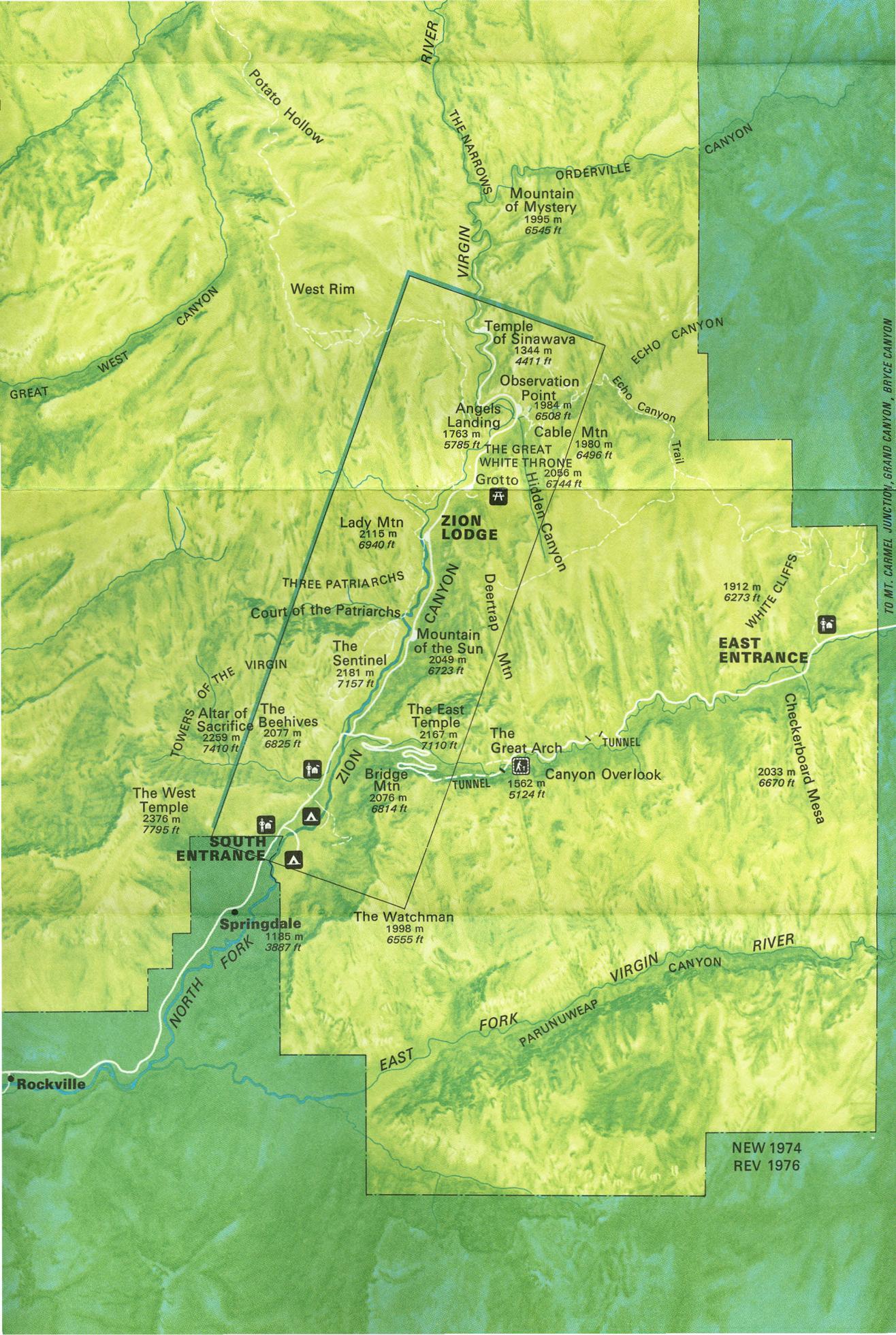
Zion Nature School

South

Watchman Viewpoint Trail

Watchman

TO 59



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WE'RE JOINING THE METRIC WORLD

The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to improve interpretation for park visitors from other nations.

ADMINISTRATION

Zion National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Springdale, UT 84767, is in immediate charge. Telephone (801) 772-3256.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR