



The West Temple and Towers of the Virgin, Zion Canyon

Glenn Van Nieuweneg

“There is an eloquence to their forms which stirs the imagination with a singular power and kindles in the mind . . . a glowing response . . . Nothing can exceed the wondrous beauty of Zion . . . in the

nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison.” When geologist Clarence E. Dutton wrote that description in 1880, southern Utah was a wild, rugged

country of little-known canyons and plateaus. Slowly, scientific reports, magazine articles, and photographs spread the word that deep within this remote territory lay the scenic phenomenon of Zion. Some

refused to believe such a place existed, just as others had scoffed at the first stories of Yellowstone. But the massive multi-colored vertical cliffs and deep canyons

were real, and in 1909 this area was added to the National Park System. Take time and discover Zion on its roads—and beyond.

On the Road

Zion Canyon Shuttle
Because of growing traffic, parking problems, and pollution, visitors wishing to travel the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive from April through October will now use a shuttle system. The shuttles follow two loops: one includes nine stops in Zion Canyon; the other has six stops in the town of Springdale. The loops are connected by a footbridge between the Zion Canyon Theater and the Zion Canyon Visitor Center. Visitors can park in Springdale and take the shuttle to the park or park at the visitor center. The shuttle departs frequently from each stop throughout the day, and users can get on and off as often as they wish. The round trip from the visitor center lasts a minimum of 90 minutes. There is a park entrance fee, but the shuttle is free.

Tunnel Restrictions
All buses and many recreational vehicles are too large to pass safely through the long tunnel in two-way traffic. A fee is charged for the escort required for large vehicles to use the tunnel.

Zion Canyon Scenic Drive Sheer, vividly colored cliffs tower above as you follow this road along the floor of Zion Canyon. This narrow, deep canyon is the centerpiece of the park. It awed early visitors like Frederick Vining Fisher, a Methodist minister who named the Great White Throne, Angels Landing, and many other monoliths. Today the canyon continues to spark a sense of wonder and

disbelief in those who come and stand beneath its 2,000- to 3,000-foot-high walls.

At the canyon's bottom flows the Virgin River, a river with the looks of a creek and the muscle of the Colorado. This small river almost singlehandedly carved the profound rock gorge of Zion Canyon. It began its downcutting more than 13 million years ago and continues its work today.



Cottonwoods on the Virgin River, autumn

You may witness the power of the river during a flash flood, when it turns muddy and violent, carrying cottonwoods and boulders like twigs and pebbles.

On most days the Virgin winds through the canyon peacefully. Fremont cottonwoods, willows, and velvet ashes along its banks provide shady spots. Mule deer and many birds, too, seek refuge from the extreme

midday heat of summer beneath this canopy. Other wildlife, including ringtail cats, bobcats, foxes, rock squirrels, and cottontails, rest under rocky ledges. Look for animals in early morning, evening, and at night, when they are most active. These are also ideal times to see the conspicuous white trumpet-shaped flowers of the sacred datura. This common plant is also called moonily because its



Court of the Patriarchs

blossoms open in the cooler hours of evening and wilt with the rising heat of the day.

Ancestral Puebloans and Paiute Indians may have lived in Zion Canyon year-round. Mormon settlers lived here in summer, when dramatic thunderstorms send dozens of waterfalls, large and small, cascading off the cliffs; in autumn, when the green canyon trees turn

gold; in the winter, when light snow dusts the rocks; and in the spring, when wildflowers fed by melting snows bloom. You may want to sample a different season on your next visit to Zion Canyon. You can be sure that whenever you return, and no matter how often, Zion Canyon will always repay you generously for the time you spend here.

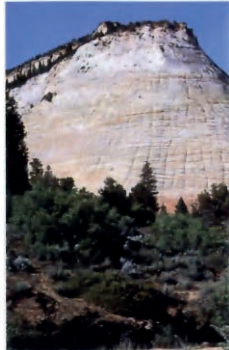


East portal of Zion-Mt. Carmel tunnel, early 1930s

Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Outstanding works of humans and nature compete for attention along this route. Completed in 1930, the road was considered an “almost impossible project,” an engineering marvel of its time. Built across rough up-and-down terrain, it connects lower Zion Canyon with the high plateaus to the east. Two narrow tunnels, including one 1.1 miles long, were drilled

and blasted through the cliffs to finish the construction job.

As you travel from one side of the long tunnel to the other, the landscape changes dramatically. On one side lies Zion Canyon with its massive cliff walls. The colossal size of the canyon is matched by one of the most striking attractions along this road—the Great Arch of Zion, a “blind” arch carved high in a vertical cliff wall.



Checkerboard Mesa

On the other side of the tunnel is slickrock country. Here rocks colored in white and pastels of orange and red have eroded into hundreds of fantastic shapes, etched through time with odd patterns of cracks and grooves. The mountain of sandstone known as Checkerboard Mesa stands as the most prominent example of this naturally sculptured rock art.

Roads to the Kolob Two roads lead into the northwestern corner of the park, where streams have carved spectacular canyons at the edge of the Kolob Terrace. The Kolob Canyons Road enters the park from I-15 at exit 40 and penetrates 5 miles into the Finger Canyons, ending at a high viewpoint. The Kolob Terrace Road overlooks the cliffs of the Left and Right Forks of North Creek. Both routes climb into forests of pin-

yon and juniper; ponderosa pine, fir, and quaking aspen are found at Lava Point. In summer there is often a feel of mountain coolness to the air atop the Kolob's plateaus. And in the early spring the Kolob is buried under a thick snowpack. The sparkling white of the snow heightens the colors of this already colorful landscape. Interpretive road guides are for sale at the visitor centers.



A finger canyon of the Kolob

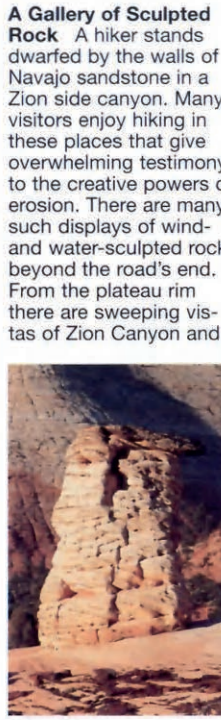
Beyond the Road

The names of the trails in Zion—Emerald Pools, Hidden Canyon, the Narrows, Canyon Overlook—hint at some of what you can find beyond the road. There are surprises, too—a desert swamp, a petrified forest, springs and waterfalls, and the always unpredictable appearance of wildlife. You may be overwhelmed by the size and scale of the park as it surrounds you, or fascinated by the tiny details of a rock pattern or a cactus bloom.

Before you head out on your first hike, consult “Hiking Zion,” a brief guide to the park's trails, on the opposite side of this brochure. Naturalists take guided trips along some of these trails from late March to November. They also lead off-trail hikes through canyons, up the Virgin River, and over slickrock country.

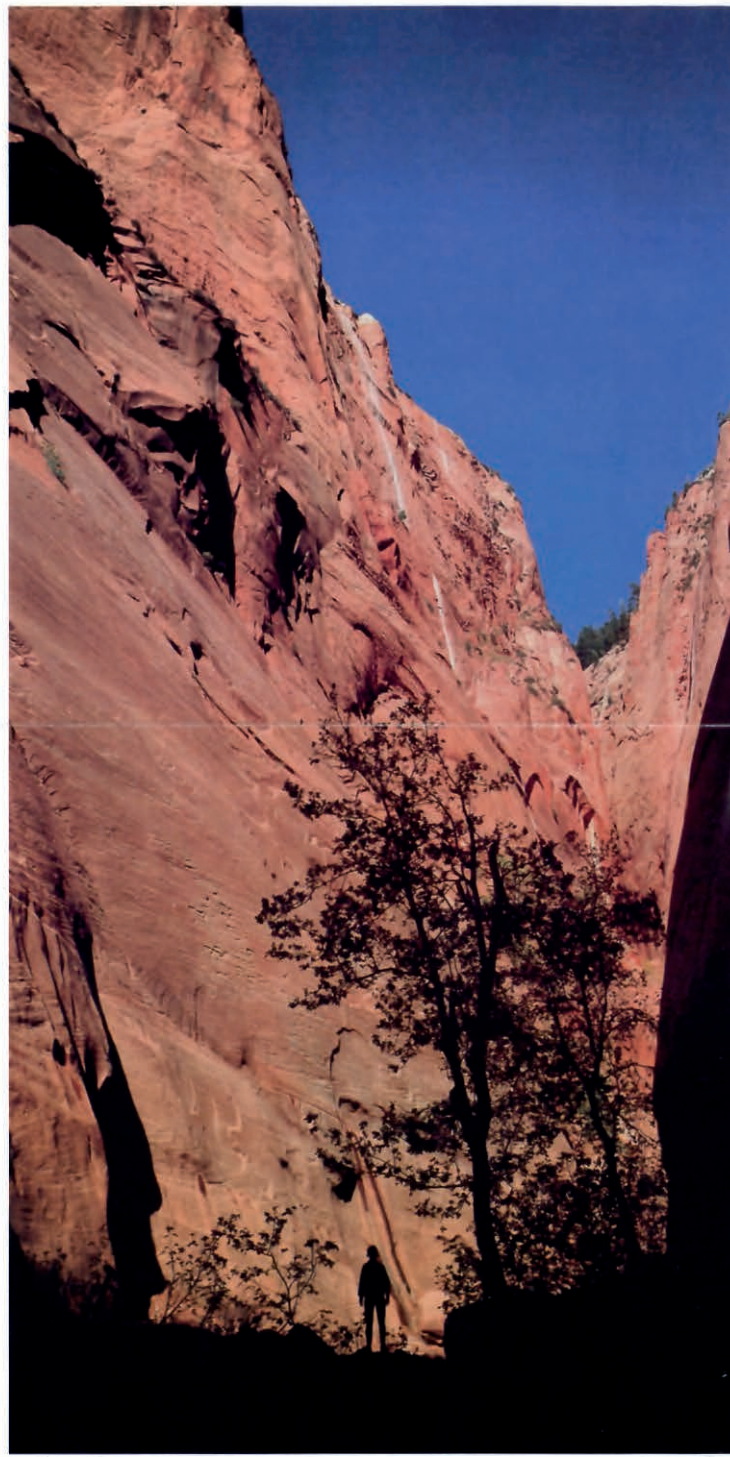
Concessioner-guided horseback trips are offered from March into November. Private horseback parties should check in at either visitor center. In the Zion Canyon portion of the park, only the Sandbench Trail to the Emerald Pools trailhead is open to horses. The large amount of pedestrian traffic throughout the park prevents more extensive use by horses.

Technical climbing is permitted in the park. A backcountry permit is required for overnight climbs. Climbing alone is not recommended. Certain areas may be closed for public safety or resource management concerns; therefore, check routes at the visitor center before beginning your trip.



A hoodoo

One observer called Zion “a singular display of nature's art mingled with nonsense.” The hoodoos readily seen on the east side of the park reflect this idea well. These weird, iron-capped rocks resemble enormous mushrooms, or king-sized footstools, or whatever your imagination fancies. A multitude of other interesting rock forms—from arches to alcoves to potholes—are scattered here, there, everywhere.



In the stillness of a canyon

Laurence Parent

A Refuge for Wildlife The name Zion suggests a place of peace and refuge. This is true not only for visitors but for wildlife as well. The park is a sanctuary for road-runners and golden eagles, mule deer and mountain lions, cactus and cottonwood. Some of the best opportunities for encountering wildlife are along park trails. You may surprise lizards or Gambel's quail on a hike along a wooded wash on the desert's edge. Or hear echoes of the clear gushing song of the canyon wren in a pygmy forest of pinyon and juniper. Watch for tracks; they may be the closest you get to rarely seen species like the mountain lion or the nocturnal ringtailed cat.

Wildflowers are common throughout the park, particularly in spring and fall. Even where there is nothing more than a tiny pocket of soil in a rock crack, plants manage to take root and grow. Some cliffs, like those at Weeping Rock, are thick with golden and western columbine, scarlet monkey-flower, and maiden-hair fern. Springwater seeping through the porous rock walls nourishes these lush hanging gardens.

A Wilderness Preserved Protected within Zion's 229 square miles is a wilderness full of the unexpected. It includes what may be the world's largest arch—Kolob Arch spanning 310 feet—and simpler natural wonders, such as small waterfalls and clear backcountry pools. The fundamental qualities of wild America—quiet and solitude—are here, too.



Hanging gardens



Golden aster



Utah penstemon



Hikers in the Virgin River narrows



Mountain lion



Collared lizard



Prickly pear cactus

General Information and Services

The Zion Canyon Visitor Center offers a wide variety of information and services year-round. Many books and free brochures, topographic maps, and exhibits are available. Park rangers can assist you in planning your visit to get the most out of your time.

The smaller Kolob Canyons Visitor Center offers similar services.

Campgrounds South Campground is open on a first-come, first-served basis. Sites at Watchman Campground can be reserved; call 1-800-365-2267 or visit the <http://reservations.nps.gov> website. Both campgrounds charge fees; both have fire grates, picnic tables, water, restrooms, and a sanitary disposal station for trailers. Some sites are set aside for people with disabilities. Campsites for groups of 9 to 40 persons are available by reservation. The Lava Point Primitive Campground is usually

open from May to October. Fire grates, tables, and toilets are provided, but there is no water. No fee is charged.

Camping is limited to 14 days and is permitted only in designated sites or in the backcountry.

Picnic Areas There are two picnic areas: the Grotto Picnic Area in Zion Canyon and a site at the end of Kolob Canyons Road. The Grotto has fire grates, picnic tables, water, and restrooms. The Kolob site has tables, fire grates, and pit toilets.

Zion Lodge The lodge has motel units, cabins, a restaurant, snack bar, and gift shop. It is open all year. For information on accommodations, write: AMFAC Parks and Resorts, 14001 East Liff St., Aurora, CO 89914; call 303-297-2757; or visit www.amfac.com. Advance reservations are recommended.

Tram Tours Tours of Zion Canyon aboard open-air trams are run several times daily in the summer. Reservations and information are available at the lodge.

Horseback Rides Guided rides are available from late March to early November. Reservations and information are available at the lodge, or by writing to Bryce-Zion Trail Rides, Inc., P.O. Box 58, Tropic, UT 84776, or by calling 435-772-3810.

Nearby Services and Accommodations Springdale, Mt. Carmel, and the larger towns of Hurricane, St. George, Cedar City, and Kanab have motels, restaurants, service stations, and grocery stores. A private campground in Spring-

dale has full utility hook-ups and hot showers. Other campgrounds are located within 25 miles of the park. The nearest hospitals are located in St. George, Cedar City, and Kanab.

Park Activities Guided nature walks, evening programs, and talks are given from late March to November. Activity schedules are posted in the visitor centers and throughout the park.

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, children ages 6 through 12 can learn about the park in the

Junior Ranger Program, held at the Zion Nature Center.

Fishing A Utah fishing license is required in the park. Angling success is poor.

Climate From May to October temperatures range from 70° to 105°F in the day and from 45° to 75°F at night. Afternoon thunderstorms are common in July and August. Winters are mild in Zion Canyon with temperatures often reaching above 40°F. Little snow falls in Zion Canyon, but snow accu-

mulates on the plateaus. Spring and fall are ideal times to visit the park. During these seasons temperatures range from 45°F at night to 80°F in the day.

Information For more information write: Superintendent, Zion National Park, Springdale, UT 84767-1099; call 435-772-3256; or visit www.nps.gov/zion on the Internet.

Regulations This is your national park. Please help us to preserve and protect it so that future generations may enjoy it, too. We ask that you follow these regulations: • Permits are required for overnight backcountry use. • Pets must be leashed and are not allowed in the backcountry, public buildings, or on trails. • Motorized vehicles and bicycles must stay on established roads. • Do not feed or molest wildlife or remove or otherwise disturb any natural feature.

• Wood gathering is not permitted in the park. • In an emergency, contact a ranger or call 1-435-772-3322 or 911. **For Your Safety** Each year people are lost, injured, and sometimes killed while visiting the national parks. • When hiking, stay on established trails and watch your footing at all times. Steep slopes and cliff edges are dangerous. • Do not roll or throw rocks and other things from high places; others may be below you.

• Temperatures can exceed 105°F in the park. Drink lots of water, but do not drink untreated water as it may be contaminated. • Avoid drainages after thunderstorms or severe weather because of flash floods. Stay away from high points during thunderstorms; lightning can kill. • Wildlife may appear tame but may attack if threatened. Stay a safe distance away while observing animals. • Watch your children closely; they often do not recognize potential dangers.

For a Safe Visit

Exploring Zion

Hiking Zion



Angel's Landing trail

There are trails in Zion for those who want an easy 10-minute walk, a two-day backpacking trip, or something in between. The chart at right lists the park's most popular trails. When choosing a hike consider not only your time and interests but also your hiking experience, physical fitness, and fear of heights. Easy trails are short and mostly level. Moderately strenuous and strenuous trails require hiking long distances, often uphill. Extreme summer heat makes any hike more difficult and exhausting. Early morning, late afternoon, and evening are best for hiking, unless you come in spring or fall when it is cooler.

Always let a friend or relative know where you are going and when you expect to return. Stay on trails unless you have discussed plans to hike

off-trail with a ranger. Carry a topographic map when hiking longer trails. Water is scarce in the backcountry; you should carry one gallon per person per day. Carry some water even on short hikes. Don't drink water you find in the backcountry without boiling or treating it. Carry food on long trips. Pack out all trash. See "For a Safe Visit" (opposite side) for additional important information.

Backcountry Camping Backcountry permits are required to camp on a hiking trip. Permits are issued at the Zion Canyon Visitor Center and the Kolob Canyons Visitor Center. Camping is not permitted within one mile of a road or trailhead.

The Narrows The Narrows of Zion Canyon is one of the most popular, and most strenuous, off-trail hikes in the park. Hiking through the Narrows is a 16-mile trip requiring at least one full day. Much of the trip involves wading through the Virgin River. The Narrows may be closed because of the threat of flash floods. Permits are required for trips through the length of the Narrows and its tributaries.

Zion Canyon Trails:

Weeping Rock	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, Weeping Rock parking lot	0.5/0.8	0.5 hour	98/30	Easy. Minor dropoffs. Self-guiding trail. Ends at Weeping Rock, a rock alcove with dripping springs. Hanging gardens of wildflowers decorate the walls in spring and summer.
Canyon Overlook	Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, just east of long tunnel	1.0/1.6	1 hour	163/50	Easy. Long dropoffs. Mostly fenced. Self-guiding trail. Guidebooks available at visitor center and trailhead. Ends at spectacular view of lower Zion Canyon and Pine Creek Canyon.
Emerald Pools	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, opposite Zion Lodge	1.2/1.9	1 hour	69/21	Easy to moderately strenuous. Long dropoffs on upper route. Lower route ends at lower pool and three waterfalls. Accessible to persons with disabilities with assistance. To reach upper pool, hike another 1 mile; this is more strenuous. Upper pool is larger and sits at the base of high cliffs.
Riverside Walk	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, Temple of Sinawava	2.0/3.2	1.5 hours	57/17	Easy. Minor dropoffs. Follows Virgin River upstream to Zion Canyon Narrows, where paved trail ends; hanging gardens of wildflowers in spring and summer. Trailside exhibits. Access for persons with disabilities with some assistance. You may continue hiking beyond the end of this trail. The route through the Virgin River involves walking in up to 4 feet of water and climbing over rocks. Wear ankle supporting shoes. Avoid carrying items in your hands and protect cameras in plastic bags. Talk to a ranger before making this hike and check the Narrows Danger Level before starting.
Watchman	Service road, east of Watchman Campground Registration Station	2.0/3.2	2 hours	368/112	Moderately strenuous. Mostly minor dropoffs. Recommended for early and late in the day. Ends at viewpoint of lower Zion Creek Canyon and town of Springdale.
Hidden Canyon	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive-Weeping Rock parking lot	2.0/3.2	3 hours	850/259	Moderately strenuous. Long dropoffs. Not for anyone fearful of heights. Leads to narrow side canyon in joint of rock. Trail ends at canyon mouth; can hike beyond end of trail for another 0.6 mile.
Angels Landing	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, Grotto Picnic Area	5.0/8.0	4 hours	1488/453	Strenuous. Long dropoffs and narrow trails. Not for anyone fearful of heights. Ends at summit high above Zion Canyon floor. Last 0.5 mile follows a steep narrow ridge; chains have been added for safety.

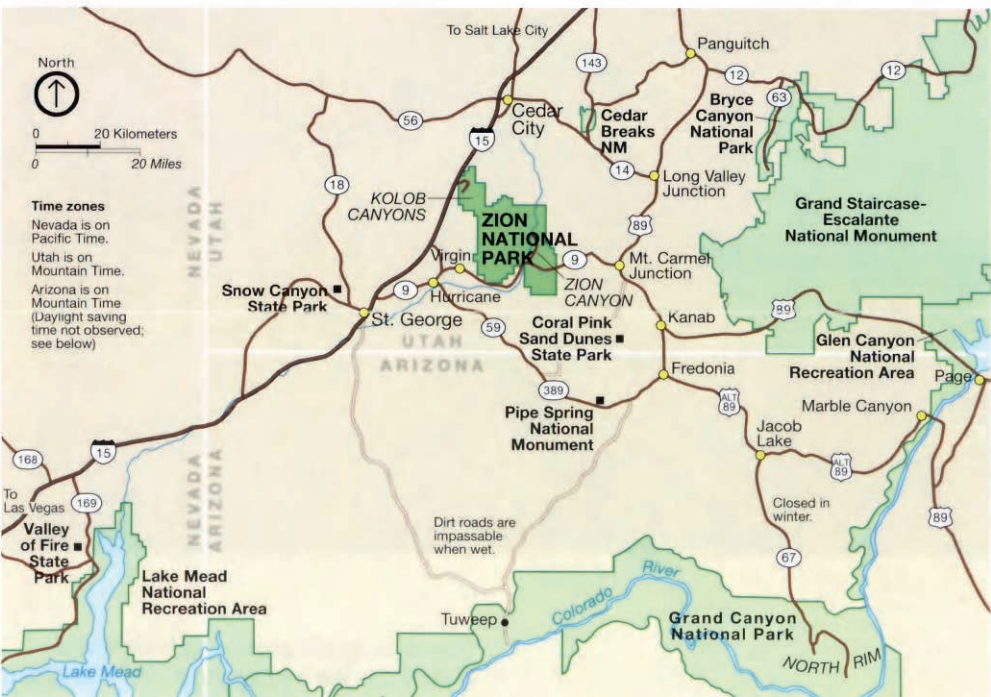
Kolob Trails:

Taylor Creek	Kolob Canyons Road, 2 miles from Kolob Visitor Center.	5.4/8.6	4 hours	450/137	Moderately strenuous. No dropoffs. Follows the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek past two old cabins to Double Arch Alcove. Footwear may get wet fording creek.
Kolob Arch	Kolob Canyons Road, Lee Pass	14.4/23.0	9 hours	699/213 (Descent)	Strenuous. No dropoffs. A hot midday hike in summer. Follows Timber and La Verkin Creeks and ends at Kolob Arch, possibly the world's largest free-standing arch.

Extended Backcountry Trails - distances and times are one-way:

East Rim	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, Weeping Rock parking lot	11.6/18.7	7 hours	2400/732	Strenuous. Long dropoffs. Climbs Echo Canyon up to the forested top of the rim and continues to the Zion-Mt. Carmel Hwy. at the East Entrance of the park. Trail provides access to Observation Point and to Deertap and Cable Mountain.
West Rim	Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, Grotto Picnic Area	14/22.5	12 hours	3593/1095	Strenuous. Long dropoffs. Climbs to the top of the forested Horse Plateau, with spectacular views of the North Creek drainages. The trail ends at Lava Point.

Traveling in the Area



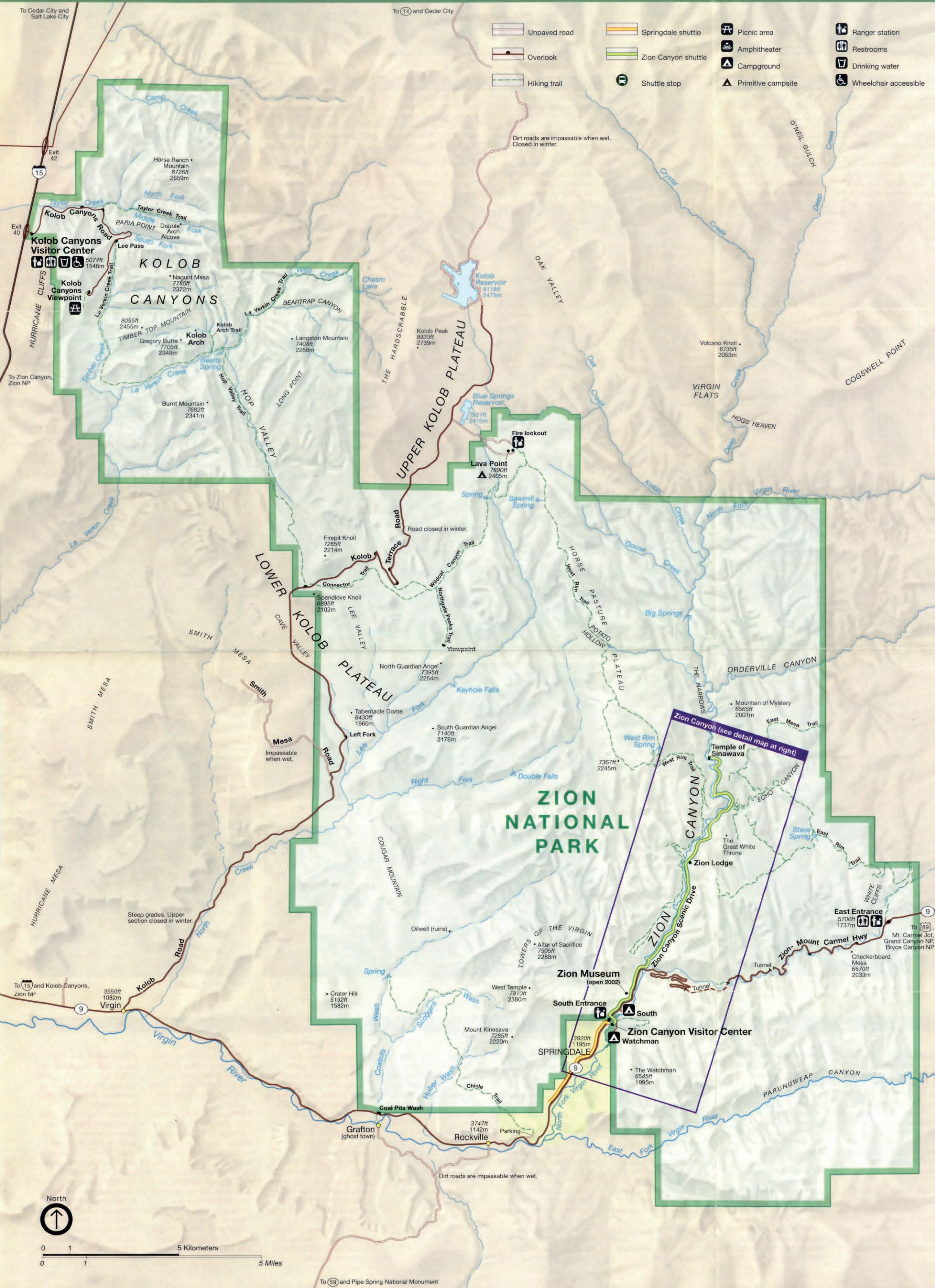
Zion is part of the Southwest's "Grand Circle" of national parks, monuments, historical areas, and recreation areas—one of the world's great concentrations of outstanding natural and cultural features. Driving distances from Zion Canyon Visitor Center to many of these sites and to area towns are listed here.

Bryce Canyon National Park 86 miles
Cedar Breaks National Monument 76 miles
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Lake Powell) 115 miles
Grand Canyon National Park (North Rim) 119 miles and (South Rim) 253 miles
Lake Mead National Recreation Area 189 miles

Pipe Spring National Monument 63 miles
Cedar City 60 miles
Kanab 41 miles
Las Vegas 158 miles
St. George 43 miles
Salt Lake City 320 miles

Time Zones Be aware of time changes as you travel throughout this region. Nevada (Pacific Time) is always one hour earlier than Utah (Mountain Time). Utah and Nevada observe daylight saving time during the summer; Arizona (Mountain Time) stays on standard time the year round. Thus, Utah and Arizona are on the same time from late October to early April. From early April to late October, Arizona and Nevada are on the same time—one hour earlier than Utah.

Zion National Park



Detail Map of Zion Canyon

