



# Around Zion National Park

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## Best Places to Stay

- Under the Eaves Inn (p86)
- Desert Pearl Inn (p87)
- Seven Wives Inn (p91)

## Best Places to Eat

- Whiptail Grill (p89)
- Riggatti's Wood Fired Pizza (p92)
- Painted Pony (p93)
- Centro (p96)

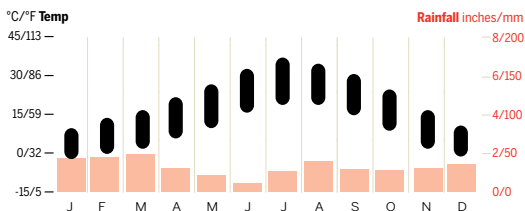
## Why Go?

You may be tempted to speed out of Vegas with your foot on the gas and Zion firmly in your sights – after all, the park is less than three hours away via the interstate. But once you cross the state line, consider slowing down to explore the vast wilderness that surrounds you: Snow Canyon State Park, St George and Cedar Breaks National Monument are all worthy detours, with their own superb vistas and an array of fun activities, including mountain biking, cycling, climbing and cross-country skiing.

Even if time is short, it's likely you'll be based outside the park anyway, unless you've got a coveted park campsite. As far as towns go, Springdale is the pick of the bunch, with easy access and a range of accommodations and restaurants. For something a bit more off the beaten path, consider sleepy Cedar City for Kolob Canyons access, or idyllic Glendale, perfectly situated in between Zion, Bryce and Kanab.

## When to Go

### Zion National Park



#### May–Aug

Soaring heat; rains increase the risk of flash floods in July and August.

#### Sep–Nov

Clear, warm days; festivals in Cedar City and St George.

#### Dec–Apr

Snow at higher elevations; some trails may be closed.

## Springdale

POP 548 / ELEV 3898FT

When the cottonwoods are budding against the red cliffs, Springdale is the perfect little park town, though more frequently it's a bottleneck of traffic entering Zion National Park. The main drag – well, the only drag – features eclectic cafes, galleries and restaurants touting local produce and organic ingredients. Many residents were drawn here for the surroundings, but you will occasionally run into a lifelong local who thinks they're 'just rocks.'

### Sights

#### Grafton Ghost Town

GHOST TOWN

The freely accessible Grafton ghost town, outside Rockville, achieved its 15 minutes of fame in 1969 as the setting for the bicycle scene in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Originally settled in 1859, the town never amounted to much. A restored 1886 school and church, a well-maintained cemetery and some pioneer cabins remain. In Rockville, 3.5 miles west of Springdale, take Bridge Rd north; cross the bridge and turn right on Grafton Rd. After half a mile follow the main road, which bears left and becomes gravel. A mile further, bear right at the sign. After another 2 miles, you'll pass the cemetery on your left, then drive a quarter-mile further to the ghost town. Park at the red gate.

#### La Verkin Overlook

VIEWPOINT

West of Virgin on Hwy 9, before La Verkin, a 1.5-mile gravel-and-dirt road leads south to the La Verkin Overlook. Stop for a fantastic 360-degree view of the surrounding 40 sq miles, from Zion to the Pine Valley Mountains. Trails lead along the ridge above the Virgin River. This is a great sunset perch.

### Activities


#### Mountain Biking

The area around Zion has a handful of heart-pumping mountain-bike trails through the desert – these are wicked-fun rides. The two most famous trail systems are the **JEM Trail** – fast singletrack through desert scrub along the canyon rim – and **Gooseberry Mesa**, a more technical slickrock route similar to what you'll find in Moab (and not for beginners). Note that Gooseberry Mesa access is rugged; you don't absolutely need high-clearance 4WD, but it is recommended. Further afield, the area around St George is another good spot for road and

mountain-bike trails. Ask at the bike stores for maps and more information. Zion Adventure Company also runs bike tours.


#### Zion Cycles

MOUNTAIN BIKING

( 435-772-0400; [www.zioncycles.com](http://www.zioncycles.com); 868 Zion Park Blvd; half-/full-day rentals from \$28/38, car racks from \$12; ☀️ 9am-7pm Feb-Nov) Next to Zion Mountain School, this is the most helpful bike shop in town, with lots of info on local trails and tandem, road and mountain-bike rentals. No tours.

#### Bike Zion

MOUNTAIN BIKING

( 435-772-0320; [www.bikingzion.com](http://www.bikingzion.com); 1458 Zion Park Blvd, Zion Rock & Mountain Guides; half-/full-day rental \$25/35, car racks from \$12; ☀️ 8am-8pm) Zion Rock's on-site sister cycle shop; has a variety of rentals and does tours. We never saw anyone in the store, so best call ahead.


#### tubing

Tubing is prohibited within Zion but is quite popular outside the park. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, Zion Adventure Company and Zion Outfitters (p85) rent out river tubes (\$17 per day), unless the water level is too low (or too high). The float stretches about 2.5 miles, and lasts from 90 minutes to two hours depending on the water flow. Good river play places include **Springdale River Park**, and from the campground at Zion Canyon Campground & RV Resort (p85).

#### Spa

##### Deep Canyon Adventure Spa

SPA


( 435-772-3244; [www.deepcanyonspa.com](http://www.deepcanyonspa.com); 428 Zion Park Blvd, Flanigan's Inn; 1hr treatments from \$99) After a hard day's hike, the river-stone massage will be your muscles' new best friend.

### Tours & Outfitters

If you're eager to try out canyoneering or rock climbing but don't have the gear or necessary experience, stop in at one of the following outfitters to sign up for a trip or a course. All outfitters offer half-day, full-day, family and adventure-level tours. Outfitters with storefronts also offer gear rental for the Narrows (wetsuits, drysuits, neoprene booties, etc). There are also a few off-road 4WD tours available.

#### Zion Adventure Company

ADVENTURE SPORTS

( 435-772-1001; [www.zionadventures.com](http://www.zionadventures.com); 36 Lion Blvd; canyoneering day from \$177; ☀️ 8am-8pm Mar-Oct, 9am-noon & 4-7pm Nov-Feb) The main outfitter in town and certainly the most