

## Zion: Angels Landing

The Angels Landing Trail is one of the most famous and thrilling hikes in the national park system. Zion's pride and joy runs along a narrow rock fin with dizzying drop-offs on both sides. The trail culminates at a lofty perch, boasting magnificent views in every direction. Rarely is such an intimidating path so frequented by hikers. One would think that this narrow ridge with deep chasms on each of its flanks would allure only the most intrepid of hikers. Climbers scale its big wall; hikers pull themselves up by chains and sightseers stand in awe at its stunning nobility. The towering monolith is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the Southwest.



### At Glance

**Photo Album:** [Angels Landing Pictures](#)

**Map:** [Trail Map](#) - [Backcountry Map](#) - [Overview Map](#)

**Day Hike:** Yes

**Distance:** 5-miles

**Average Hiking Time:** 5 hours

**Equipment:** Map to locate the landmarks surrounding Angels Landing.

**Difficulty:** Strenuous uphill hike, but hiking is on a well maintained trail.

**Sun Exposure:** Full sun

**Trail Usage:** Heavy

**Permits:** Not required.

**Trail Conditions:** The first 2-miles are paved and well-maintained. Most of the path is sunny, but Refrigerator Canyon offers shade and often a cool breeze. This is a good early morning hike. Make sure to allow time to be off the trail by dark if starting late in the day. The last half-mile is across a narrow sandstone ridge. Anchored support chains are attached along some sections of the sheer fin. Sheer cliffs at high elevations while hiking on a narrow fin. Not suggested for children or those with a fear of heights. Avoid standing near the edge at all times! Do not hike the trail when it is wet, storming, or when high winds are present.

**Trailhead:** Grotto picnic area in Zion Canyon

**Trailend:** Same as trailhead

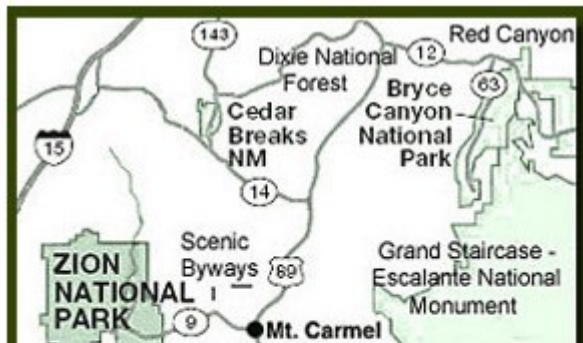
**Trail Access:** Usually from April 1st until October 30th Zion Canyon is accessed via the shuttle. Private cars are allowed in [Zion Canyon](#) the rest of the year. Park at the [Zion Canyon Visitor Center](#) to ride the shuttle and get off at the Grotto shuttle stop. The rest of the year, when the shuttles are not operating, drive into the canyon and park at the Grotto.

**Best Season:** March to October, but can be hiked year-round as long as the trail is free of ice and snow.

**Elevation Gain:** Long steady climb. 1488 feet

**Peak:** 5785 feet

**Restrooms:** Scout Lookout (when working) at the Angels Landing junction and at the Grotto Picnic area.



### Angels Landing and the West Rim Trail

From the Grotto Picnic area, cross the Zion Canyon Road. Head toward the footbridge that passes over the North Fork of the Virgin River. On the other side of the bridge, take the north (right) fork to the West Rim Trail. This busy path begins by traveling through a riparian woodland of cottonwood, pinyon pines and junipers. It's a steady 2-mile uphill trek as the trail ascends a series of switchbacks up the steep West Rim Trail. Much of the path hugs the side of the sun

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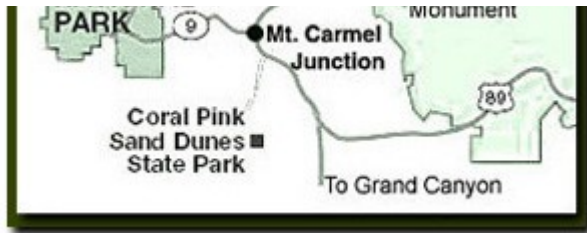
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  - Grand Stair
  - Dixie Forest
  - Sand Dunes
  - Coyote Butt



**Directions to Zion National Park**

From the North: Travel I-15 south, past Beaver, exit on Hwy 20. Follow US-89 to Mount Carmel Junction. Take SR-9 to Zion's east entrance. From Arizona: Travel US-89A through Fredonia, Arizona and Kanab Utah. Follow US-89 to Mount Carmel Junction. Take SR-9 to the east park entrance.

From the South: Travel I-15 north. Take exit 16 and travel through Hurricane to LaVerkin. Continue on SR-9 to the south entrance of the park. SR-9 through Zion National Park is always open and is also called the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. See restrictions for RV's.

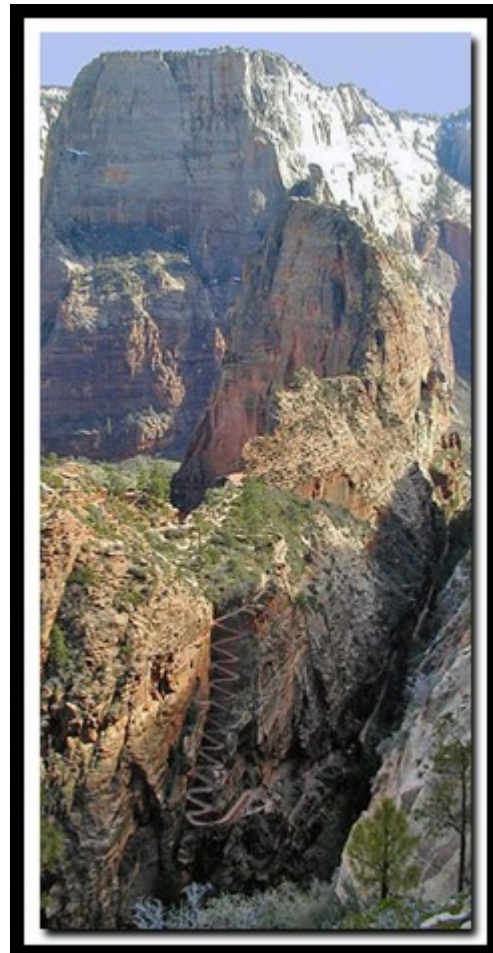


**12 Online Reservations**

Lodging and services are available on the gorgeous east side of Zion National Park, where guests are close to Zion National Park (12 miles), Bryce Canyon National Park (60 miles), Cedar Breaks National Monument (45 miles), Coral Pink Sand Dunes (12 miles), and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon (85 miles). It's where city traffic is absent and the skies are bright and clean.



baked mountain offering an outstanding vista below of a shimmering river, billowy cottonwood trees and a rich collection of stone. A few ambitious trees are tenaciously growing in cracks high on the sheer cliff, adding bits of green between sections of rock that is stained by iron oxide and desert varnish.



The fin of Angels Landing and the zigzagging path of Walter's Wiggles offer daring paths for this trail.

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**Angels Landing and the West Rim Trail** - From the Grotto Picnic area, cross the Zion Canyon Road. Head toward the footbridge that passes over the North Fork of the Virgin River. On the other side of the bridge, take the north (right) fork to the West Rim Trail. This busy path begins by traveling through a riparian woodland of cottonwood, pinyon pines and junipers. It's a steady 2 mile uphill trek as the trail ascends a series of switchbacks up the steep West Rim Trail. Much of the path hugs the side of the sun baked mountain offering an outstanding vista below of a shimmering river, billowy cottonwood trees and a rich collection of stone. A few ambitious trees are tenaciously growing in cracks high on the sheer cliff, adding bits of green between sections of rock that is stained by iron oxide and desert varnish.

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**Refrigerator Canyon** - Just over one mile, hikers get a reprieve from the constant, steep grade of the West Rim Trail and the blazing heat of the full sun. The path turns toward a gap between Angels Landing

and Cathedral Mountain. A cool breeze blows through the shady canyon leading to its name - Refrigerator Canyon. In the cooler climate of the ravine, vegetation is more abundant. The white fir is dominant, but it is the only place in the park where this is the case.

**Squiggle the Wiggles** - Just before the trail spills onto Scout Lookout, it's time to 'squiggle the wiggles,' as they ascend the steep twenty-one sharp zigzags to a scenic plateau. Walter's Wiggles was named after the first superintendent of Zion who helped engineer the steep zigzagging section. The park was in its planning stages at this time and the short, steep section of trail was created to enable horses to access Cabin Spring. One of his granddaughters works in Zion today and his home still stands in Springdale, known now as the Worthington Gallery.

**Scout Lookout** - The wiggles ascend to a broad, sandy area called Scout Lookout. This is the saddle at the junction of the Angels Landing Trail and the West Rim Trail. The views down into Zion Canyon are impressive. Several climbing routes can be viewed from this vantage point. West Rim Trail continues, past Cabin Spring to Lava Point in the Kolob Terrace section of Zion, but the Angels Landing Trail turns southeast.

**Angels Landing Trail** - Hikers will navigate the next half-mile along a narrow sandstone isthmus with sheer cliffs on both sides. The narrow and arduous trail drops 1200' on one side and 800' on the other. Chipmunks scurry carelessly along the ridge, finding bits of shade under the few trees that have found a weakness in which to burrow their roots. The summit offers incomparable, fairytale views. Almost 1500' below, the Virgin River winds around the Organ. The Great White Throne seems only a stones throw away when standing at the end of the trail. Looking northeast across the canyon is Observation Point and to the east is Cable Mountain. Look closely to see the preserved cable-works structure on Cable Mountain. While exploring Zion in 1916, Frederick Fisher exclaimed, "only an angel could land on it," and thus the monolith was named Angels Landing.

**Best features of the hike** - The last half mile of the trail is fun and the views along the way are impressive. The point at the end of the Angels Landing trail allows for unlimited views of Zion Canyon in both directions and the Great White Throne seems only a jump away. When standing on the peak of Angels Landing the Great White Throne is at eye level. From the top many landmarks of Zion National Park can be seen including the Virgin River, Big Bend, the Organ, Cathedral Mountain, Observation Point and Cable Mountain.

**Trail History** - A group of four (F. Fisher, V Fischer, E. Bingham, C. Hirshi) were exploring Zion in 1916 when upon looking up at the great monolith, Frederick Fisher exclaimed, "only an angel could land on it." Another name considered for Angels Landing was "El Gobernador," a Spanish term to honor William Spry. Later Spry Mountain was named in his honor instead. The Walter Wiggles section was named after the first superintendent of Zion National Park, who in 1924, helped engineer the twenty-one switchbacks.

**Best of Angels Landing** - Angels Landing is one of the most famous hikes in the world and it deserves its place with the best. The actual Angels Landing Trail is only a half-mile one way, but it is a spectacular half-mile. The West Rim Trail leading to the Angels Landing Trail is an additional two miles one way. This trail is a rewarding challenge for visitors to the park. Kids should not be taken anywhere there is unsure footing.

Beta: Coordinates and other trail and canyoneering information by Zion Park search and rescue veteran team member [Bo Beck](#) and [www.zionnational-park.com](http://www.zionnational-park.com) author [Tanya Milligan](#).

To post trip reports, offer corrections, updates, or for more information please visit the [Zion National Park Forum](#)

**Suggested Gear:** A sturdy pair of shoes are recommend to hike the trails in Zion National Park. Many quality shoes will help grip the rocks and prevent injury.

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This is my new favorite quote:

"I don't know who Tanya Milligan is, but I mean [www.zionnational-park.com](http://www.zionnational-park.com)

It's a better site than the NPS's anyway."  
Written by the authors of the book: [Favorite Hikes in and around Zion National Park](#)

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