



TRAVEL GUIDE

CAMPING IN ZION:

Amenities and More



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One of the biggest advantages of having an RV is having your home on wheels with you while you are traveling. The ability to ditch hotels is not only more comfortable, but also more economic. RVing provides the freedom to travel to some of the best destinations in the country and those include many of our favorite national parks.

Zion is a top destination for many RVers, and for good reason. In this national park, you'll get to experience all the wonders of southern Utah first-hand. Zion National Park is known for its red walls of sandstone surrounding the grounds and its jaw-dropping views. There's truly something for everyone at this popular park.

But before you start your adventure, you need to know where to camp!

In this guide, we'll cover the information you need to know about all your camping options in the park and outside the park, as well as free camping options. We'll also highlight a few camping tips and tricks we've learned along the way as well as information on visitor centers, and so much more! Let's dive into everything you need to know about camping in Zion.

CAMPGROUNDS INSIDE THE PARK

One of the best experiences you can give yourself is to camp inside Zion National Park. Not only is it convenient, but some of the views you can wake up to are unmatched. Below you will find information about the three campgrounds that are located inside the park boundaries.

South Campground

South Campground is the smaller of the two reservable campgrounds and may be booked up to fourteen days before your arrival. This encampment is located near the southern entrance and is conveniently close to the shuttle service and main visitor center. Additional details include:

- Open early March to late October
- 117 total sites
- 4 group sites
- 3 accessible sites, but no accessible facilities
- 50% discount provided for Golden Age and Interagency
- Pass holders
- Accommodates rigs up to 40 feet in length
- No hookups
- Flush toilets available
- Potable water available
- Dump station available
- Pets allowed
- Fires allowed
- Generator usage allowed between 8am-10am, and 6pm-8pm
- Near the town of Springdale which has gas, shopping, shower facilities, and a health clinic

Watchman Campground

Watchman Campground is the largest camping area available in Zion. Located just one-quarter mile from the southern entrance, this area is also located near the shuttle service and main Zion Canyon Visitor Center. From March through November, reservations can be made here up to six months in advance. In the winter months, the campground operates on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional details include:

- Open year round
- 179 total sites, 69 are tent only
- 6 group sites
- 2 accessible sites
- 50% discount provided for Golden Age and Interagency Pass holders
- Accommodates rigs up to 40 feet in length
- Some sites have electric, but no full hookup sites
- Flush toilets available
- Potable water available
- Dump station available
- Pets allowed
- Fires allowed
- No generator usage permitted
- Near the town of Springdale which has gas, shopping, shower facilities, and a health clinic

Lava Point Campground

Lava Point Campground is a free, reservable campground about one hour north of the canyons. This is only available for rigs up to 19 feet in length. Additional details include:

- Open May-September, weather permitting
- 6 primitive sites
- 2 accessible sites
- Accommodates rigs up to 19 feet in length
- No hookups
- Pit toilets available
- No dump station available
- Pets allowed
- Fires allowed



If you're looking to maximize your time in the park and make the most of your visit, it is highly recommended to stay in the park. However, even with ample planning, campsites tend to fill up early, which means Zion's campgrounds may not always have availability.

CAMPGROUNDS OUTSIDE THE PARK

If you prefer to set up camp outside of the park, then there are plenty of nearby options. With many of these, you can avoid the crowds and have access to more hookups and amenities.

Zion Canyon Campground

Zion Canyon Campground is located a short half-mile from the park entrance. You can either walk or take the free shuttle to avoid the hassle of parking in Zion. This campground has upgraded amenities such as a heated pool, playground, wifi, and cable tv. It is also a short distance from the town of Springdale, which has shopping, eateries, and gas. Additional details include:

- Open year round
- 200 total sites
- No accessible sites
- Accommodates rigs of any size
- Full hookups available
- Flush toilets available
- Potable water available
- Dump station available
- Pets permitted
- Fires permitted
- Camping supplies sold on-site
- Coin-operated showers and laundry available





Zion River Resort RV Park

Zion River Resort RV Park is located along the Virgin River, about a twenty minutes drive from the southern entrance to the park. They also offer a paid shuttle service if you would prefer to avoid driving into Zion. This RV park has several nice amenities, such as a heated swimming pool and spa, playground, dog area, take-out grill, and a variety of different campsites. Additional details include:

- Open year round
- 120+ RV sites
- Accommodates rigs of any size
- Full hookups available, including cable tv
- Flush toilets available
- Potable water available
- Dump station available
- Pets permitted
- Fires permitted
- Camping supplies sold on-site
- Complimentary showers
- Coin-operated laundry available

Zion Ponderosa Ranch Resort

Zion Ponderosa Ranch Resort is located near the eastern entrance to the park. This campground is located near a fine dining restaurant and coffee bar. To enhance your trip to Zion, the resort offers Jeep tours, guided tours, guided canyoneering, and horseback riding. If you are looking to do more than just explore Zion, this park also offers paintball, kids activities, zip-lining, a two-tiered swimming pool, and a shooting range. Additional details include:

- Open year round
- No accessible sites
- Accommodates rigs of any size
- Full hookups available
- Flush toilets available
- Potable water available
- Dump station available
- Pets permitted in RV campsites
- Fires permitted
- General store on premises
- Coin-operated showers and laundry on-site

There is a stark contrast between campgrounds inside and outside of the park. While these may be comparable in price during the off-season, during peak tourist season the prices at these campgrounds increase significantly. If you're looking for free options, we have those too!

FREE CAMPING OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE PARK

If you are looking for no-frills, no-nonsense RV camping, then free camping (boondocking) could be the right fit for you. Typically, the stay at these campgrounds is a fourteen day maximum, unless otherwise stated or posted. Every campsite listed below is dry camping only, meaning that there are no hookups. A few sites have access to potable water, and others do not. What these camping areas lack in amenities, they make up for with privacy and, oftentimes, beautiful views. In addition, for some, these sites could be a lifesaver in the busy seasons when all other campgrounds and sites are full.

Kolob Reservoir West and North Shore

Kolob Reservoir West and North Shore is located inside the northern portion of the park, about an hour from the southern entrance. There are a variety of spots available, from the beachy edge of the reservoir to more secluded areas. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.4395, -113.0528
- Vault restrooms available
- Dry camping only

Gooseberry Mesa

Gooseberry Mesa is just under an hour from the park's southern entrance. With canyon views, fire rings at most sites, and decent cell signal, this is a popular free camping area. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.1416, -113.1535
- Dry camping only

Smithsonian Butte

Located along Smithsonian Butte National Backcountry Byway, this free camping area is less than thirty minutes from Zion. Once atop the plateau, campers are treated to panoramic views that are excellent for stargazing. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.1297, -113.0757
- Dry camping only



Hurricane Cliffs

Hurricane Cliffs, otherwise known as Sheep Bridge Road, is one of the largest free camping areas, and it is located less than thirty minutes from the park. There are a variety of sites available, including some near the Virgin River. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.1866, -113.2228
- 48 campsites
- Dry camping only

Twin Hollow Canyon

Twin Hollow Canyon is less than twenty minutes from Zion's eastern entrance. Between the close proximity and the variety of sites, this area is a hidden gem. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.2071, -112.6893
- Dry camping only

Leeds Canyon

Leeds Canyon, located in Dixie National Forest, is just under forty-five minutes from Zion. In this area, you may camp for up to sixteen days, free of charge. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.2667, -113.3702
- Dry camping only

Meadows Dry Lake Bed

Meadows Dry Lake Bed is located about thirty minutes away from Zion's eastern entrance. This area is popularly used by ATVs and Jeeps for off-roading purposes. Additional details include:

- GPS coordinates: 37.0675, -112.7037
- Dry camping only

Boondocking can allow you to stay at locations that most campers couldn't dream of, while forgoing hookups and other modern conveniences. While some feel this is a viable trade-off, others may not feel comfortable dry camping. If you're inexperienced, it is recommended to do some research first and start small before planning a long boondocking stint in the wilderness. Whether you book a campsite or take advantage of dry camping, it's beneficial to know a few tips and tricks...



CAMPING TIPS AND TRICKS

When planning any camping in Zion or nearby it, it's helpful to keep a few tips and tricks in mind to ensure your trip goes smoothly. Be sure to note the following five suggestions before arriving to camp in this lovely area.

1. Make reservations as early as possible.

- Most paid campgrounds in and out of the park accept online or phone reservations sometimes up to six months out and more. As soon as you know your definite vacation dates, be sure to place your reservations, especially for group sites.
- Some places even allow you to request certain sites or features (riverside, shaded, etc.).
- Be sure to reserve sites that can accommodate your rig size and preferences (pull-thru or back-in).
- Do ample research to be sure that the campground you're selecting is the best fit for you and other travelers in your group.

2. Try to arrive early.

- If you're staying at a first-come, first-served campground, getting there early gives you the advantage of selecting the perfect campsite.
- Traveling early can alleviate traffic.



3. Scout your site (boondocking).

- If you're choosing to dry camp, a best practice is detaching your private vehicle and scouting ahead. This allows you to plan how to maneuver your rig (backing in, where to park, etc.), see how much space you have to work with, and see if it's an amicable campsite.
- Scouting ahead also allows you to check for cell signal.
- You can also see how crowded your intended site is, and this gives you the opportunity to relocate before driving your rig all the way up.

4. Practice campsite etiquette.

- Be mindful of quiet hours, even if you are boondocking. This includes music, excessive pet noise, generators, ATVs, etc.
- Try not to kick up excessive dust around others' campsites. Boondocking sites, in particular, can be located on dirt roads and on dirt pads, leaving more potential for dust and dirt when you fly by someone else's campsite.
- When boondocking, most choose free dispersed camping for privacy, versus cramped camping at an established campground. Be sure to give others their space whenever possible.

5. Leave it better than you found it.

- Do not leave any trace behind. Pack out your garbage, pet waste, and anything else used at your campsite.
- If your campsite has any litter, even some that doesn't belong to you, please take it with you.
- It is never acceptable to empty your gray tank (or black tank) anywhere other than designated dump stations. This may mean traveling to a nearby town or asking permission to dump at an actual campground, but it's important for preserving the cleanliness of these campsites for future campers.

Camping in Zion or anywhere nearby is a surreal and enjoyable experience that will likely create memories for years to come. When planning your camping trip, be sure to keep these tips and tricks in mind for the best possible overall experience.

After you've mastered all of our camping tips and tricks, it's a good idea to get a lay of the land and that includes park amenities.

PARK AMENITIES

If you need to grab a few groceries, a bite to eat, or a gas refill while visiting Zion National Park, there are several places in or around the park for you to choose from. Below you will find general information, phone numbers, and addresses of basic amenities in and around the park.

Restaurants in the Park

One of the many perks of traveling in your RV is the luxury of a traveling fridge and stove. However, if you are opting to go out to eat while visiting Zion, you will find both a quick stop and a casual dining room attached to the Zion National Park Lodge. Luckily, the shuttle system picks up and drops off right near the lodge for visitors' convenience.

Castle Dome Cafe

Castle Dome Cafe is a quick-bite eatery that offers snack-bar style foods such as coffee, burgers, breakfast sandwiches, etc. They are only open seasonally due to only having outdoor seating. Additional details include:

- Hours change seasonally, but they serve breakfast and lunch
- Located at: 1 Zion lodge, Springdale, UT 84767
- Phone number: (435) 772-3213

Red Rock Grill

This casual, sit-down restaurant is sometimes known as the Zion Lodge Dining Room and offers American fares for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant boasts large windows that allow you to enjoy the canyons from their dining room, making it a popular choice among park visitors. Reservations are highly recommended. Additional details include:

- Breakfast: 6:30am-10:30am
- Lunch: 11:30am-3pm
- Dinner: 5pm-10pm
- Lounge: 11:30am-10pm
- Located at: 1 Zion lodge, Springdale, UT 84767
- Phone number: (435) 772-7760

GAS

Because of its smaller size and ample access to public transportation, there are no gas stations located inside of Zion National Park. Below you will find a list of gas stations nearest each entrance of the park. When entering from the eastern entrance, there are no gas stations once you reach Route 9, so be sure to fill up while traveling on US-89.

South Entrance

Near Zion's southern entrance, there are a couple of gas stations where you can fill up before entering the park. Likewise, you can always leave the park to fill and return if you are near the southern entrance and in need of gas.

Chevron

- Open daily from 7am-7pm
- Located at: 1593 Zion – Mount Carmel Hwy, Springdale, UT 84767
- Phone number: (435) 429-7718
- Convenience store attached

Shell

- Open daily from 6am-9pm, 24 hour fueling at pump
- Located at: 962 Zion Park Blvd, Springdale, UT 84767
- Phone number: (435) 772-3963
- Convenience store attached

East Entrance

Just outside of Zion's eastern entrance, you can find a bunch of different gas stations to choose from. Just like with the southern entrance, you should fill at one of these before entering the park and note their location for any future gas refills you may require. Details include:

Phillips 66 (KB Express 9)

- Open daily 7am-10pm, 24-hour fueling at the pump
- Located at: 14215 US-89, Orderville, UT 84758
- Phone number: (435) 648-3400
- Convenience store attached

Sinclair

- Open 7:30-8pm Monday through Saturday, closed on Sundays
- Located at: 15 E State St, Orderville, UT 84758
- Phone number: (435) 648-2433
- Convenience store attached



East Entrance *(continued)*

All American Fuel

- Open twenty-four hours per day
- Located at: 94 W State St, Orderville, UT 84758
- Phone number: (801) 472-9893
- Convenience store attached

Shell

- Open daily from 7am-7pm
- Located at: 4490 State St, Mt Carmel, UT 84755
- Phone number: (435) 648-2326
- Convenience store attached

Chevron

- Open daily from 7am-7pm
- Located at: US-89, Mt Carmel, UT 84755
- Phone number: (435) 648-2009
- Convenience store attached

Ramsay Oil Co.

This gas station has a convenience store and an attached gift shop, famous for their handmade southwestern products. Additional details include:

- Open daily from 7am-8pm
- Located at: 4490 S, State St, Orderville, UT 84758
- Phone number: (435) 648-2326
- Convenience store attached

As a best traveling practice, it is recommended to fill up your gas tank before entering the park, not only for driving purposes, but also for running your generator while dry camping. If you are staying outside the park, be sure to research the nearest gas station to where you'll be camping.

CONCLUSION

Zion is a true national treasure and is considered one of the most popular and most-visited national parks in the United States. While you're in Southern Utah, consider checking out the additional four nearby national parks known as the "Mighty Five": Canyonlands National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Arches National Park, and Bryce Canyon National Park. We hope this guide serves you well as you start planning your next escape to Zion National Park.



Zion's Park Entrances

There are three main entrances to Zion National Park, and each of these offers a different set of stunning views as you make your way into the park. At the entrance stations, you will pay a few to enter the park. The cost is \$35, and this will grant you access to the park for seven days. If you plan to stay longer and/or want to spend more than a week here, consider purchasing the America the Beautiful pass. This costs \$80 and allows entrance to over 2,000 federal recreation sites, including all sixty-one National Parks, for an entire year.

South Entrance

This entrance is located just outside of Springdale on Route 9 and leads to the Zion Canyon Visitors Center, and the rest of Zion Canyon. This is the park's most popular and busiest entrance and is open year round.

East Entrance

This entrance is located on Route 9 and leads to the Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel and the rest of Zion Canyon at Canyon Junction Bridge. This entrance is popular for those coming from Kanab and other parts of Eastern Utah and closes seasonally.

Kolob Canyons Entrance

This entrance leads to the further section of the park at Kolob Canyons. There may or may not be a park ranger at this entrance, depending on the season, but you can stop at the Kolob Canyon Visitor Center for a park map. This entrance is open year round.

APPENDIX

We'll quickly walk you through the various entrances to the park, visitor centers, shuttle information, and break down the different sections of the park. Keep this information handy during your trip and grab a few brochures at the visitor center so you can take advantage of all that Zion has to offer!

Visitors Centers

When traveling to any national park, your first stop should be the visitors center. Even if you have frequented other parks, or if you have been to this particular park before, stopping at the visitors center can still allow you to learn important and new information. It also grants you the opportunity to map out your trip, obtain permits, and find information about weather or road closures. Zion has two visitors centers, located at the two main areas of the park.

Zion Canyon Visitor Center

Located near the south (main) entrance of the park, this center has souvenirs available, trail guides, and important information provided by rangers. You may also obtain wilderness and overnight hiking permits. Additional details include:

- Open daily year round
- Spring hours: 8am-6pm
- Summer hours: 8am-7pm
- Fall hours: 8am-6pm
- Winter hours: 8am-5pm
- 1101 Zion - Mount Carmel Hwy, Hurricane, UT 84737



Visitors Centers *(continued)*

Kolob Canyon Visitor Center

Located near the north entrance, this is an important stop to make before partaking in the Kolob Canyon Scenic Drive. Here you can obtain permits and information for wilderness and backcountry backpacking, along with more information on canyoneering and Kolob's finger canyons. Additional details include:

- Open daily year round
- Spring-Summer hours: 8am-5pm
- Fall-Winter hours: 8am-4:30pm
- 3752 E Kolob Canyon Rd, New Harmony, UT 84757

Zion Human History Museum

Located near the Zion Canyon southern entrance as well, this museum offers a ninety minute tour filled with exhibits on Native Americans and others, who once called Zion Canyon home. These display more information and examples of archaeological sites and artifacts. Additional details include:

- Open daily year round
- Spring hours: 10am-6pm
- Summer hours: 9am-7pm
- Fall hours: 10am-5pm
- Winter hours: vary

As you can see, there are many reasons to make one of the visitors centers your first stop in Zion National Park, no matter how seasoned a traveler you are. So be sure to stop by one on your next visit, because you may just learn something new.

Shuttle Service

In 2000, a convenient shuttle service was installed in Zion Canyon to alleviate traffic and parking issues. It has also helped to preserve the well-being and longevity of the park. Unlike other national parks, there is only one shuttle system throughout Zion, but it makes many stops and is inclusive of the entire main Zion Canyon. It runs almost year round, excluding January and February. Hours vary depending on the season, but visitors are required to ride the shuttle anytime it is in use. This is usually between the months of April through October but it varies from year to year. When the shuttle is running, personal vehicles are prohibited from driving through Zion Canyon, so be sure to stop at a visitors center or view their website for the most current shuttle information and schedule.

The shuttle leaves from Zion Canyon Visitor Center, where you will find several parking areas where you can leave your vehicle while you explore the park via shuttle. However, keep in mind that these lots tend to fill quickly during the busier months, so you will want to arrive nice and early to secure a parking spot.

Park Sections

Kolob Canyon

This area is actually forty miles north of Zion Canyon and comprises a completely different section of the park. Between hiking, scenic drives, and panoramic views, it is entirely possible to spend several days exploring this vivid area. A wilderness pass is required to hike in this canyon area. Because it is far from Zion Canyon, the park's main attraction, Kolob Canyon tends to be quiet and further off-the-beaten-path, which is excellent during the busier seasons.

Kolob Terrace

As one of the lesser-traveled sections of Zion National Park, this scenic area takes visitors from the location where Zion Canyon and Kolob Canyon meet, all the way up to the Kolob Reservoir. During this drive, you will experience a change in elevation that creates a transition from canyon views to mountainous views. No visit to Zion is complete without a stop along Kolob Terrace, so be sure not to leave this beautiful region out.

Upper East Canyon

This route is connected to the Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel, and offers additional scenic driving opportunities. The sandstone formations, carved-out drainages, and minor peaks provide excellent photography material and views for miles and miles.



Desert Lowlands

Some of the best hikes in Zion National Park can be found in the Desert Lowlands. As the name implies, this area is very hot in the summer, so many opt to hike it in the winter season. The Desert Lowlands region is fairly isolated and the majority of the hikes here are considered strenuous.

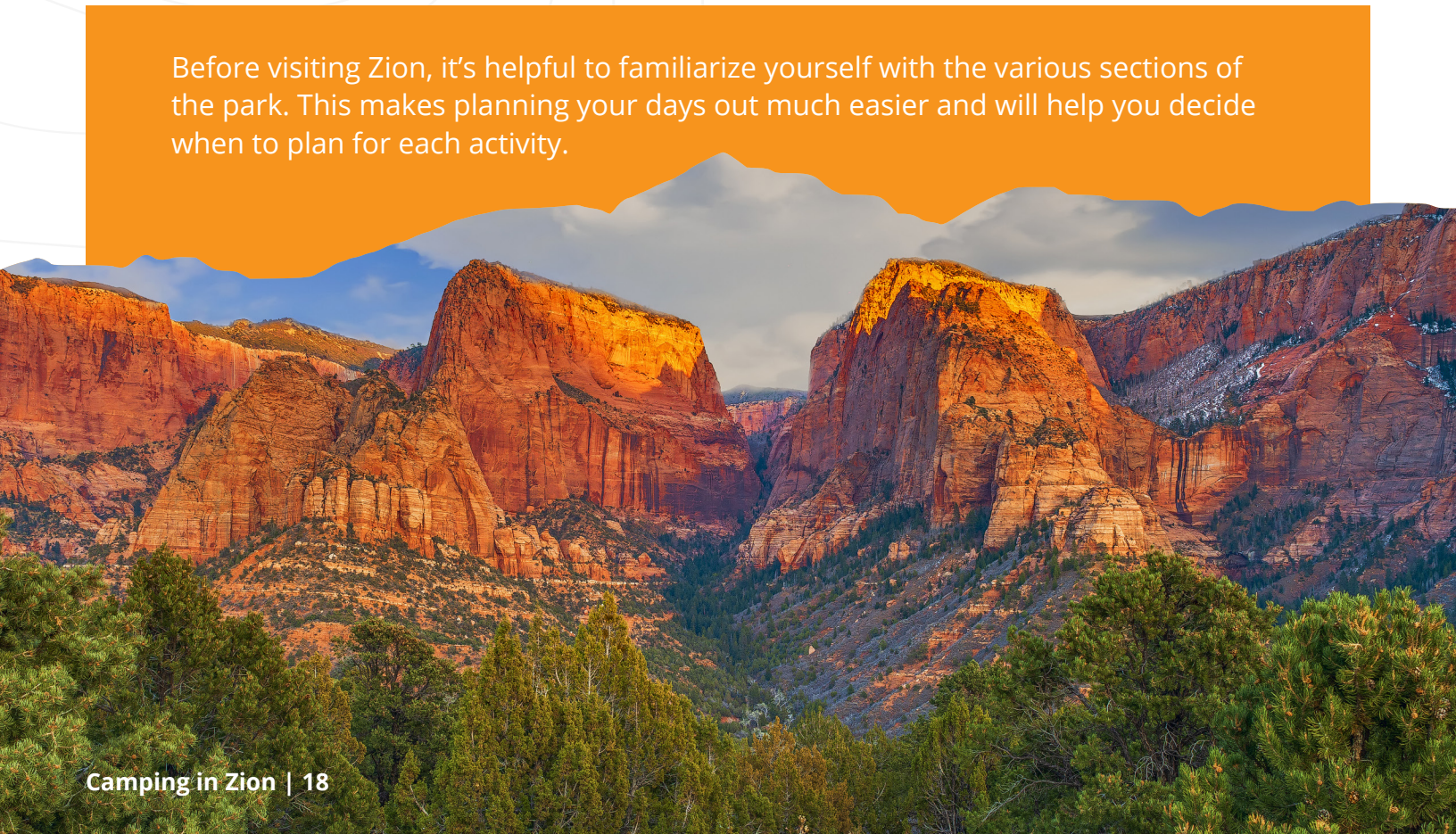
Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel

If you drove to Zion from Bryce Canyon or the Grand Canyon, you may have driven through the famous Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel. Built over the span of the late 1920s to the 1930s, the construction crew stayed true to incorporating natural materials to ensure the tunnel blended into the surrounding landscape. After its completion, it was the longest tunnel of its type in the United States during this era. The tunnel today hasn't changed much at all, except for the added concrete ribbing that creates extra support. The Zion Tunnel is monitored electronically twenty-four hours per day to ensure there is no chance of collapse or falling debris.

As the park grew with popularity, traffic and the size of vehicles became an issue. The tunnel was originally constructed to be the width of two regular cars. RVs, motorhomes, tour buses, and trailers eventually posed a new problem: they could not navigate the tunnel's curves without crossing over the centerline. In 1989, the decision was made to instill traffic control. It was mandated that any vehicles over a certain height and width guideline needed special access to the tunnel via one-way conversion. Today, Park rangers must shut down the tunnel on both ends for it to become one-way, in order for oversized vehicles to pass through safely.

Park entrances now measure vehicles to determine if special access to the tunnel will be needed. Vehicles over 2.4 meters in width or 3.4 meters in height will be required to pay an extra \$15 fee and can only use the tunnel during select hours and times of the year. You can find more information about the allowances and restrictions on the National Park's website.

Before visiting Zion, it's helpful to familiarize yourself with the various sections of the park. This makes planning your days out much easier and will help you decide when to plan for each activity.





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