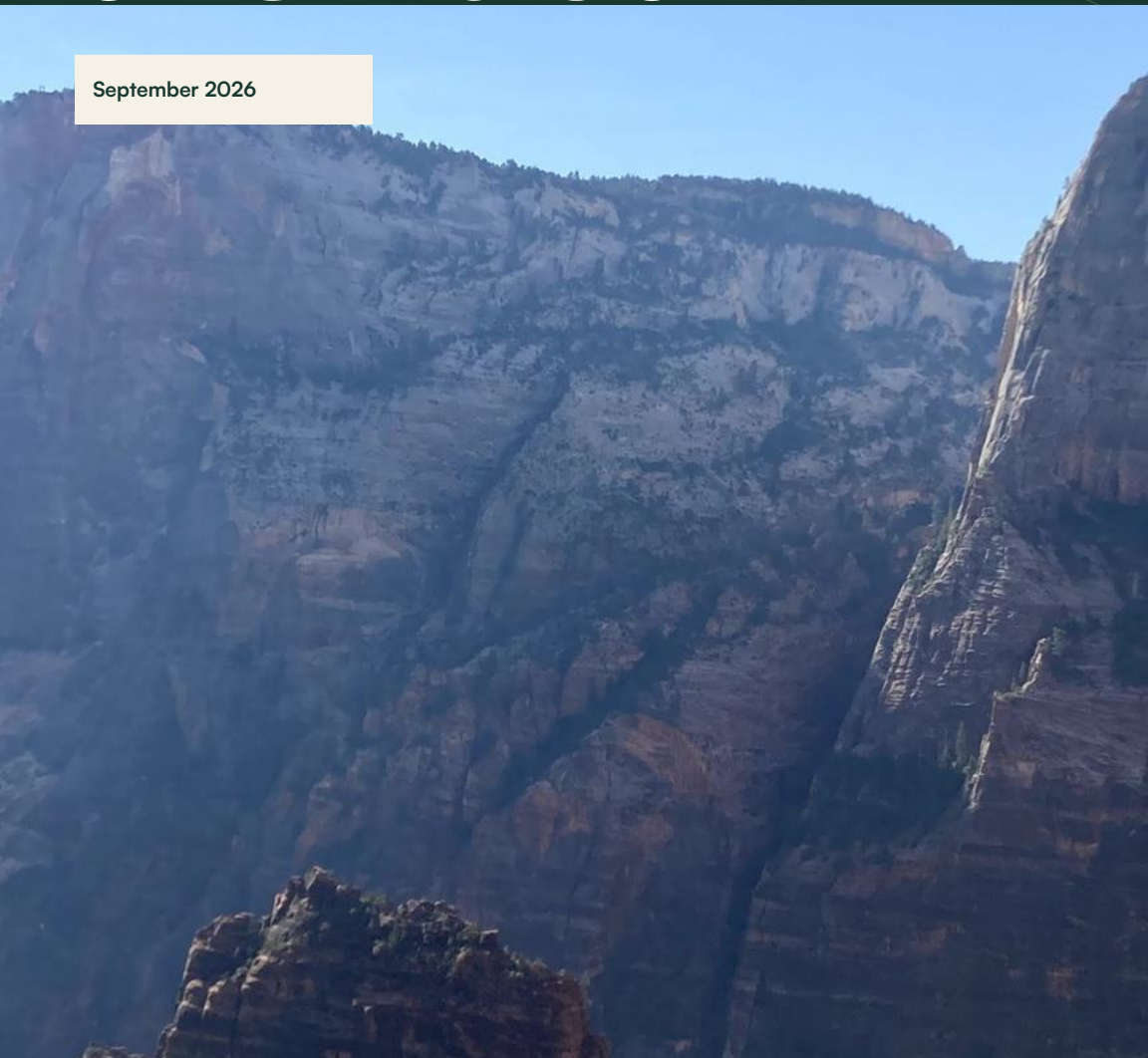


DUCK CREEK VILLAGE INN

FIELD NOTES FROM DUCK CREEK VILLAGE INN

Zion from the East

September 2026



Top 10 things to do when you enter Zion through the quiet gate.

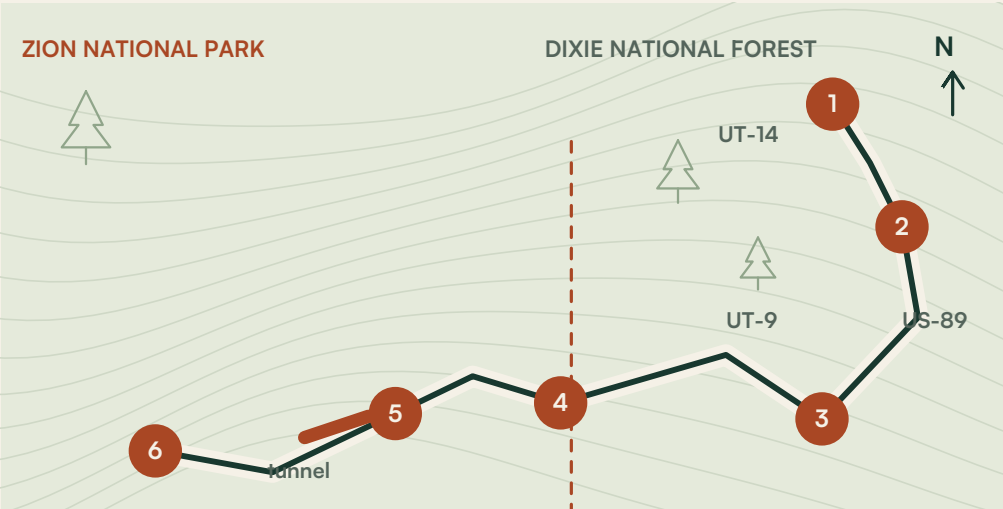
The route and its elevation / Ten stops in the order the day unfolds /
The day plan / What to check before you go / A mystery gift at check-in



01 / THE DRIVE

Fifty-five minutes to the quiet gate.

Highway 14 east, US-89 south, SR-9 west: 46 miles to the East Entrance, then the whole Zion-Mount Carmel Highway before the main canyon.



- 01 Duck Creek Village Inn**
8,455 ft

03 Mount Carmel Junction
mile 34 / turn west, last fuel

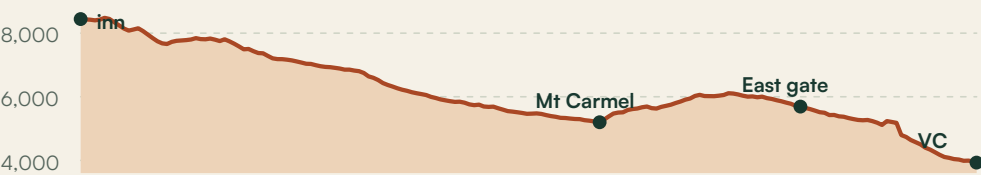
05 Canyon Overlook Trailhead
mile 52 / the tunnel
- 02 Long Valley Junction**
mile 11 / turn south

04 Zion East Entrance
mile 47 / 5,690 ft

06 Zion Canyon Visitor Center
mile 58 / shuttle stop 1

Orientation diagram / not to scale. Tap a numbered stop for its map listing.

ELEVATION ALONG THE DRIVE



8,455 ft at the inn to 3,930 ft at the visitor center: 4,525 ft of descent, with one climb back over the divide to the East Entrance. USGS 3DEP along the traced route.

Cars, SUVs and pickups drive straight through the 1.1-mile tunnel. Since June 7, 2026 oversized vehicles are banned from the whole highway; check the NPS page before bringing an RV or trailer.

→ Tunnel and large-vehicle rules (NPS)

02 / THE TEN STOPS

On the way in.

The east side arranges itself in a line. Take it in order.

01

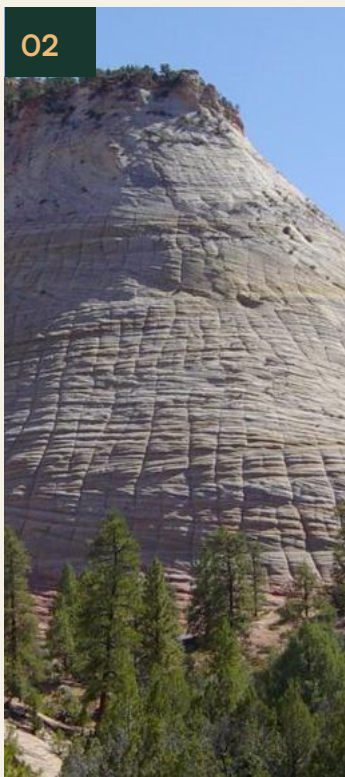


Pie and coffee at the turn

Mile 34 / Mount Carmel Junction

The Thunderbird and its "Ho-Made Pies" sign mark the turn onto SR-9. Last fuel before the park; The Shop Coffee Co. in Orderville is the other morning stop.

02



Checkerboard Mesa pullout

Just inside the entrance

A dome of Navajo sandstone scored into a grid by ancient dune bedding and vertical fractures. Signed pullout on the right. A photograph and a stretch, not a hike.

03 / THE TEN STOPS

Before the main canyon.

Two stops you can only make from this side of the park.

03



Canyon Overlook Trail

1 mi round trip / 163 ft

Park at the tunnel's east portal (right turns only). Sandstone steps, a slot canyon, then a fenced ledge facing the Towers of the Virgin. Arrive early for the tiny lot.

04



The Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel

1.1 mi / opened 1930

A mile of darkness blasted through the cliff between 1927 and 1930, with gallery windows that flash red rock as you pass. No stopping inside.

04 / THE TEN STOPS

Into the canyon.

Through the tunnel to the visitor center, then the shuttle.



05

Pa'rus Trail with the dog

1.6 mi one way / paved

Paiute for "bubbling water." The only Zion trail open to leashed dogs and bikes, with the best views of the Watchman, and the NPS pick for sunset.



06

Riverside Walk into the Narrows

1 mi one way / shuttle stop 9

Paved to the stairs into the river; from there the river is the trail. No permit to Big Spring. Closed to all travel above 150 cfs, so check the gauge first.

05 / THE TEN STOPS

The big morning.

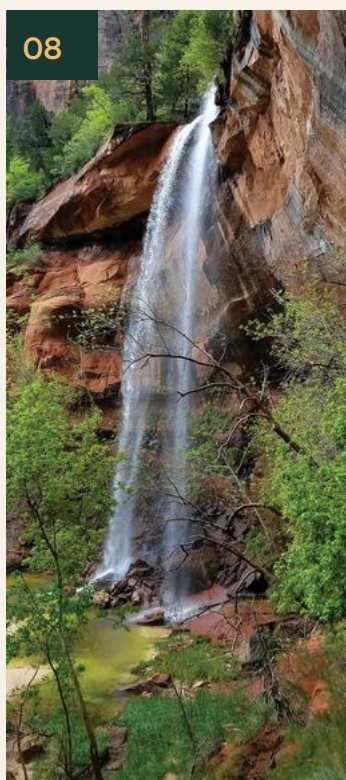
Pick one anchor. Both start from the Grotto or the Lodge.



Scout Lookout, no permit needed

1.9 mi one way / 1,187 ft

From the Grotto up Refrigerator Canyon and the 21 switchbacks of Walter's Wiggles to a ledge a thousand feet above the river. Only the chained ridge beyond needs a permit.



Emerald Pools from the Lodge

Lower pool 0.6 mi one way

Seasonal waterfalls feeding a tiered set of pools across from Zion Lodge. The lower path is rough-paved and family friendly; the upper adds stone steps. No swimming.

06 / THE TEN STOPS

The late light.

When the shuttles thin out, the park gets better.



09

Watchman Trail at golden hour

1.4 mi one way / 479 ft

Starts at the visitor center lot, so it works after the shuttles stop. An unpaved climb to an overlook of the Watchman, the Towers and Springdale in the late light.



10

Stay for the dark sky

International Dark Sky Park since 2021

Most cars leave at dusk. Stay on the museum patio or the Pa'rus Trail for the Milky Way, then drive home east through an empty tunnel.

07 / THE DAY PLAN

How the day flows from the inn.

A summer plan. In spring and fall shift it an hour later and the light is even better.

01 7:00 AM / leave the inn

Coffee in Orderville or pie at Mount Carmel Junction.

02 8:00 AM / the east entrance

Checkerboard Mesa in low light, then Canyon Overlook. Allow an hour plus patience for a spot.

03 9:30 AM / through the tunnel

On to the visitor center; board the shuttle at stop 1.

04 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM / your anchor

Scout Lookout, the Emerald Pools, or the Riverside Walk and a wade into the Narrows. Lunch at Zion Lodge.

05 4:00 PM / back east

Through the tunnel with the sun behind you. No exit traffic; home at the inn by five.

Check the morning you go: park alerts, the shuttle schedule, the Narrows gauge (closed above 150 cfs) and the flash-flood forecast. Angels Landing needs a recreation.gov permit; Scout Lookout does not.

→ **Zion conditions, alerts and shuttle times**

→ **Virgin River gauge for the Narrows (USGS)**

→ **Angels Landing permits**

→ **The full guide online, with live river flow**



A little something from the inn

MYSTERY GIFT

Your mountain stay. A little mystery.

Book a stay with Duck Creek Village Inn and receive a MYSTERY GIFT at check-in when you bring this offer or mention it.

- 01 Book your stay at Duck Creek Village Inn.
- 02 Save this page, bring a copy or mention the offer.
- 03 Receive your mystery gift when you check in.



Find your room

Scan or tap to plan your stay

A surprise to start your stay. 815 East Hwy 14, Duck Creek Village, Utah.