

FREE PREVIEW — SAMPLE PAGES INSIDE

BEST HIKES

SCENIC DRIVES

HIDDEN GEMS

WHERE TO STAY

STARGAZING

THE COMPLETE LOCAL'S GUIDE —
2026 EDITION

THE ULTIMATE MIGHTY 5 UTAH GUIDE

Zion · Bryce Canyon · Capitol Reef · Arches · Canyonlands

Every hike, drive, permit, hidden gem, and insider tip for all five national parks — built by a family who lives 20 minutes from Zion's south entrance and has spent years exploring every corner of this corridor.

"Fact-checked for 2026 — permits, fees, and trail conditions verified before publication."

96
PAGES

5
NAT'L PARKS

60+
HIKES + DRIVES

150+
INSIDER TIPS

ZION NP

BRYCE CANYON

CAPITOL REEF

ARCHES NP

CANYONLANDS

Table of Contents

This is a free preview of the complete 96-page guide. Below is everything included when you purchase — a handful of real sample pages follow so you can see the depth and quality before you buy.

- 01 **How to Use This Guide**
 - 02 **2026 Critical Updates — All 5 Parks**
 - 03 **Plan Your Route**
 - 04–07 **3 Complete Itineraries: 5-Day, 7–9 Day, 10–14 Day**
 - 08 **Packing List + Pre-Trip Checklist**
-

- 09 **ZION NATIONAL PARK**
19 pages — 9 full trail profiles
- 10 **BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK**
15 pages — 7 full trail profiles
- 11 **CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK**
15 pages — 7 full trail profiles
- 12 **ARCHES NATIONAL PARK**
16 pages — 8 full trail profiles
- 13 **CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK**
15 pages — 7 full trail profiles

EACH PARK SECTION INCLUDES

Geology & seasonal strategy · fees & permit tables · a complete trail guide with full hike profiles · scenic drives · where to stay + recommended outfitters · dining · stargazing · a photography guide · FAQ & a quick-reference cheat sheet.

SAMPLE PAGES FROM THE FULL GUIDE

The next four pages are pulled directly from the 96-page guide, exactly as they appear in the PDF you'd download after purchase — original page numbers included.

READ THIS FIRST

2026 Critical Updates at a Glance

The single biggest reason trips to this corridor go sideways is outdated information from an old blog post or a friend's trip report from three years ago. Here's exactly what's different in 2026, park by park.

Park	What Changed for 2026
Zion	Large vehicles (over 35'9" long / 7'10" wide / 11'4" tall / 50,000 lbs) are BANNED on the Zion–Mt. Carmel Highway east of Canyon Junction as of June 7, 2026. The tunnel escort permit option is eliminated entirely. Angels Landing permits still required year-round.
Bryce Canyon	No major access changes for 2026. The \$100 nonresident surcharge (age 16+) now applies here in addition to Zion. Shuttle remains free and runs mid-April through mid-October.
Capitol Reef	No entrance reservation or timed entry of any kind — still the most walk-up-friendly of the five. The \$100 nonresident surcharge does NOT apply here.
Arches	Timed-entry reservations were eliminated park-wide on February 18, 2026. You can now enter any time during operating hours with a standard pass — no Recreation.gov booking needed. Fiery Furnace permits and Devils Garden Campground reservations are unaffected and still required.
Canyonlands	No timed entry, no nonresident surcharge. Remains the least-crowded and most logistically simple of the five parks to enter.

THE \$100 NONRESIDENT SURCHARGE — WHO IT ACTUALLY APPLIES TO

As of January 1, 2026, the National Park Service added a \$100-per-person surcharge for non-U.S. residents age 16 and older at 11 of the country's most-visited parks. Of the Mighty 5, **only Zion and Bryce Canyon** are on that list. Capitol Reef, Arches, and Canyonlands are not, and the surcharge does not apply there. Non-U.S. residents can sidestep the per-person fee entirely by purchasing the new \$250 America the Beautiful Non-Resident Annual Pass on Recreation.gov, which covers the passholder and everyone in the vehicle for a full year at any federal fee site. U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents are unaffected and continue to pay the standard \$80 annual pass rate.

ENTRANCE FEES AT A GLANCE (STANDARD, U.S. RESIDENT RATE, 7-DAY VEHICLE PASS)

Park	Vehicle Fee (7-day)	Nonresident Surcharge
Zion	\$35	Yes (\$100)
Bryce Canyon	\$35	Yes (\$100)
Capitol Reef	\$20	No
Arches	\$30	No
Canyonlands	\$30	No

ITINERARY · 10–14 DAYS

The 10–14 Day Full Experience

The complete picture, with real breathing room. This is the version we recommend for a milestone trip, a family reunion, or anyone who wants to actually rest between big hiking days instead of running a marathon of trailheads. It layers in Kanab as an east-Zion basecamp, Goblin Valley and Valley of the Gods as full stops rather than detours, and gives Canyonlands' Needles district the day it deserves.

D1–2

Zion Deep Dive

Region: **Springdale / Kanab basecamp** 2 full days in the park

DAY 1

- Arrive, ease in on the Pa'rus Trail and Riverside Walk, apply for the Angels Landing lottery.

DAY 2

- Angels Landing at dawn, Narrows in the afternoon — the two signature hikes back to back while you're fresh.

D3

East Zion + Kanab

Region: **Kanab, UT** Drive: 40 min from Springdale

ALL DAY

- Canyon Overlook Trail and Checkerboard Mesa on the Zion–Mt. Carmel Highway.
- East Zion Adventures for a guided canyoneering or ATV excursion into the terrain most visitors never reach.
- Move basecamp to Kanab — well positioned for both Zion's east side and tomorrow's drive.

D4

Bryce Canyon — Full Day

Region: **Bryce Canyon NP** Drive: ~1.5 hrs from Kanab

TRAIL GUIDE

Every Major Hike in Zion

From a flat, paved riverside stroll to one of the most thrilling chain-assisted summits in the American West. Nine full profiles, ordered roughly from most iconic to most accessible.

1

Angels Landing

The most thrilling hike in Zion — chains, exposure, and the best view in the canyon

PERMIT
REQUIRED

STRENUOUS

5.4 mi RT DISTANCE	1,488 ft ELEVATION	3–5 hrs TIME	Year-round (permit) SEASON
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TRAIL OVERVIEW
The signature hike of Zion. The final half-mile above Scout Lookout follows a narrow sandstone fin with sheer drop-offs on both sides, assisted by chains bolted into the rock. At the 5,790-ft summit you look directly down 1,488 feet to the canyon floor, across to the Great White Throne, and into the Narrows canyon.

TRAILHEAD + LOGISTICS
Shuttle Stop 6 (The Grotto). Trail climbs through Refrigerator Canyon, then Walter's Wiggles — 21 switchbacks cut into the cliff — to Scout Lookout. Permit required only for the chain section above the Lookout; hiking to Scout Lookout itself needs no permit.

CROWD STRATEGY
Two lottery systems on Recreation.gov: seasonal (apply quarterly, ~2 months ahead) and day-before (12:01 AM–3 PM MT, results ~4 PM). Day-before is the accessible option for spontaneous visitors. \$6 application + \$3/person if selected.

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS
Best in the first two hours after sunrise or last two before sunset for warm light and long shadows. Photograph the chain section looking back toward Scout Lookout for the classic shot.

LOCAL INSIDER TIP
Scout Lookout without a permit puts you at the base of the chains looking up at the summit — a dramatic viewpoint most visitors don't realize requires no permit at all.

TRAIL TIPS + WARNINGS
People have died on this trail. Wet rock makes the final section extremely dangerous; rangers close it in rain. Download your permit before leaving Springdale.

LODGING GUIDE

Where to Stay Near Zion

Springdale is the gateway town directly adjacent to the South Entrance — walkable, 500 full-time residents, tens of thousands of visitors on peak weekends. Staying here means walking to the entrance and having the best restaurants steps from your hotel.

FEATURED PARTNER — ZION PONDEROSA RANCH RESORT

East rim, cabins + glamping, direct canyon access without the Springdale crowds. Waking up on the east rim with canyon views instead of fighting Springdale traffic — most visitors don't even know this exists. Also the best-positioned lodging for the East Mesa / Observation Point trailhead and East Zion Adventures excursions.

zionponderosa.com · code **ADVENTUREFAMILY** for 10% off your stay

SPRINGDALE / ZION AREA — ALL BUDGETS

- › **Budget:** Zion Valley Lodge, Cliffrose Garden
- › **Mid-range:** Cable Mountain Lodge — canyon-view rooms, walkable to shuttles
- › **Bucket list:** Zion Lodge — the only in-park lodging, books 13+ months ahead for summer
- › **Budget alternative:** Hurricane, UT (25 min west) — 40–50% lower rates, full chain hotel selection

BOOK YOUR STAY

- › Search all Springdale + Zion area hotels: booking.tpk.mx/dlIUqVAP
- › Bundle your hotel + rental car: expedia.com/shop/adventurefamily

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES + OUTFITTERS

ZION GURU — NARROWS GEAR + GUIDED CANYON TRIPS

Our trusted local partner for Narrows dry-gear rental and guided trips into the canyon. Staff checks flash flood conditions every morning before you head out.

zionguru.com · code **AFV10**

MAD MOOSE RENTALS — E-BIKES + GEAR

Bike the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive on an e-bike when the shuttle is running, or rent camping and outdoor gear for the rest of your Utah loop. Convenient Springdale pickup.

madmooserentals.com · code **adventurefamily**

EAST ZION ADVENTURES — FEATURED PARTNER

ATV tours, horseback rides, guided canyoneering, and slot canyon hikes on Zion's wild east side — terrain most visitors never reach. Locally owned and based near Zion Ponderosa.

eastzionadventures.com

What's Inside

96 pages built for people actually planning this trip, not skimming a blog post. Here's everything you get.

96
PAGES

5
NAT'L PARKS

38
FULL TRAIL PROFILES

3
COMPLETE ITINERARIES

TRIP-LEVEL PLANNING (FRONT SECTION)

- › 2026 fact-checked critical updates for all five parks in one place — permits, fees, timed entry status, and what changed this year.
- › The recommended drive order and why it works, with distances between every stop.
- › Three complete day-by-day itineraries: a 5-day fast trip, the 7–9 day "most popular" version, and a 10–14 day full experience with Kanab, Goblin Valley, and the Needles district.
- › A cross-park packing list and pre-trip planning checklist.

EVERY ONE OF THE 5 PARKS GETS ITS OWN COMPLETE GUIDE

- › **38 full trail profiles** across all five parks — distance, elevation, time, difficulty, permit status, trailhead logistics, crowd strategy, photography tips, local insider tips, and trail warnings for every single hike.
- › Fee and permit tables verified for 2026, including the nonresident surcharge, Angels Landing lottery, Fiery Furnace permits, and more.
- › Where to stay in every park — budget through bucket-list, plus our real outfitter and activity recommendations (Zion Guru, East Zion Adventures, Canyon Trail Rides, Moab Adventure Center, and more).
- › Where to eat, where to see the stars, and a photography guide with best light and gear notes for the signature shot at every major stop.
- › An FAQ and one-page cheat sheet at the end of every park section for a fast pre-hike refresher.

BUILT TO USE IN THE FIELD

Every page is designed to be read on your phone at the trailhead, with no cell signal required once it's downloaded. Clickable bookmarks let you jump straight to the park you're visiting next.

YOU'VE SEEN THE PREVIEW

Get the Full 96-Page Guide

Every hike, every permit, every hidden gem, every recommendation in this preview — plus 90 more pages covering all five parks in full. Fact-checked for 2026 and built to use in the field.

\$49

one-time purchase · instant PDF download · yours to keep

GET THE FULL GUIDE AT [ADVENTUREFAMILYVLOG.COM](https://adventurefamilyvlog.com)

ZION

BRYCE

CAPITOL REEF

ARCHES

CANYONLANDS

A premium AdventureFamilyVlog.com guide.