

THE CampChuck REVIEWER

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Special 33.1 Travel Edition

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Editor, critic, layout, distribution, and general factotum ...



Zion's Angels Landing Renamed Meryl's Landing

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In and Around Zion

Gawking at roadside vistas between Utah parklands, it seems that the whole of southern Utah could well be one huge National Park.

It was no chore driving 30 minutes east into the main part of Zion four times. We hiked and biked and lolled amidst spectacular geologic architecture. The huge size, the natural sculpture, the tones of color enveloped us.

We chose a base camp – that is to say a rented house – in a central location for our various forays. Probably fewer than one in a hundred of those who visit Zion National Park ever access the northwestern section of Zion, known as the Kolob Canyons. This section alone could be a National Park.

Probably fewer than one in a hundred of those who travel within 15 minutes of Snow Canyon State Park ever experience its red rock wonders.

We even carved a couple hours at Valley of Fire State Park on our way back to Las Vegas Airport. Yet another flavor of red rock country unfolds in this mostly skipped play land.

While we touched many typical tourist bases, it feels good to think we did some things that fewer than one in a hundred people visiting in and around Zion do. I'll bet it's closer to one in a thousand.



Zion and Kolob



Snow Canyon and Valley of Fire State Parks



For a photo slide set: at www.startlets.com, click "Photos," then click on the "Zion Trip" photo.

Day by Day

Saturday, April 28 – Saturday, May 5

Day 1: drive to Sacramento Airport; fly to Las Vegas; drive two and half hours to nicely appointed rental house (through VRBO.com) in La Verkin, Utah.

Day 2: drive half hour into Zion National Park; hike 2 miles out and back to the Canyon Overlook; hike half mile out and back to petroglyphs; experience the whole shuttle bus route; hike 2 miles out and back on the Riverside Narrows trail.

Day 3: drive half hour to the Kolob Canyons section of Zion; hike 5 miles out and back to the Double Arch Alcove; check out Sunriver (St. George) community for snowbird potential; dinner at Paradise Café.

Day 4: drive half hour to Snow Canyon State Park; hike 3 miles on Petrified Dunes and 3 Ponds trails; drive dirt road to La Verkin Overlook.

Day 5: drive to Zion; bike (rentals) 17 miles out and back through Springdale, onto bike path and Zion Canyon road (only cars with Lodge passes plus shuttle buses); dinner at Bit and Spur, Springdale.

Day 6: Chuck hitches to Zion; bikes 17 miles out and back; hikes 5 mile Angels Landing out and back plus half mile Weeping Rock out and back; Shopping and lolling day for Marvina.

Day 7: drive 90 minutes to Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park; hike a mile out and back up highest dune (100 feet); hike 2 miles out and back Zion East Rim trail (failed search for “hidden arch”); dinner at Thai Sapa, Springdale.

Day 8: drive to Valley of Fire State Park; arch rock, atlatl petroglyphs; rainbow vista scenic road; see 7 bighorn sheep; drive to Las Vegas Airport; fly and drive home.

(Chuck averaged 2 miles each on La Verkin neighborhood walks 5 of 7 mornings before mobilizing.)

Manufactured Mailbag

Dear Editor,

If you had just one day between the end of a stoked vacation week and returning to the rigors of work, would you use most of it to create a special travel edition of THE CampChuck REVIEWER?

Nona Idle, Ocean City, MD

Dear Nona,

It would be too pressingly compulsive to do that.

Ed.

Dear Editor,

I know you're going to keep doing this outdoors travel thing. Just tell me, man. Tell me you're seeing a flick or two while you're out there.

A friend, Los Angeles

Dear friend,

Although there were movie theaters in easy striking distance during this Zion getaway, nothing tugged sufficiently. We rented a house for this week away, which came with a large flat panel TV monitor but effectively no TV hookup. Of the six or so DVDs there, we watched “Touching the Void” (tortuously taut documentary account of surviving an extreme mountain climb). We also made our first ever use of one of those vending machines for DVDs at the local market. For \$1.28, we saw “We Bought a Zoo” (a sweet enough family film that tries too hard and plays too bland).

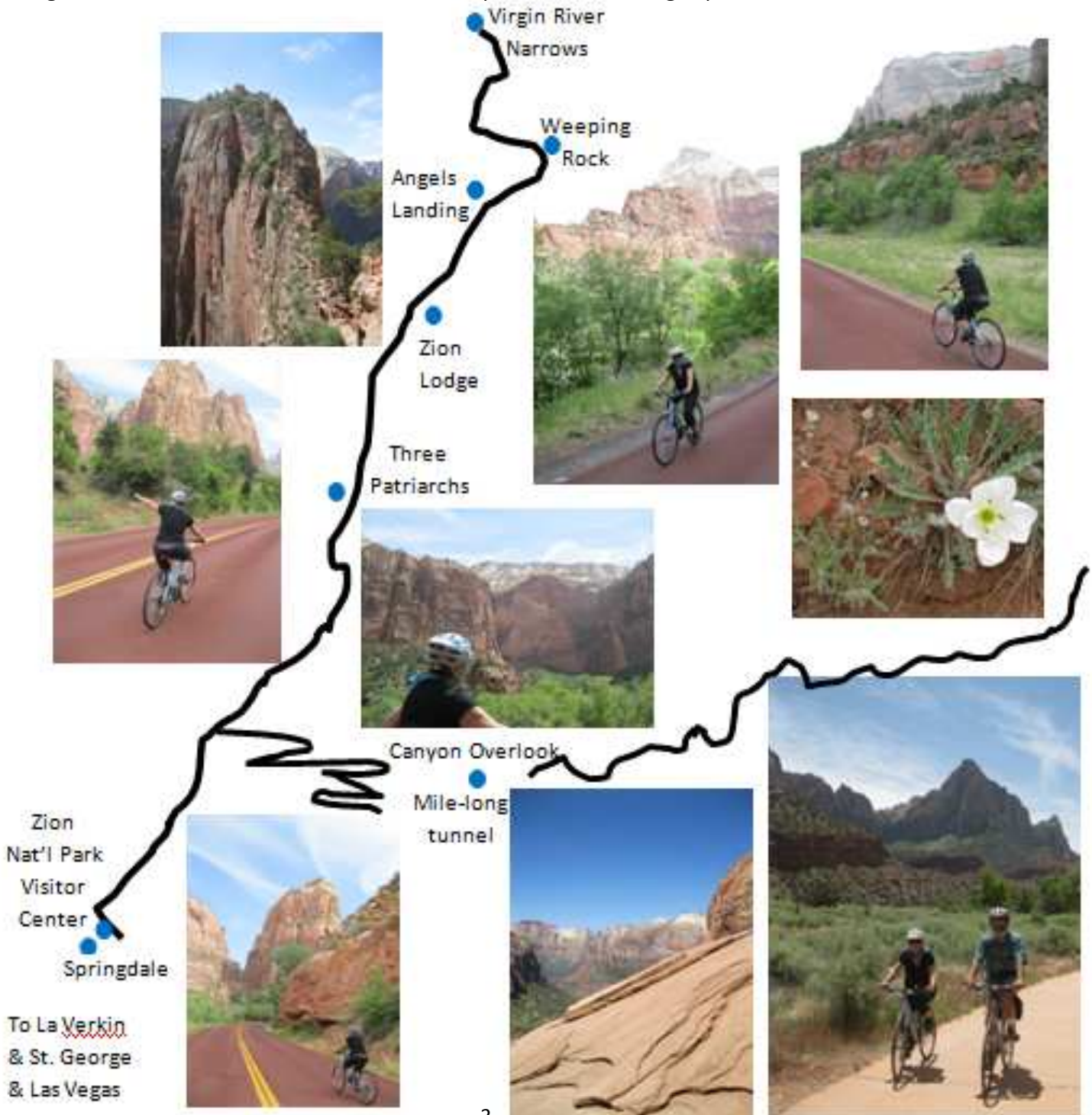
Ed.



We rented bicycles in Springdale. No, we didn't trek by bike way uphill to the mile-long tunnel toward the east end of the park. We did, however, take full advantage of the main Zion Canyon road that is closed to cars (unless you have a Zion Lodge pass). Pretty much, cyclists only share the road with shuttle buses.

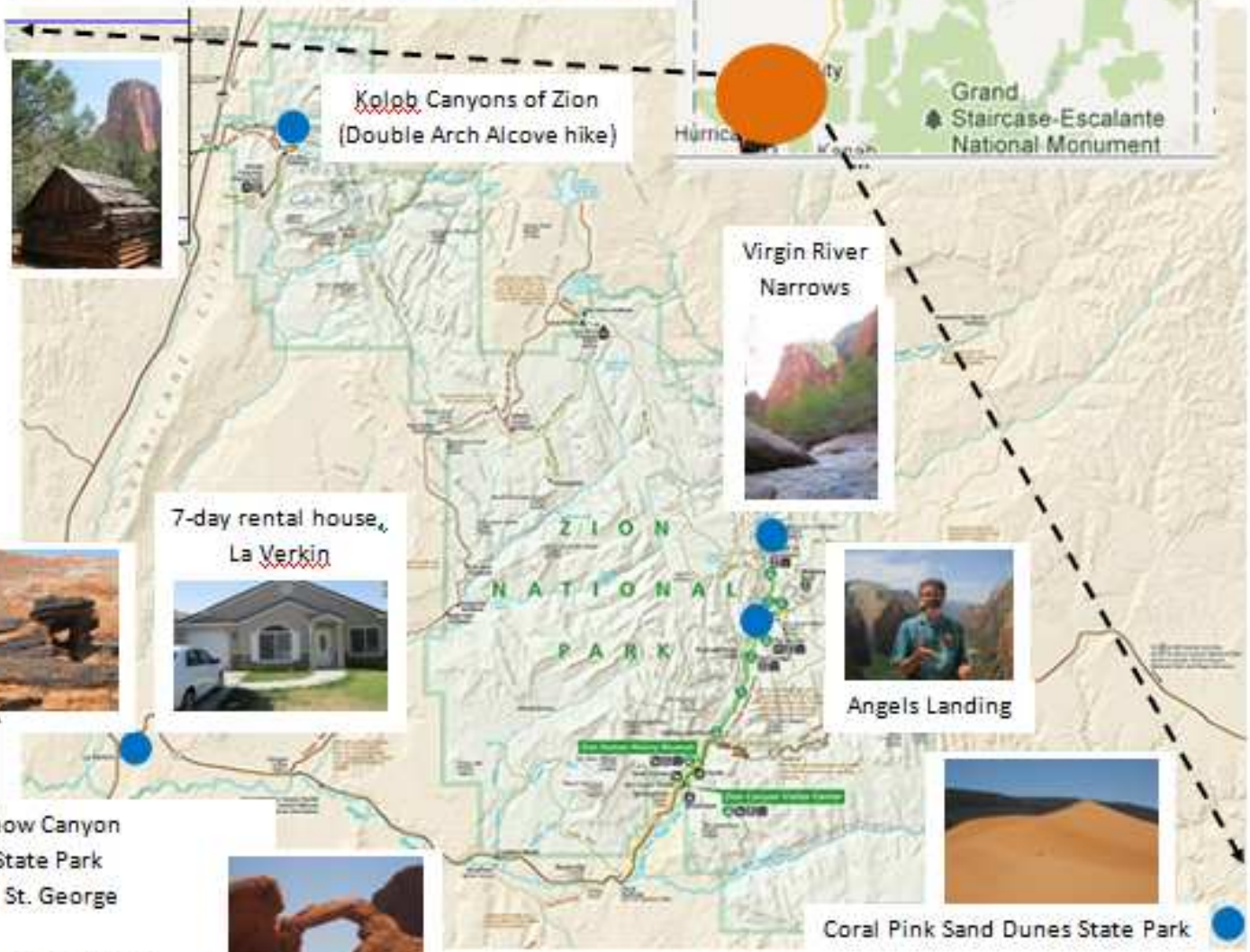
We toodled through the relative commotion of the town of Springdale, began following the Virgin River in the park on a bike path, and then pedaled the six-mile stretch of road surrounded by magnificent canyon walls and comfortable Spring weather.

One more day of bicycling (solo Chuck this time) covered the same route, adding the Angels Landing hike to the energetic bargain. In a mile and a half (plus another essentially flat mile), this trail gains 1400 feet of elevation, including a final half-mile up the spine of the jutting spire. Any steeper and this would be a climbing route, not a hiking trail. As it is, the immediate 1000 foot drop-offs offer a hiking experience like no other.



We've explored Utah several times, sometimes on a whirlwind round, sometimes less so. This trip we revisited places and took in familiar places in new ways and found new places. It was gratifying to bed down in one location and stick to one corner of Utah for this seven-day turn. We enjoyed our mix of venturing in and around Zion.

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- Snow Canyon State Park
- St. George
- Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada