

Das Boot • Zion National Park

Rating:	3B III
Best Season:	Summer or fall.
Time:	7 to 12 hours, including the Subway (Left Fork).
Longest Rappel:	60 feet (20 m)
Access:	If continuing through the Subway, requires car spot, shuttle service or short hitchhike.
Permit:	Required. Separate permits are required for Subway and Das Boot. Available at Visitor Center.
Seasonality:	Spring —In early spring, winter conditions apply. For several more weeks in spring, water levels are too high to safely descend due to snowmelt. There is no gauge on the stream, so hard to judge these conditions remotely. Summer —HOT! An early start will allow the sunny approach to be completed before its too hot out. The hike out is also in full sun and very hot. Fall —The preferred season, with nice temperatures and scenery. Bring a headlamp for the shorter daylight hours. Winter —Generally, snowpack blocks the access to trailheads and canyons. May be a reasonable venture if the area is clear of snow.
Equipment:	Helmets, rappelling gear, webbing and rapid links.
Cold Protection:	Full wetsuits or drysuits and drybags for your gear.
Drinking Water:	Clear spring water is available to filter once in the drainage.
Flash Flood Risk:	High—the upper section of the canyon is long and unrelenting, with no high ground or exit.
Skills Required:	Good navigation skills, and there is long exposure to cold water.
Anchors:	Primarily natural anchors.

For seasoned canyoneers, the famous "Subway" is an easy and incredibly scenic canyoneering venture. Hidden upstream from the usual start is a wonderful, tight, dark, cold and wet narrows that makes a more adventurous start to the classic Subway. Das Boot offers easy access to the kind of tight, wispy and wet stuff found in more "extreme" canyons like Heaps or Imlay. Due to its unrelenting nature, this is a journey only for prepared and experienced canyoneers. What's it like?

- A long, underground narrows with only the occasional view of the sun.
- Wading and swimming for 2 hours straight.
- Numerous logjams to climb over or rappel from.
- A few short drops requiring skilled downclimbing or short rappels.
- A fun, underground adventure.

Das Boot is a variation on the **Subway from the Top**, and most parties will descend Das Boot and continue down the Subway. The Park manages the two areas separately, so different rules apply in the two sections (group size: Das Boot = 6; Subway = 12); and they require two different permits. While the permits can be combined onto one 'ticket' (and thus one fee), reservations are separate so you will want one reservation for Das Boot and one for the Subway. Some parties will find a permit for the Subway unavailable, in which case you can hike out the Subway approach, but it is steeply uphill and very hot in summer.

The Approach: Hiking From the Wildcat Canyon trailhead, follow the trail 30 minutes past the first trail junction (The Hop Valley Connector), then right (South) at the second trail toward Northgate Peaks. Follow this a short way (about 2 minutes) before leaving the trail to the left and dropping into a slickrock bowl. There is a prominent, unmaintained, but well-cairned trail along this entire "backcountry" route. IF you are not following a prominent

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trail, you are getting lost. Hike down slickrock into a beautiful forest. Follow the trail through the forest and out onto a ridge that then heads left, dropping into Russell Gulch.

This is where the Das Boot variation heads off from the usual Subway path. Pay attention! Careful navigation is essential. Looking down from the ridge, note a slickrock pass above the usual slickrock pass. Descend and cross Russell Gulch, then climb to the higher slickrock pass. From there, climb straight up and slightly right to gain a bench. Cross the corner of the bench and descend shallow gullies heading southeast toward a complex of gullies and ridges toward the Left Fork visible ahead. Make sure there is a substantial ridge on your right. Work your way down trying to avoid difficulties (3rd class) to a canyon bottom. Follow the canyon past some brushy sections, some sandy sections and some slickrock sections to where it drops into the Left Fork. Avoid rappelling in by traversing upcanyon (4th class) to where a steep brushy slope descends 40 feet to the bottom of the canyon.

The Canyon: The narrows begin immediately so wade on in. Wade, swim, climb, rappel, etc. for about 2 hours. It is beautiful and challenging down there, and even on a brutally hot day, pleasantly cold in Das Boot. The end of Das Boot is a 30 foot waterfall, with a large ledge on the right. Rappel the waterfall directly off a logjam or chockstone. There used to be a tree off to the right, but it expired. Downcanyon 100 yards (100 m) is the intersection with the regular Subway route. (If short on time, one can ascend the regular Subway start, rather than completing the Subway). Enjoy the Subway or the exit.

The Exit: If exiting before the Subway, walk up Russell Gulch 100 yards (100m) and find the Subway approach trail as it descends on the right side. Follow the trail (well-cairned) back to the Northgate Peaks trail and the Wildcat Canyon trailhead. It is steeply uphill, and longer than you might expect.

If continuing through the Subway, use the canyon description for the Subway.

