

Icebox Canyon • Zion National Park

Rating:	North Pass Entrance Route: 3B IV Slickrock Entrance Route: 4B IV
Best Season:	Summer or fall.
Time:	8 to 12 hours.
Longest Rappel:	165 feet (50 m)
Access:	Begins and ends at Lee Pass Trailhead, in the Kolob Canyons Area. NOTE: Two entrance variations exist—take note the Slickrock Entrance’s higher difficulty.
Permit:	Required—Available at the Visitor Center.
Seasonality:	<u>Summer</u> —HOT! Take plenty of water for the hike out. <u>Fall</u> —The preferred season, with nice temperatures and scenery. <u>Winter and Spring</u> —Ice, snow and snowmelt conditions persist through the spring—making this canyon inaccessible or dangerous conditions.
Equipment:	Helmets, rappelling gear, lots of webbing and rapid links. Consider extra sets of ropes in case a rope gets stuck.
Cold Protection:	Wetsuits or drysuits in cool weather.
Drinking Water:	None, bring plenty.
Flash Flood Risk:	Moderate—the collection zone is small and visible. Only short sections of slot.
Skills Required:	North Pass Entrance—no special difficulties. Slickrock Entrance—Sequenced “big wall” station to station rappels. Not suitable for parties larger than 2.
Anchors:	Natural and bolted.

Hidden behind Timbertop Mountain and Nagunt Mesa is an interesting canyon that makes a fine adventure on a long summer day. Two entrances are available: the Slickrock Pass start offers a big wall, technical, station to station rappel route suitable for a small party of expert canyoneers; while the North Pass start provides a dramatic 4th class slickrock couloir followed by two steep rappels – an interesting approach at a more moderate standard.

The canyon itself is narrow and lush, keeping a trickle of water even in drought conditions. A few rappels and a swim lead to the top of a huge, three-drop waterfall. From the bottom end, this canyon is known as Waterfalls Canyon. Bypassing the waterfall and descending the adjacent ridge, the delighted canyoneer passes below one of the world’s largest arches (Kolob Arch) on her way to LaVerkin Creek. Then there’s only the little matter of a 7 mile, 1000-foot gain (11 km, 280 m) slog back to the trailhead.

Either route can be done as a long day-canyon or as an overnight trip. However, humping bivy gear up the wooded ridge and down the rappels is a lot of work, and not recommended. The hike back to Lee Pass can be brutally hot in the summer.

Driving from Springdale - Drive south and west 19 miles to LaVerkin. Turn right on Highway 17 and drive north 6 miles to I-15, then 13 miles north on the Interstate to the Kolob Canyons exit and the Kolob Visitor Center. Allow an hour for the drive from Springdale.

Driving from the Kolob Visitor Center - Drive 4 miles to the Lee Pass Trailhead. Continue ¼ or ½ mile (400m to 800m) to any of several turnouts from which a good view is available. Take a good look at the area between Beatty Point and Nagunt Mesa. Note several passes, and the wooded ridge leading up to the passes on the left. The V-notch at the top of the ridge is "North Pass". The slickrock pass to the right is "Slickrock Pass". Return to the Lee Pass Trailhead and park.

Trail and off-trail approach to the wooded ridge:
Descend the trail to the bottom of the ridge where it crosses a small wash. Turn left, down the wash, leaving the trail, and hike about 30 yards (30m) to an intersection with the main drainage of Timber Creek. Turn left and ascend the wooded and brushy canyon 1-1/2 miles (2 km) to where the canyon splits, the left hand split ending in a dry fall after a hundred feet. The fun begins here.

From the canyon junction, ascend the dirt between the arms to an alcove. At the right end of the alcove, climb a short cliffband to attain the open slopes above at the base of the wooded ridge. Head left of the crest of the ridge to find more open terrain and climb the ridge.

North Pass Entrance: Follow the ridge to the top. Descend the slickrock couloir on the other side. Single bolts are available at odd intervals for setting up a rappel or handline. They can be hard to find. Descend the fall line to a ledge with several bolts. From the ledge, note a small pine tree down and right (right facing out). Rappel or downclimb to the ledge and tree.

Rappel from the pine 160 feet (50m) to a good ledge with several bolts. Rappel from the ledge 140 feet (45m) to the canyon floor.

Slickrock Pass Variation: Ascend the wooded ridge about half way, then work your way over to the slickrock below Slickrock Pass. Climb to the pass, then descend the opposite side. A short section of slab climbing (5.2) leads to a cool slanted corridor. A bit of 4th class downclimbing leads to the top of a slab leading to a steep dropoff. A single bolt at the top of the slab can be used to set up a handline down to the first anchor.

R1: Rappel 160 feet (49m) to a bolt anchor on a steep wall.

R2: Rappel 164 feet (50m) to a bolt anchor on a steep wall.

R3: Rappel 140 feet (40m) to the main canyon floor.

In Icebox Canyon: Once in the big canyon, enjoy the lush vegetation and hike downstream. A small trickle of water will soon appear. Follow the canyon. Interesting slots come in on both sides that are worth a few minutes exploration.

Three obstacles must be overcome in this section of canyon. The first is a short drop into a slot with a pool, avoided by traversing on the right to a bolt anchor. Careful rigging and a diagonal rappel avoid a swim. The second drop goes into the pool and swims a short, cold slot. The third drop swim is again avoided on the right by a long hike out to a bolt anchor. Walk a few minutes to the top of an interesting waterfall.

The Exit: Enjoy a fabulous view from the top of the waterfall. From the top, traverse on a small trail left to the adjacent ridge, past the crest and down into the gully on the other side. Descend to the main canyon floor, then walk out the beautiful and dramatic canyon, mostly staying in the center of the drainage. After a half mile, Kolob Arch becomes visible on the right, and an official trail can be found. Follow the official trail out to LaVerkin Creek, then turn right and follow the main trail back to Lee Pass.

