

## Lower Refrigerator Canyon • Zion National Park

<b>Rating:</b>	3A II
<b>Best Season:</b>	Spring, summer or fall.
<b>Time:</b>	About 4 hours.
<b>Longest Rappel:</b>	190 feet (58 meters)
<b>Access:</b>	Starts and ends at The Grotto—use the free shuttle April-October.
<b>Seasonality:</b>	<u>Winter and Spring</u> —Snowmelt from the canyon above may cause flow—you can see the canyon from the road, so visually assess the flow rate before attempting descent. South and east facing—so a good (sunnier) spring option. <u>Summer</u> —HOT! An early start is suggested. <u>Fall</u> —The preferred season, with good temperatures and scenery.
<b>Permit:</b>	Required. Available at Visitor Center
<b>Equipment:</b>	Make sure everyone has a safety leash. Bring trashbags to pick up litter.
<b>Cold Protection:</b>	None.
<b>Skills Required:</b>	The ledge at the top of rap #3 is only big enough for 2 or 3 people. If your party is larger, you will want to bring enough ropes to have both rappels set up at the same time. Navigation and downclimbing skills needed.
<b>Drinking Water:</b>	None, bring plenty.
<b>Anchors:</b>	All anchors are bolted.
<b>Flash Flood Danger:</b>	Moderate—a few sections of sustained narrows.

While Low-F's main feature is two nice rappels, there is also a bit of sporty downclimbing at the start. Less-confident chimney-downers might want a belay for this part. Some discretion (inobviousness) might be a good idea when leaving the trail, to avoid being followed by ambitious, equipment-less hikers.

The canyon faces east and south. If you are looking for warmth, head there in the morning. If seeking not-warmth, try the late afternoon. The raps are in the center of the watercourse, so if you can see water flowing from the road or trail, it is probably not a good day to do this canyon. Webbing will need to be replaced regularly, so be sure to bring some.

**Approach:** From the Grotto shuttle stop, head up the West Rim / Angels Landing Trail to the bridge crossing Refrigerator Canyon. Backtrack a few feet and drop into the watercourse where it can be done with zero impact. Move downcanyon a bit, then gear up. Allow 30 minutes for the approach.

**Canyon:** the canyon starts with several short, downclimbable drops. Short people and the less confident chimney-downclimbers will want a belay. Packs can be handed down on long leashes or short ropes. After several interesting steps, a two-bolt anchor is found on the left, above a short drop to a pool.

**R1:** rappel 30 feet (10m) to a pool, which can be avoided with some dexterous climbing to reach the large, flat top of a pillar. It is possible to downclimb this drop, though it is a bit harder and less secure than the chimney sections above. Packs can be zipped across the pool.

**R2:** from a two-bolt anchor, rappel 140 feet to a small ledge.

**R3:** from a two-bolt anchor, rappel 190 feet to the ground. The last 100 feet are free.

There is poison ivy in the landing zone, and further downcanyon. The slime at the bottom of the rap is particularly slippery - beware!

**Exit:** minimize your impact on the exit hike. There are usually quite a few empty water bottles to pick up. Follow the watercourse down about 10 minutes until it is possible to escape right to flat, grassy ground. This will involve weaving back and forth to avoid short drops and the worst of the brush. Start to the left.

When a flat, grassy area appears on canyon right, make your way to it, then follow deer trails south toward the West Rim trail, crossing a gully or two, then pushing through the Fremont Mahonia (ouch!) to reach the pavement. Follow the paved trail back to the Grotto.

