

Middle Echo Canyon • Zion National Park

Rating:	3B II
Season:	Summer or fall.
Time:	3 to 6 hours.
Longest Rappel:	30 feet (10 m)
Access:	Zion free shuttle (March-October) to Weeping Rock.
Permit:	Required. Available at Visitor Center.
Seasonality:	Winter and Spring —Thick wetsuits or drysuits required. In heavy snow years, icepacks and snow bridges form after the rappels. These can be dangerous and block canyon descent; in big snow years, it can be as late as June before the canyon is free of snow. Summer and Fall —The preferred seasons. Wetsuits advised in cooler weather.
Equipment:	Helmets, rappelling gear, webbing and rapid links.
Cold Protection:	Wetsuits required in all but the hottest conditions.
Drinking Water:	None, bring plenty.
Skills Required:	No special difficulties, but in certain conditions, one pothole exit can be difficult without a partner assist. Soloing Echo is not recommended.
Flash Flood Risk:	Moderate—sustained narrows take only 1-2 hours to traverse.
Anchors:	Natural and bolted anchors.
Special Note:	In Winter, Echo collects an unusually large quantity of snow and ice. In big snow years, this canyon can open as late as June. Check conditions at the Backcountry Desk.

Echo is a large canyon complex that drops into Zion Canyon at Weeping Rock. The middle part of Echo offers a delightful canyoneering adventure. A couple of short rappels and some very chilly swims access a long section of narrows deep underground. Due to its large watershed, the pools are often full of water, and they maintain their coldness long into the summer. The pools can be filled with decaying vegetable matter and smell like poo. Canyoneers sometimes wonder if they will pass out from the smell before making it through the pools.

Approach: The Observation Point Trail leaves from the Weeping Rock shuttle stop and switchbacks up the slope below the vertical face of Cable Mountain. Nine hundred feet (300m) above the canyon floor, the trail traverses left below the smooth face and crosses into the gravelly wash of Echo Canyon. The trail follows the wash about a hundred feet (30m) then ascends the left side of the canyon (left looking up). The section of Echo Canyon above this crossing is called Middle Echo. The section below is Lower Echo.

After ascend the Observation Point Trail to the crossing of Echo Canyon. The route ends. From the crossing, continue up the trail 1/2 mile (800m) to where the Echo Canyon Trail branches off right. It is signed for Cable Mountain and the East Entrance. The main trail continues up to Observation Point. The smaller Echo Canyon Trail descends diagonally toward the bottom of the canyon. Follow the trail 0.25 mile (400m) to where it crosses a shallow drainage. Follow the trail another 50 feet (15m) further, then step into the woods and follow small trails along the rim, then down steep dirt into the canyon.

The Canyon: The canyon narrows right away. Enjoy the cool shade of the canyon after the sun-scorched slickrock of the approach. Suit up before the first wading pool. The first rappel shows up after 20 minutes. Chose an anchor carefully, test and evaluate, then rap a V slot into a pool. The second rappel follows soon after, into a pool; and then the third, also into a pool. The third pool can be difficult to exit and might require a partner assist. Downcanyon a few minutes, one more rappel into a pool completes the rappelling.

Fabulous canyoneering follows, down one of the best slot canyons in Zion. Downclimb and walk down the soaring corridor. Enjoy the excellent acoustics of the Echo Chamber. After half an hour, a few wades or short swims lead to familiar ground

where the trail crosses Echo Canyon. Warm up in the sun and pack your gear. Hike the Observation Point trail back to Weeping Rock Trailhead.

