

Telephone Canyon • Zion National Park

Rating:	3A III
Season:	Spring, Summer or Fall.
Time:	5 to 8 hours.
Longest Rappel:	200 feet (60 m).
Access:	Begins and ends at Grotto Trailhead.
Permit:	Required. Available at Visitor Center.
Seasonality:	Winter and Early Spring: Ice and snow hinder the hike up and descent of the canyon. Be ready for winter canyoneering conditions. Summer: HOT! Hike up the West Rim is in full sun, get an early start to avoid the heat. Fall: Excellent time for this canyon.
Equipment:	Helmets, rappelling gear, webbing and rapid links.
Cold Protection:	None required.
Drinking Water:	Sparse pools, bring plenty.
Skills Required:	General rappelling and downclimbing skills.
Flash Flood Risk:	Moderate—there are a few sections of sustained narrows.
Anchors:	Fixed bolts and natural anchors. Bring webbing and rapid links.

A nice little slot high on the West Rim, the technical part of Telephone makes a great canyon by itself, or can be combined with Behunin (often called Telephunin) for a longer day. The long approach hike, many rappels and substantial downclimbing make it a good outing for experienced canyoneers in small groups.

Telephone Canyon starts out as a drainage atop the West Rim, then drops steeply to the bench level 1000 feet lower, wanders across the bench with some slotting, then drops suddenly into the Narrows in a dramatic, 900 foot drop. This technical route is the 1000 feet from the West Rim to the bench.

Telephone is named for the telephone line that used to run from Cabin Spring (West Rim Spring) to the Temple of Sinawava through this canyon.

Approach: Chug up the Angels Landing Trail to the top of Scout Lookout. Continue chugging all the way to West Rim Spring. A small spring provided filterable water. Take the "Telephone Canyon" branch of the West Rim Trail and hike about 1/2 mile north. Cut down through a burned-over ghost forest to the bottom of the drainage. Follow the rim left to the canyon, or the stream right to the head of the drop.

Canyon: On the right side of the drainage, rappel 30 feet (10 m) to a shelf with a few trees on it. Rappel from the lowest tree 100 feet (30 m) free-hanging, then continue the rappel down past a few potholes to a ledge with a bolt anchor, then down another short drop to another bolt anchor. The rope pull from here is surprisingly good. Rap a short steep drop, then down an awkward low-angle v-slot about 200 feet (60 m) to a ledge.

The canyon continues with about 10 rappels from a mix of natural and bolted anchors. Some downclimbing is required, made spicier by the fine coating of limey dust coating much of the canyon.

Toward the bottom, after a steep rappel in an area of recent rockfall, follow a game trail right across a steep wooded slope to exit onto the slickrock to the side of the canyon. Traverse slickrock to regain the West Rim Trail.

Exit: Turn left and hike down the West Rim Trail back to the Grotto, or turn right and hike up to Behunin Pass and descend Behunin Canyon back to the main canyon (Telephunin).

