

ZION NATIONAL PARK

SPRY CANYON

LODGE CANYON AND MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN

Spry Canyon

A splendid canyon in the heart of Zion, the rugged approach and a bit of spicy downclimbing give Spry a considerably more serious air than many canyons at the same rating. Best done in spring or fall, or with an early start in summer.

Spry Canyon is not named on the map, but is the canyon between Twin Brothers and The East Temple, dropping into Pine Creek below Mount Spry. Mt. Spry is named for William Spry, third governor of Utah (1909-1917), and an early supporter of Zion National Park. He is most famous for signing the death warrant of labor organizer Joe Hill - the case generated international attention, with critics charging the trial and conviction were unfair.

Rating:	3B III
Time Required:	4 to 6 hours
Preferred Season:	Spring, summer or fall.
Cold Water Protection:	None required.
Longest Rappel:	165 feet (50 m)
Special Difficulties:	None

Driving: Spry starts where Pine Creek crosses Highway 9 one third of a mile (500 meters) east of the main tunnel. There is poor parking at this spot - park closer to the tunnel at a real parking spot and walk the side of the road to the crossing of Pine Creek.

Spry ends in lower Pine Creek, where the highway crosses the creek on a beautiful masonry bridge and starts climbing toward the tunnel. This is 1/2 mile (800 meters) east of Canyon Junction. Spot a car here.

Approach: The approach to the bowl of upper Spry is shared with Lodge Canyon. From Highway 9, follow social trails north into the bed of Pine Creek. Walk this wide and sandy wash about 15 minutes (1/2 mile, 800 meters) to where the canyon starts to narrow. Exit the bed of the canyon left up a 4th class slickrock watercourse and climb up and a little right several hundred feet to a bench. Follow the

bench north then west into a slickrock bowl below the impressive south buttress of Deertrap Mountain. Climb the center of the bowl (4th class), then up and right to the top of the pass. Keep your eyes peeled for faint petroglyphs on vertical orange wall a couple hundred feet below the pass.

From the top of the pass, looking west, left to right you see: the big peak of the East Temple; then the upper bowl of Spry Canyon; the Twin Brothers; a notch pass next to Twin Brothers; then a ridge leading up to Deertrap Mountain. From the top of the pass, traverse right and slightly down toward the slot pass and to the head of a narrow slot that cuts across the slope below. Climb into the head of the slot and, pushing through some brush, follow the slot most of the way down to the canyon floor. When convenient, exit to the right and descend steep broken slabs to easier terrain. You are now in the upper bowl.

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Canyon: Descend the watercourse between huge, colorful walls. The canyon winds its way through trees and brush, soon arriving at a lovely slickrock bowl. Downclimb to a bolt anchor, then rappel (R1) 165 feet (50m) past a swampy pothole to the ground.

The canyon again winds its way through a delightful forest. A couple of small potholes lead to a mossy area of short drops in the canyon bottom, usually downclimbed. Stay in the watercourse. The second drop is tall, but yields easily to the "elevator" technique – staying back in the corner and using outward pressure to control one's slide. Or rappel off a tree. The last drop into a dark slot requires a rappel off the most solid of the abundant debris. The dark slot may require a little wading.

After another mellow section, the canyon gets going. Moderate downclimbing is interspersed with about 10 rappels. In one spot, a narrow slot is down-slid elevator-style, then a pool delicately stemmed over. After an interesting rappel, the canyon opens out, then a slabby slope is downclimbed by cutting right. This leads down to a bolt anchor for a 90-foot (27 m) rappel into a black slot. The edge here has been cut up by canyoneer's ropes – don't get your rope stuck in one.

Lodge Canyon and Mountain of the Sun

Lodge Canyon (aka Employee Canyon, Wylie Canyon or Mountain of the Sun Canyon) offers but modest charms and several opportunities for misadventure. Mountain of the Sun is one of the more-accessible technical wilderness summits in the park, and the ascent of the one, and descent of the other, makes for a quality day. The big-wall exit out Wylie is a common place to get ropes stuck, so this adventure can only be recommended to experienced canyoneers.

Lodge Canyon runs north between Mountain of the Sun and Deertrap Mountain, dropping into the main canyon south of Zion Lodge, through the alcove known as Wylie Retreat, and coming out to the road through the employee housing area of Zion Lodge.

Mountain of the Sun catches the first and last rays of the sun, as seen from Zion Lodge. It used to be called one of the Three Brothers, but "left the family" when the Lodge became popular. The other two became the Twin Brothers. Before the Lodge, the Wylie brothers operated a motorcar tour with tent-

Soon after, a block allows rappelling into a mysterious pool in a slot. This is not to be missed. Swim the pool, then continue the rappel (total 30 m or 100 feet) down a second drop. (Var: those wishing to avoid swimming can rappel off a large tree directly to the large sandy area below. A trail leads past the large tree to a really ugly rappel down a dirty slot.)

Toward the end, a diagonal rappel is made to gain the top of a flute, thus avoiding dropping into a skanky pool. Most of the anchors are bolted - certainly no more bolts are required.

Finally, the canyoneer downclimbs (4th class) a scary-looking, narrow slot (easier with pack off) into a pool (ankle to nose deep, depending) to a 100 foot (30m) rappel to a ledge. The final rap is made by climbing up and left onto a shelf, and rapping off a tree to the top of the talus.

Exit: Work your way directly down the watercourse (large blocks) to a big ledge with a 90-foot (27 m) drop, the Lambs Point Tongue layer of Navajo Sandstone. Either rappel, or follow the ledge right to a landslide, then back to the watercourse under the drop. Descend to Pine Creek. Turn right and walk out Pine Creek to the bridge.

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camp at the present Lodge location (1917-1925). The waterfall and glen behind the Lodge is known as Wylie Retreat. The Lodge was built by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1925.

Rating: 4A III R
Time Required: 5 to 7 hours
Preferred Season: Spring, summer or fall.
Cold Water Protection: None required.
Longest Rappel: 200 feet (60 m)
Special Difficulties: Famous for getting ropes stuck. Bring lots of webbing for extending anchors.

Driving: Lodge starts where Pine Creek crosses Highway 9 one third of a mile (500 meters) east of the main tunnel. There is poor parking at this spot - park closer to the tunnel at a real parking spot and walk the side of the road to the crossing of Pine Creek.

Lodge Canyon ends at Wylie Retreat, behind the Zion Lodge.

Approach: Follow the same approach as Spry Canyon into the upper bowl of Spry. Turn north and climb to the notch pass between Twin Brothers and Deertrap Mountain, and drop over the other side. Descend small trails steeply through trees and around a few minor drops to an open slickrock area below Mountain of the Sun (see Var-1).

Canyon: The canyon soon slots up. Avoid the first slot section by following the left edge about 50 feet to a weakness that is descended into the canyon. Downclimb as far as possible, then cross the canyon to a narrow, sandy ledge and traverse to a small tree.

R1: from small tree 165 feet (50m) to the edge of a small pool. SCAAAARY! – as of 2005, the small tree is not long for this world. Evaluate carefully, then find another anchor in the area.

R2: from bolt anchor on left 165 feet (50m) to the edge of a large pool. This rappel tends to get stuck - extend the anchor as far as you can.

R3: from bolt anchor on right 30 feet (10m) to ledge.

R4: from bolt anchor, rap 40 feet (12m) to the top of a buttress on the right - NOT down the chute. Walk right (east) to the other side of the buttress.

R5: from bolt anchor at right side of buttress, rap off right side of buttress 200 feet (60m) to a ledge. Watch out for loose rock. Ropes get stuck on this one - extend the anchor as required.

R6: from bolt anchor 165 feet (50m) beside waterfall to the ground.

Special Warnings: You MUST exit the watercourse part way down rappel 4. The final drop down the watercourse is longer than 300 feet (100m). The descent route is on the other side of the buttress - be SURE to go that way.

This canyon is famous for sticking ropes. There are long slings on a couple of the anchors, and they may not be long enough to place the rappel point over the edge. Rig your rappels carefully and test-pull. Carrying an extra rope or two is a good idea in this canyon, and might prevent an unplanned bivvy.

Loose rock falling on the last rappel station has been responsible for one fatality. Wear a helmet, clip into the belay, and pay attention to what you are doing.

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