

# Zion National Park – Keyhole Canyon

**Very Cool, and Very, Very Cold:** Keyhole is a great little canyon offering a good introduction to technical canyoneering. It tends to be very cold, due to its subterranean and wet nature. This makes a great pre-view for Pine Creek, or a nice quick swim canyon to do on a hot day. Even when super hot out, the length of the swims requires some protection from the cold - wear a wetsuit, and be sure to wear a helmet.

- Rating:** 3B II
- Season:** Summer or Fall. Keyhole is very cold.
- Length:** Around 2 Hours.
- Equipment:** 100' rope, rappelling gear, at least summer wet suits, drybags for gear (if you bring any).
- Drinking Water:** Bring a quart or so.
- USGS 7.5' Map:** Springdale East.
- Difficulties:** A few short rappels, some downclimbing, much swimming including difficult swimming.
- Logistics:** Park on the road and return to the same spot.
- Permit:** **Permit Required!**
- Flash Flood Danger:** Moderate. Weather Report available at Visitor Center.

**Getting There:** From the Mount Carmel Tunnel, drive east on Utah 9 to the next tunnel. Hit the trip odometer coming out of the Short Tunnel, and drive 1.9 miles to where a shallow wash crosses the road. Park here. This is where you will come out.  
( UTM: 12S 0331229 mE 4121471 mN )

**Getting Started:** The narrow nature of the canyon makes carrying a pack difficult, so bring a minimum of gear. Walk east on the road 1/4 mile and around the corner, then cut left and climb slabs in a beautiful slickrock bowl to a pass at the top. The pass is distinctive, as it has a nice Hoodoo right in the center. Cut left of the Hoodoo and descend a steep gully on the other side to the canyon bottom. (Total approach about 15 minutes).

Please be certain you are on the correct approach trail. The Park has been concerned about erosion in this area. The **Zion Canyoneering Coalition** has worked with the Park to identify the best approach, harden the preferred route and restore the eroded areas next to the route. Please do your part and STAY ON THE TRAIL. Thanks.

**Enter the Zone:** enter the canyon. The first section of canyon requires a bit of scrambling and maybe a little easy wading. After a bit, the wash opens out again. You have completed the fun slot of Middle Keyhole.

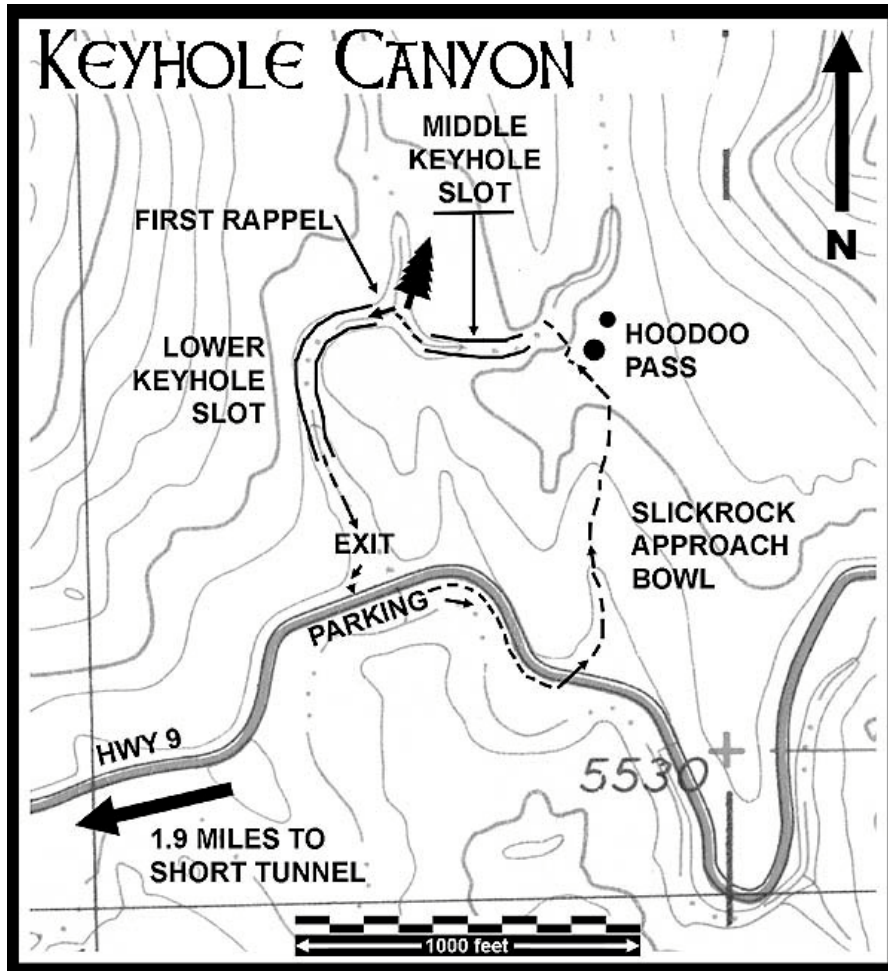
A little further, the fun resumes. The broad, sandy watercourse feeds into a narrow slot on the left, and drops 15 feet to the edge of a pool. The easiest way to anchor the rappel is

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not immediately obvious. Tie a sling around the big ponderosa pine across the wash, and rap from there. A little further, a second rappel is made off a slung tree stump. Then more canyon fun - a little downclimbing, the occasional chilly swim, a few short rappels, some wading, then eventually a long, difficult swim down a dark narrow corridor. Hassle the frogs, survive a few warmer swims, then pop out at the bottom to enjoy the blazing hot sun. So much fun, in such a little canyon.



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