

Zion: Angels Landing & Observation Point

Sunday, November 6th

Since I had a full Sunday to explore I decided to do two longer hikes in Zion National Park: Angels Landing and Observation Point. This ended up being pretty much my maximum for the day and I stumbled home exhausted and happy. We now begin The Zion Picture Blitz.



Angels Landing: looks easy enough, start here and just hike up to the top of that!

Angels Landing is the most famous hike in Zion, and for good reason. You end up going up a bunch of switchbacks and then out over a narrow, rocky outcropping with huge drops on either side. I did this one first because the magic of scrambling on a narrow path is challenging enough without massive two way traffic that later in the day brings.

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My fellow hikers at the start of Angels Landing.



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The core of Zion is one big canyon, so you get a lot of photos of said canyon from differing heights.



The (in)famous Walter's Wiggles.

The steep ascent is made possible by a large number of switchbacks. My knees hate these going down. Where are the Incas and their insane staircases when you need them?

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We're up in the stupid bits now. People fall off these cliffs every few years and die, which is totally understandable while you're up here. It's a glorious and clearly idiotic trail to undertake.

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Looking back on the path taken (and to be taken again on the return). I found the trip back a bit

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more exhilarating; it's a different experience doing the same climb but looking down all the time.



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Zion Canyon from Angels Landing

The summit is fun, I stopped and ate breakfast there, but you're really here for the trail to and from. My cell phone camera does not handle changes in light well, and hiking first thing in the morning leads to slanty shadows and poor pictures, but it was totally worth it. After breakfast I headed down the trail, my knees starting to ache a bit by the end.

I almost forgot to include this! The sound of a group of hikers, young women who were headed up the trail as I was headed down. The video shows nothing really, it's just the sound of them loudly singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" although they couldn't all remember the lyrics and one of them enthusiastically provided the fireworks or drums sound effects that traditionally accompany the performance. It was a fairly random few moments.

<https://www.goodmorninggoodevening.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/StarSpangledBann>

er.mp4

Then it was time to jump on the shuttle for a stop or two and start my next hike, Observation Point! This is a longer trail that heads up a series of stretched switchbacks (goodie), through a slot canyon (amazing) and then up and around until you end up high atop a mesa which you hike across to look down the canyon. There is a huge amount of elevation change on this hike, as evidenced by how small Angels Landing looked below me at the end and how much my legs ached. It's a less spectacular hike, but you pass through many different rock textures and varying formations so it's a lovely way to see a lot of the area's different features.



Looking across the canyon early in the hike.

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Initial switchbacks.

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So much motion in the rocks.

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Looking down a canyon partway up the trail.



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The part of the hike where you're happy you're done climbing but sad your destination is way out there.



It's in the shade, but you might be able to make out the initial switchbacks that started this hike.

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Zion Canyon from Observation Point – that bump on the right is Angels Landing.



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Cliff hiking.



Slot canyon.



By the time I was back down my knees were on fire. Over 15 miles hiked, most of it going steeply up or down, was definitely as far as my out of shape body was up for. I planned to visit some of the other really short hikes, but I couldn't even face those. I boarded a totally packed shuttle bus back to the visitors center, and was amazed at how busy it is during the off season. I can't imagine what it's like during the summer. It's hard to begrudge folks wanting to experience it; Zion is a beautiful place.