

Moonlight Buttress

V 5.13a or 5.9 C1

RACK:
 offsnuts: 1 set
 micro nuts: 1 set
 cams: 3 ea .4-2.5"
 2 ea 3-4"

APPROACH:

From Springdale or the campgrounds at the park entrance, drive past the Visitors Center to the turnoff for Zion Canyon Scenic Drive and follow it for 5 miles, to the Angel's Landing parking lot on the left. Continue another 0.1 miles to a paved pullout on the right. Moonlight Buttress is obvious across the river. The descent ends 1.6 miles back toward the park entrance at the Grotto Picnic Area. Leave a car there, or plan to catch a ride back. Walk up the road to a pullout on the left, and follow a path to the river. The best crossing spots are usually knee deep or so, but spring run-off or heavy rains can swell the Virgin River dramatically and may make it impossible to cross. Look for a good path that switchbacks up the hillside toward the buttress. The route starts about 100 yards left of the buttress. Scramble as high as possible to small ledges below a prominent right leaning groove.

DESCENT:

The route ends at a large tree just back of the rim. Scramble easily to the west across the buttress top, then down a few feet to the West Rim Trail. Turn left and follow this mostly paved trail about 2.2 miles to the Grotto picnic area, crossing the Virgin River on a bridge by the road. This trail skirts huge drop-offs—be careful in icy weather or at night. From the trail head, it's 1.6 miles on the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive to the Moonlight Buttress parking area. In daylight, it should be easy to catch a ride if you didn't leave a car at the Grotto. At night you'll be walking.

