

## Hiking The Zion Narrows By Tibor Vari

If you can visit Zion NP towards the end of October through early November, you'll be well rewarded with some breath taking beauty along with the added bonus of fall colors. Within Zion NP is the Narrows which was carved by the Virgin River over millions of years to form walls almost 1500 feet in height and only 22 feet wide in some areas like Wall Street! Since I was in Las Vegas the third week in October of 2005 for a business convention, I decided to stay the weekend (10/27), and do some photography. On this trip, I was joined by my fellow Teaneck Camera Club member Jeff Norton.

After shooting South Coyote Buttes on Friday, we did some research Friday night and found that the river was moving at close to 110 cubic feet per second whereas the normal flow over the past 78 years is closer to 50 cfs. So despite all the rain recently and some hand wringing about the conditions, we decide to go for it!



Saturday morning we got up very early so that we can drive from Kanab to Zion NP and were rewarded with a really beautiful sunrise behind the Museum. Afterwards, we head back towards Springdale and find the Zion Adventure Company ([www.zionadventures.com](http://www.zionadventures.com)), which is just off the main road on Lion Boulevard. Their website is a great resource filled with everything you need to know about the Narrows and what equipment to bring. We used these folks during our first hike of the Narrows back in November of 2003 and were quite pleased with them and the training they gave us. With the water at a brisk 45 degrees, we get outfitted in the cold weather wet suits (footwear, dry pants, long underwear fleece pants, and waterproof back-pack for about \$50 dollars). We quickly get our photo gear ready (camera, wide angle lens, and tripod), and head for the car. Because the Zion Shuttle Bus service is operating from April through October, we drive over to the visitor center and pick up one of the tour buses which takes us to the last stop along the route (Temple of Sinawava).



Next, we hike about a mile on a paved sidewalk to where the hike in the Narrows begins. Because of all the rain, a big difference from two years ago is that we are in the water about 80% of the time (verses maybe 20-30% the last time). With the water moving at the rate it was, we had to be careful at the many crossings. One lesson we learned the first time is to shoot as you are going with our goal being the confluence of the Virgin River and Orderville Canyon (2 hrs distance). So we stop often to shoot and generally put our gear back into the backpacks.

With all of the stops we made to photograph and the speed of the water, we were quite tired by the time we reached the confluence (as well as it was getting late). So we turned around and headed back. About the last half we had to stop shooting because the light was fading and we pushed our last energy reserves to get back to the paved path before it got too dark. Though we were early for the peak fall colors, the Narrows were still very rewarding and I would encourage anyone to take the hike! Had the water level been normal like it was back in 2003, we would not have been anywhere near as tired. So if you have the chance, rent the gear, pack some food and have one heck of a photographic experience!

