



There's More to Greater Zion Than Meets the Eye
Fun Facts and Stats About the Southwest Utah Destination

St. George, Utah – 2019 – Greater Zion is known for offering adventure and inspiration across 2,400 square miles in southwestern Utah. However, behind the beautiful landscapes and outdoor activities, there's more to this area than meets the eye.

For example, Snow Canyon State Park has an amazing and lesser-known hike that leads to a slot canyon covered in petroglyphs. Or that early explorers in the 1800s described the area as a "poor and worthless place." With awards, famous ties and more, there's no shortage of interesting facts about Greater Zion.

Outdoor Exploration, Activities and More

- Greater Zion is located at the convergence of three geographic areas; the Colorado Plateau in the east-northeast, the Great Basin in the northeast and the Mojave Desert in the south-southwest.
- There are 18 official wilderness areas in Greater Zion that are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- There are four state parks and one national park in Greater Zion.
- Dixie Red Hills was the first golf course to open in Greater Zion. Its opening in the mid-1960s was the first effort to bring tourists to the region.
- Greater Zion's largest city, St. George, has been home to the IRONMAN 70.3 North American Championship since 2015, and hosted the IRONMAN 70.3 Pro Championship in 2013 and 2014. The city and area will host the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships, and IRONMAN St. George will return in 2020, the first time for the full-distance race since 2010-2012.
- [Bloomington Cave](#) is a huge 1.43-mile-long tectonic cave offering six distinct levels and a maze of passages that are generally narrow, often with steeply dipping floors. It is the fifth longest cave in Utah, and the only cave in Greater Zion.
- You can drive right up to the petroglyphs in [Petroglyph Park](#).
- Of the five volcanic fields in Utah, two are located in Greater Zion. The [Santa Clara](#) volcanic field has been active for about four million years and contains numerous cinder cones and lava flows. The second is [Kolob](#) volcanic field in Zion National Park, featuring the Kolob Canyons, Kolob Plateau and Kolob Arch.
- Petroglyphs can be found in a slot canyon in Snow Canyon State Park, accessible by an amazing and lesser-known hike. This trail takes about two to three hours roundtrip and is not found on any maps, but can be found [online](#).
- In 1850, early explorer Parley P. Pratt described the area as a poor and worthless place, stating, "A wide expanse of chaotic matter ... lying in inconceivable confusion – in short, a country in ruins ... turned inside out and upside down, by terrible convulsions in some former age."
- A few years later in 1857, Lieutenant Joseph Ives surveyed the area and concluded, "The region ... is, of course, altogether valueless ... After entering it, there is nothing to do but leave."
- Joshua Tree National Natural Landmark features the northern most Joshua Tree grove in the country.
- The Pine Valley Mountain is considered the largest laccolith, a mass of igneous lens-shaped rock, in the United States and possibly the largest in the world.

- [The Narrows, a popular hike in Zion National Park](#), just received a Michelin three-star rating. Zion National Park and Springdale previously received this destination rating.
- Greater Zion is the only point of access to the [Toroweap Overlook](#), the highest vertical drop into the Grand Canyon.
- Zion National Park is full of life, with more than a 1,000 plant species, 78 species of mammals, 30 reptile species, seven species of amphibians, eight fish species and 291 species of birds.

Historical Facts

- The earliest settlement in Greater Zion was Fort Harmony in 1852.
- The Utah Territory legislature created Washington County on March 3, 1852.
- Greater Zion features two ghost towns, [Silver Reef](#) and [Grafton](#), both offering authentic buildings and a chilling atmosphere.
- St. George received the nickname “Utah’s Dixie” when members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, mostly from the South, settled in the region and started growing cotton.

Music & Film Ties

- The annual [DOCUTAH International Documentary Film Festival](#) brings quality films and filmmakers from all over the world to Dixie State University in St. George. More than 65 films produced locally, state-wide, nationally and abroad are shown throughout the week of the festival, attracting thousands of attendees.
- YouTube star [Alex Boyé](#) is a Greater Zion local and has filmed numerous music videos in the area. A musician, actor, video director, humanitarian, and global visionary, Boyé calls his multi-cultural, multi-generational style, “pop music with an African twist.” He recently performed a concert in the area, addressing suicide prevention as part of his “Bend Not Break” tour.
- Pop sensation Katy Perry’s 2016 music video, [“Rise,”](#) was shot at Sand Hollow and Snow Canyon State Parks featuring the red rock cliffs and clear waters.
- [The Piano Guys](#) originated in St. George and have become known worldwide after starting as YouTube stars.
- Countless movies were filmed in the gorgeous landscapes of Greater Zion
 - [Butch Cassidy & The Sundance Kid](#) – Filmed in Snow Canyon State Park and Zion National Park, as well as the ghost town Grafton, this classic Western film starred famed Paul Newman and Robert Redford.
 - [High School Musical 2](#) – This hit movie was filmed at Entrada at Snow Canyon, earning the hearts of thousands of teenage fans in 2006.
 - [The Conqueror](#) – Based on the story of Genghis Khan, this John Wayne film was shot at Snow Canyon and in parts of St. George.
 - [The Electric Horseman](#) – Grafton, St. George and Zion were featured in this additional Redford film which also starred Jane Fonda.
 - [The Flyboys](#) – The 2008 film was shot largely in Hurricane, Washington, St. George and parts of Zion National Park. Although it did not secure a theatrical release, it won 21 awards from numerous film festivals across the U.S.

Awards, Recognitions and Accolades

- St. George – No. 1 Emerging Travel Hotspot, TripAdvisor
- Zion National Park – The Best National Park in the U.S., Trip Advisor
- St. George – Utah’s Best Vacation Destination, Official Best
- Hurricane – The Next Great Slick Rock Biking Town, *National Geographic Adventure*
- Springdale – Prettiest Small Town in the U.S., *Forbes Traveler*
- Zion National Park – Best Fall Getaway, *Sunset Magazine*
- St. George – 50 Best Places to Live & Play, *National Geographic Adventure*
- Zion National Park, Three-Star Michelin Award

For more information on lodging, activities and dining throughout Greater Zion, please visit GreaterZion.com or call (435) 634-5747.

About Greater Zion

Located in the southwest corner of Utah, Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the fourth most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year-round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 12 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings. The Greater Zion Convention and Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit GreaterZion.com.

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