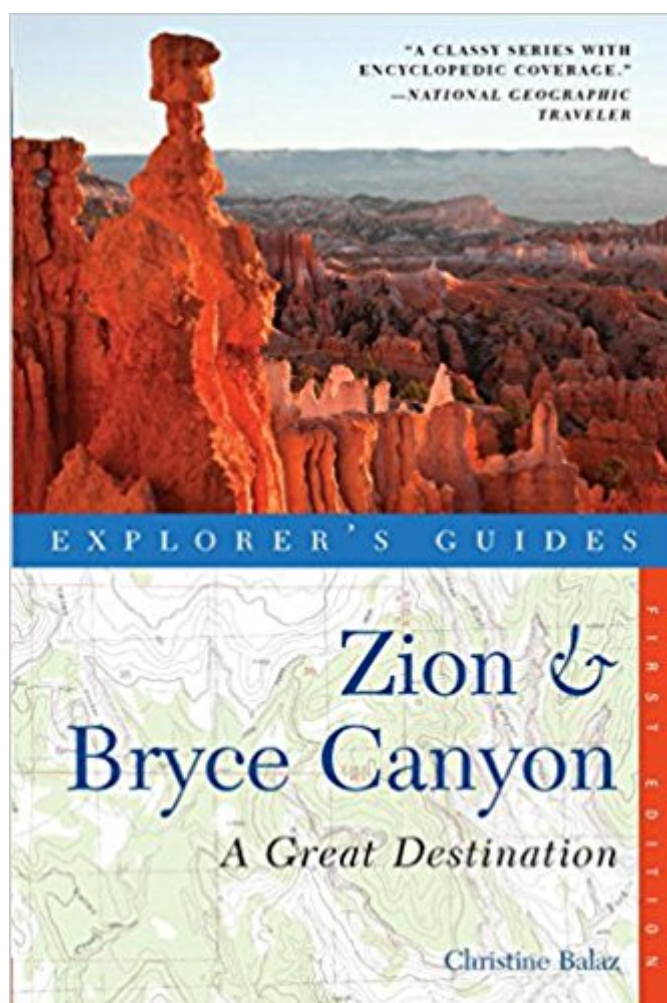


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# Explorer's Guide Zion & Bryce Canyon: A Great Destination (Explorer's Great Destinations)



## Synopsis

In this new guide, travel writer Christine Balaz distills her love of the outdoors and of beautiful Utah to bring you the inside scoop on these stunning parks. In this new guide, travel writer, skier, and rock climber Christine Balaz distills her love of the outdoors and of beautiful Utah to bring you the inside scoop on these stunning parks. Balaz knows well these dramatic landscapes and their austere beauty—she's spent considerable time here and, in climbing these canyons, has seen Bryce and Zion from every angle! Count on finding choice options for outdoor adventure, the best restaurants, best places to camp, fun tours, and cool honkytonks in this unique guide to some of America's wildest places. 149

## Book Information

Series: Explorer's Great Destinations

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Countryman Press; 1 edition (June 4, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1581571437

ISBN-13: 978-1581571431

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,472,590 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in [Books > Travel > United States > Utah > Bryce Canyon & Zion National Parks](#) #1951 in [Books > Travel > Food, Lodging & Transportation > Parks & Campgrounds](#) #3230 in [Books > Travel > United States > West > Mountain](#)

## Customer Reviews

Christine Balaz grew up in Bozeman, Montana and graduated from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. She has lived in London and Berlin and has traveled extensively for educational, recreational, and athletic pursuits. Christine now lives in Salt Lake City where she is an avid rock climber, skier, and cyclist. Christine is the author of *Explorer's Guide Salt Lake City, Park City, Provo & Utah's High Country Resorts and Backroads & Byways of Utah*.

I bought several books and maps for our upcoming trip to southern Utah, including this one. I have two big problems with this book. First, Christine injects way too much of her own bias and personal

preferences while describing places to see, restaurants, etc. If you're a young, vegan, female power-hiker, you'll connect with her suggestions. Anyone else will find her opinions off the mark. This is prevalent throughout the book but is most obvious in her dining recommendations. She continuously focus on vegan, vegetarian, organic, and healthy cuisine and looks down her nose at traditional food. For example, compare her gushing over the quirky food choices in Springdale and St. George (Vegan, vegetarian sushi, foo-foo Italian and a coffee shop with "globally conscious brew") compared to the flat-toned description of Cedar City, with its "small town variety" of food. Fortunately, even in Cedar City she offers helpful hints for people who want to escape the "traditional food coma." Her high-brow recommendations in the book include her disdain for music of the unwashed masses, with a reference to a country restaurant that starts with "If you can tolerate Western music . . ." and the menu for this place is described as having "massive, heart-menacing meals". On this same page she offers a highlighted section to alert Vegans and Vegetarians on how to survive this horrible little town. The overall tone is condescending and a bit snotty, and again, targeted very specifically to a small segment of the population. Her suggested itinerary for a 48 hour visit typically includes things that only experienced, athletic hikers can do. For example, her 48 hour itinerary for Zion begins with Angels Landing hike, a grueling 5.4 mile climb up 1400 feet that is consistently ranked as difficult and not particularly safe. That tip alone makes her itinerary worthless to the majority of park visitors, and she offers no alternative itinerary for average visitors or people with children. She offers tips on other activities scattered throughout the chapter, but her recommended itinerary focuses on the most demanding and extreme. Second, the organization of chapters is almost incoherent, and again caters to a very specific demographic. She starts each chapter with an overview, but then goes into Where to Stay and then Where to Eat. Those really should go at the end of the chapter - and wait, they do, kinda. Read on to understand. Next is a 48 hour itinerary designed to kill anyone with less than tri-athlete status, with liberal doses of health food recommendations interspersed. Finally, after all that, you get to Extend Your Stay, which offers descriptions about things that normal humans can do - shorter hikes, scenic drives. She throws in some suggestions for rock climbers and bike lovers as well in this section, making it truly a mish-mash of information. After that she has a section for accommodations. Didn't she already cover this in "Where to Stay"? This second accommodations section is a more logical place for this type of information, but it is redundant given how she starts the chapter. A travel guide should be for everyone and it should be logically organized, or it should be titled accordingly. If this book was named "Random Thoughts on Power Hiking in Utah for Vegetarian Women" I'd have no complaint about it. It wasn't written for average visitor though, and the title and book description give no hint of

that fact. I give this book 2 stars because, if you do wade through all the talk of spaghetti squash, yummy salads and kitzchy cafes, you can find some good information in there. For most normal people, however, the Lonely Planets' Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks offers better information, properly organized, and without the irritating bias.

Good book for visitors to Bryce, Grand Staircase Escalantes, and Kodachome State Park. It includes much more, but this where I just got back from. I think this was a good purchase. I would also recommend the audio book from Audible, by Waypoint, entitled Bryce Canyon Tours. Great for listening while hiking the trails, or on the plane.

It is just what we need for our trip to the parks. The book also includes the other 3 national parks in Utah which was an added benefit.

For my upcoming Utah park trip, I bought a total of five books plus the National Geographic map for each park. If I could only purchase a single guide book for the trip, this would be the one I would get. One important thing to note, the book not only describes Bryce and Zion NP but all the national and state parks in the southern Utah area. The book is organized by area and parks which are close to each other are next to each other in the book so it makes for a very natural flow while planning since you can easily check out nearby attractions by continuing to read. If I were to criticize the book, it would be: first, the photos inside are clearly not taken by a professional photographer, most appear to be taken closer to mid-day and some have completely blown-out skies and dark shadows; second, it could use more detail on the maps; and lastly, I wish it had a table of hikes along with description, ratings, distance and elevation gain. The last two are really not a problem with me since I had maps alongside the guides while planning. My opinion is that this book is best used alongside a map while planning your itinerary. It is surprisingly well written and organized for a first edition book and for that, I give it five stars.

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