

Karen's Travels to Arizona 2012

You can see photos from this trip at

<https://plus.google.com/photos/102946042686325613584/albums#photos/102946042686325613584/albums/5718860868425785073/5718860899587206626>.

Day 1 Boston to Sedona

My trip from Boston to Sedona was pretty uneventful...until I arrived in Flagstaff. Flagstaff is one of the smallest airports I've been to, and when the bags for the other 15 people on my flight were all claimed and the belt stopped, I was reminded once again why I carefully pack to hold me over for a couple of days, just in case. I'll be OK, but I really want my hiking poles. This airport was so small, I had to wait about a half hour for anyone from US Airways to even show up at the ticket counter. Fortunately, they locate my bag in Phoenix and it is supposedly going to appear at my hotel. Then, Hertz Rental Car takes forever. It's the agent's first day and he needs to get his boss to run through everything, but she is on the phone. However, he is very pleasant and I try to be relaxed about it.

I reach my lodging, **Red Agave** in Oak Creek. Upon check-in, the owner tells me I will be "upgraded" to one of the chalets my last day and I need to be packed up by 11 and the chalet will be available at 3. I go with the program for now because I'm hungry and more concerned about my bag. I'll deal with the "upgrade" discussion later, because quite frankly, it's not an upgrade. It is an inconvenience to plan my last day of vacation around moving luggage.

My room is an efficiency and as one Yelper put it, it's like a kitchen with a bed in the middle of it-the true meaning of bed and breakfast! However, it's a good size, clean, has a full size fridge, microwave, coffee maker, toaster and flat screen TV. The best part is that you can see the red rocks from the room. There's a pool and a hot tub, and they light a fire in the fire pit at night.

I can't wait any longer for my bag and head to dinner. I make a stop at one of the visitor's centers. The man in the center is friendly and helpful, but also tries to sign you up to hear about one of the condo complexes in exchange for half off a jeep rental. Ahhh...no thanks, just want a map. I'm not getting the best vibe about this trip. I need some energy from the vortexes to sprinkle a little magic and turn this around.

I head to **Casa Bonita**, a little Mexican restaurant in a strip mall in West Sedona that is a 3.5 on Yelp. It's pretty quiet, but I don't have time to look at other options because many of the restaurants close between 8 and 9. I sit at the bar and order an organic margarita, guacamole, and the chicken mole. The margarita is nicely made with fresh lime juice. The guacamole is pretty good and the meal is OK, but nothing special. While I'm at dinner, my bag has been delivered. Maybe the vortex guides heard me.

After a stop at Safeway for some essentials, I head to my room. It's only 9:00, but most places have been closed for hours. Basically, there is no nightlife, except for a few spots, but who comes to Sedona for nightlife? However, there are stars and the moon and the lack of streetlights helps you to see the night sky.

Day 2 Sedona Pink Jeep Tour, Bell Rock Vortex, Airport Mesa

I'm ready to start my day's adventure, but a bit apprehensive. In the last couple of weeks, I've been traveling around Peru and visited Machu Picchu. Would that make Sedona anti-climatic? It turns out, no. Each place has its own magic, and both should be on the bucket list who wants to see different sites the world has to offer.

I head into town and stop at the visitor center run by the Chamber of Commerce. Everyone is very friendly. I get my info and purchase a handy little gadget that is a flashlight, compass, whistle, thermometer and a couple of other things I'll probably never use, but given I'm traveling along, I like the idea of the whistle and the flashlight. What I learn with this purchase is that the sales tax here is 10.725%. And I thought the Mass tax increase to 6.5% was bad.

I take the **South Rim / Broken Arrow Tour** offered by **Pink Jeep Tours**. Our guide is Ray, a woman who has been with Pink Jeep for nine years. She is friendly and knowledgeable, and handles the jeep with rock confidence (no pun intended). We head out on the scenic rim part of the tour on Schnebly Road. The road quickly becomes dirt, rustic, and not something you should attempt to abuse your mid-size rental car on. If you get in trouble out here, probably no one will get you and it will be very expensive to correct your mistake. You can park near the beginning and hike in.

Ray tells us that Sedona was named after Sedona Schnebly, by her husband even though she did not want the town named after her.

The first rock formation we look at is known as **Snoopy Rock**. The profile on the top looks like Snoopy lying down. On the same rock is a formation that looks just like the silhouette of **Lucy's head**. We see other rocks known as the **Titanic** and the **Eagle**.

Ray points out the vegetation as the Walmart for Native Americans. The Shaggy Juniper is used for lots of products including diapers. The Prickly Pear is used to treat diabetes and to make margaritas. For a desert, it is surprising how much green there is. The water comes from aquifers.

This area has been used for many auto commercials and photo shoots for companies such as Chico's. It has been used in a lot of movies and Ray shows us where John Wayne carved E DUKE into a rock (which would be considered property destruction for the rest of us).

We leave this area to go to **Broken Arrow**. Pink Jeep is the only tour company that can take passengers there. The view is amazing, but the ride is as well, and there are several areas where we go down a 45% angle.

Ray gives us a lot of history and makes a point that one thing about Sedona compared to other places with nice views, that the views in Sedona belong to everyone. In other places, only the affluent have access to the views. You could be in a gas station bathroom and have a chance at a beautiful view.

I meet two people on the tour, Joe and Jackie, who kindly invited me to lunch, but I decline. It's so nice out and I want to take advantage of the good weather since it might not be nice tomorrow.

For lunch I walk over to **Sedona Memories Bakery** for a sandwich. I figure this place must be the place to go by the line out the door, and I was right. For \$8 you get an enormous sandwich with lots of fixings on fresh baked bread. Half will fill you for lunch and the other half is good for an afternoon of hiking.

My next stop is **Bell Rock Vortex** for a hike. You need a pass to park pretty much anywhere scenic, but a one week pass is \$15. I take an off beat trail that is flat, but goes for a long way. I don't see anyone for a long time and at first I feel creeped out, but then start to enjoy being alone. One thing I notice is that a lot of the dead trees and the vegetation have a thin layer of iridescent green that looks like someone spray painted them. I'm not sure the reason, but I see it everywhere. Eventually, I make my way to the Bell Rock path with all the other tourists. I like how the trail marketers are large rock cairns in wire cages instead of the paint smears that I'm used to. It's hard to miss them.

I get up really high and I don't know just how high you can go, but I'm completely satisfied. Plus, I'm running low on water and getting thirsty, breaking hiking rule number one to make sure you have enough water. After this I keep at least a gallon of water in the trunk of the car so I can refill my water bottles before and after any stop.

I keep hoping to feel the vortex energy that people come to Sedona for, and although I feel the awe of nature, doesn't have that special vibration that I keep reading about.

I head to **Airport Road Overlook** at sunset. On my way up I see a small parking area that is for the **Airport Mesa Vortex**. It is a very short climb to the top for a 360 panorama of Sedona. At one point I am the only person up there, but it has become very windy. I climb down and drive up to the Airport Road Overlook and it has become very busy in spite of the wind. Dust is kicking up and it is really cloudy. I wait in my car watching viewers shiver across the street. I wait about 20 minutes and the clouds lift from the sun, so I go to the overlook. I run into Joe and Jackie again. The sunset and the glow off the rocks are beautiful. I will have to come back here again for another sunset.

For dinner, I head to **Picazzo's**, an organic pizza place. I've had two recommendations to go here and I'm glad I listened. I choose one of the white vegetarian pizzas, add scallops, and get the organic quinoa crust. It is excellent and goes perfect with a Dogfish Head. It is gourmet and on the pricey side, but I have enough for tomorrow's dinner.

Day 3 Around Town Sedona

Today's weather forecast is a bit iffy. I see a few snowflakes and it is pretty cold. I decide to make this an in town day and start at **Hot Yoga** in West Sedona to warm up and work out the kinks from the hiking the day before. The class was just what I needed and the instructor was very friendly.

I decide to deal with my unsatisfactory room "upgrade." Since I'm heading out to the Grand Canyon tomorrow maybe I can just arrange for an early checkout. I talk to the woman at the front desk and I'm in luck. One of the other guests had just called to extend her stay, and now they can give her my room. So we all win, Red Agave keeps their lodge filled, I support another business, and in the end I put a big chunk of change back into my wallet that covers my meals and more for my entire trip. Now I really

think the vortex guides are on my side. This decision affords me the opportunity to explore more since I am not tied to staying in a particular place because I have also already paid for lodging.

Since it's cold out, I decide it's a good day to walk around town. First I go to **Canyon Breeze** which is basically a little food court, but it overlooks the red rocks and has an outdoor patio, so it works for me.

My next stop is the **Chapel of the Holy Cross**. I wouldn't normally go to visit a church, since I have seen lots of them on tours in Central and South America, but a friend recommended it. I'm glad I go. Instead of the normal opulence and lots of detail, it is extremely simple inside and the ornate part is the view that parishioners see out the glass behind the altar. The other amazing part is that it is built into the red rock. Of course there is a gift shop, but not anything I'm interested in. Is there anywhere in the world anymore that doesn't have a gift shop?

I head back to Uptown Sedona for ice cream at the **Black Cow Café**. The ice cream is made from scratch and you don't even have to walk in to smell the whip cream and waffle cones. Everyone who walks by comments on the aroma. I recommend the espresso flavor.

I spend the afternoon walking around the shops, but after awhile, I realize that there is a lot of the same stuff in a lot of shops and nothing I want or need. There are two interesting places. One sells jerky and you can get a jerky pack with 14 flavors including elk and buffalo for \$14. Another sells skulls and buffalo hides. While it was a relaxing afternoon, in hindsight, I could have skipped the shops for another activity.

I decide it's time for a beer and ask a man at one of the tour reservation desks where is the **Oak Creek Brewing Company**. After his sales pitch of renting rooms for cheap if you see a presentation about the condos for sale, he tells me there are two, one for tourists with food in the Tlaquepaque Mall, and another for locals. I pick the local haunt. It has five vats, a concrete floor, a bar, a patio, and is industrial. I get the porter and would recommend it. I meet a nice man, Sean, who lives in the area. We have a good chat about travel and I tell him about my online journal. He has traveled a lot to the Middle East, which is something a lot of people in the US might not feel comfortable doing anymore. He gives me tips on a lot of places to go and I'm glad to have met him, something that probably would not have happened if I wasn't traveling alone. I thank him for his company and go back to my room for my leftover pizza for dinner.

Day 4 Oak Creek Canyon Scenic Drive, Route 66, and the Grand Canyon

I head out on 89A North which is the Oak Creek Canyon Scenic Drive. It is breathtaking view and I need to be careful to pay attention to the road more than the view. However there is a turnoff at **Oak Creek Canyon Vista** where you can park and walk to take in some scenery without fear of driving over the cliff.

When I get there, the **Native American Market** members are setting up their crafts for sale. It reminded me of a brochure I saw in the visitor's center that had two pieces of jewelry with a quiz on which one was authentic Native American jewelry. It said that there are a lot of designers making knockoffs and essentially diluting the culture.

I stop in **Williams** which is the last town to be on Route 66 before the highway. Rolling into town makes me feel like I've traveled back in time. While there are some current stores like a Circle K, a lot of store fronts still have the original signs and you could look down some blocks and the only indicator of modern times is a subtle "Free Internet" sign in the corner of the window. One sign that catches my eye is the Red Garter Inn. I stop in the **William's Visitor's Center** and it is worth going in, not just for the bathroom, but it is a mini Route 66 museum.

I head to the Grand Canyon and I decide to be a total tourist and give into the **IMAX** movie on the way. Someone on my Peru tour told me the IMAX panorama movie is good and I thought, "How about just going to the Grand Canyon and turning around for a Grand Canyon panorama?" I do enjoy the movie and I'm glad I went. The reenactments are very hokey, but the cinematography is fun. There is a National Geographic Store there with nothing I want or need, but when you exit the movie, there are some cool black and white photographs of some of the early explorations.

One thing I have figured out is that the beginning of March is a great time to travel to Sedona and the Grand Canyon. It is comfortable to do outdoor activities, but not crowded yet. Parking, hotels, and getting around is easy.

I get to the **Grand Canyon** and after driving through the entrance area, there is suddenly a lot of traffic. However, it's not real traffic, just a bottleneck because a group of elk (I don't know if they are a herd or some other collective name) are on the side of the road feeding. This is really cool and I get out with all of the other visitors to take photos. They don't seem afraid of the people at all and people are respectful of the animals and of each other to give everyone space to take their photos.

At the Grand Canyon I take in the views. I had been here briefly 20 years ago when I drove across country with my friend Jonathan, during a snowstorm. It still had an awe factor, probably not quite as much as the first time I saw it because I had some flashbacks to that time.

After I have my fill, I head to Flagstaff through the **San Francisco Peaks**. On that journey I had 20 years before, Jonathan and I went through the peaks and the snowstorm was so bad that we didn't see anything, except our lives flashing before our eyes, because we thought we were going to die out here. Our only nourishment was a bag of cookies until we eventually found a little visitor lodge where we were grateful to see other live humans and hot chocolate.

I arrive at my motel that I booked through Expedia, the **Rodeway Inn**. I'm not so sure about this, but I shouldn't be surprised since it was only \$40. This particular location looks like the location for more than one *America's Most Wanted* episodes. I go in anyhow figuring the worse that could happen is I leave without a \$40 refund, a small price for my safety. The reviews said it wasn't fancy, but good for a one night place to sleep. The man at the front desk is friendly which puts my mind a bit at ease. However, I have a judgment lapse when he asks me how many people in the room, I say, "Just me." I typically say something like, "my husband will be joining me later," to not call attention to the fact that I'm traveling alone.

I go to my room. It's kind of dumpy, but certainly not the worse place I have stayed. It has a big bathroom, king bed, microwave, fridge, and flat screen. It's also clean and the bed is comfortable. However, it's not the room that bothers me. There are a couple of no so savory looking characters coming and going. Normally, I try not to be so judgmental, but in this case, as a protective mechanism, I'll risk being a bad person in the name of personal safety.

A few blocks over is downtown Flagstaff. I set my sights on **Criollo's**, and trendy Latin restaurant. The fish tacos are pretty good and the margarita is so-so.

Day 5 Flagstaff, Verde Valley, Arcosanti, Jerome

In spite of my apprehension about my motel room, I had a good night of sleep. When I wake up the first thing I do is check to see if my rental car is there and undamaged, and thankfully it is. I have a leisurely Americano at **Macy's Coffeehouse** with one of the best biscotti I've ever had.

I take a little tour around the town. It's cute, and I agree with my uncle Don that it has a bit of a Northampton, MA flavor. There are several cafés and fun shops.

I leave Flagstaff and head about 75 miles south to **Mayer** to visit **Arcosanti**, an urban laboratory developed by Paolo Solieri. I went there on the recommendation of my friend, Jay and didn't think too much about it and saw mixed reviews online. However, I found it very fascinating. It begins with a video and then there is a guided tour. The tour guide was an excellent speaker and was very knowledgeable.

Arcosanti is a prototype of an urban community that uses ecology and architecture to take advantage of the sun and wind paired with strategic architecture to use more natural resources. Many of the structures have a dual purpose. There is a lot of shared space. For some reason the structure reminded me a bit of the old *Planet of the Apes* shows. I can see how some people could look at it and think it's a "hippy commune," but it doesn't have to be extreme. A lot of the concepts could be applied to new developments that use natural resources and how to create communities without creating urban sprawl and the dependency on automobiles. Currently, there are 75 people living there, but the big plan is to create living space for about 5,500.

A surprise treat in both directions is the view of **Verde Valley** along I-17. The roads are steep in a lot of places and there is nowhere to turn off to take a photo, but it doesn't matter. You can't really capture it anyhow.

There are a lot of ranches and what appear to be farms. I don't know what they could be farming though. It's very dry and it hardly rains. By getting off the highways, you get to see a lot of cross sections of people's lifestyles that range from very simple trailers and homes to very opulent houses.

My next stop is in **Camp Verde** to see **Montezuma's Castle**. It only takes about 10 minutes to explore, but it's serene. It's interesting to see knowing that the Sinagua Native Americans lived there at one point and no one knows why they left. Because I was in the area, I enjoyed it, but I wouldn't recommend going out of your way for it.

I head to **Jerome** not really knowing anything about it except I've seen it mentioned in a couple of tourist guides, and my friend told me I should check it out. Jerome turns out to be one of my best discoveries on my trip. The road up to Jerome climbs a mountain on a narrow two lane highway without guard rails in many spots. Jerome is an old copper mining town at about 5,000 feet and about 400 people currently live here. You can park for free and walk around the town which is basically a few tiered streets with businesses that are mostly in the original structures. Even where structures have collapsed, the remaining parts are even used. For example, the front of the building that is still standing has been fenced off as a glass blowing studio. The place gives me a vibe that there must have been a brothel or two here at one time along with some saloons.

It's about 5:00 pm and a lot of places are closing up. I think it would be a really cool place to stay for the night and explore in the morning. There are only a few hotels there, but I notice that one of the shops has a sign indicating some rooms are available in the **Connell Hotel** that has been around since the late 1800s. The manager, Dinah, looks like she's been around since the mining days. She has a long black dress with a white pilgrim-like lace collar and her gray hair is in an old school marm bun. Although, she has kept up with the times since the hotel still has a lot of old charm with modern amenities like a flat screen and a microwave. Unfortunately, I didn't enjoy my stay there only because my room was next to a smoking room and could smell the people smoking all night and when I left I can still smell it on me.

For dinner I try the **Mile High** restaurant. I have the crab enchilada which was fantastic. However, the margarita was just so-so in spite of ordering it specific ingredients. There is a musician who is pretty good, but probably a bit of a downer for him since there is a very small audience including a kid who won't stop running around the restaurant shouting, which is a downer for me, too.

Day 6 Jerome and Sedona

This morning I walk around the small town and do some window shopping. This area has some of the nicest shops and galleries even though there aren't many. I purchase a wire wrapped gemstone pendant from a young woman who is new to the craft. The store owners are very friendly. One of the most interesting stores is **Nellie Bly II** that claims to be the largest kaleidoscope store in the country, or maybe the world. Either way, I've never been to a kaleidoscope store. Julie, who works there, shows me a camera trick of taking a photo through a kaleidoscope so your image appears with the design. She takes one of me so I have a free souvenir of Jerome.

I have breakfast at **Alice's Restaurant**, which is kind of pricey and the food wasn't anything special for me, but is an absolutely charming place on one of the higher-tiered streets with great view of town and valley below. The people working there couldn't be any friendlier. I recommend going for a coffee, muffin, and a view.

In spite of a few things not being the best picks, I'm still happy I visited Jerome and now it's time to head back to Sedona. I head to a third vortex, **Boynton Canyon**. I take the Boynton Canyon route to the right that has a trail that goes up to the spire. It's a pretty easy trail and sandy until you get to the incline which is rocky, but easy to manage with hiking shoes. The view is great and worth the trek. I spend some time sitting there taking in the scenery.

I take the trail in the other direction when I get down from the top, but I don't go all the way to the end. The trail abuts a resort and the hum of air conditioning, sounds of trucks backing up, and the smell of french fries somehow takes away the appeal of hike. This is my least favorite vortex and if I could only visit three, I would skip this one.

For lunch I stop in at the **Blue Moon Café** in Oak Creek. It's not fancy, but the waitress is nice, the burger is really good, and it's cheap.

I decide to stay in Sedona for the rest of my trip and I like the Oak Creek area which is about four miles south of downtown, away from the more tourist area of uptown Sedona, and has a lot of nice views. After a quick search I make a reservation at the **Desert Quail Inn** which is a motel. However, it is the best budget motel I've ever stayed at. For about \$95 you get a newly-renovated king bed room with a couch, fireplace, fridge, microwave, etc. It's clean and very comfortable. In spite of full parking lot, it's pretty quiet. It's also next to a café and grocery store and across from an Outlet Mall with an outdoor art show if that's your type of thing.

I want a place to have a quiet beer and watch the sunset. In town is busy and the food court patio at Canyon Breeze overlooking the rocks is closed for a private party. After a quick Yelp search, I find **Mooney's Irish Pub**, down the road a bit on 179. It turns out to be perfect. They have a couple of tables and a bench outdoors. It wasn't busy and I can relax until the sun goes down.

Day 7 Clocks, Cathedral Rock, and Coffee Talk

I wake up and I'm really confused about the time. I know we change clocks, but between the clock on my laptop and my phone there is now a three hour time difference and not two between here and Boston. I check the clock in the room and my iPad and I'm still confused. I look it up on line and discover that most of Arizona does not participate in Daylight Savings Time. No problem for me since I'm not on a schedule except for when I get my flight home in a couple of days.

I start out at the **Red Rock Coffeehouse** for a latte. It's a nice little place with friendly people and seems to draw some of the locals. No fancy breakfasts here, but enough to get you started in the morning.

I head to the only vortex I haven't seen yet, **Cathedral Rock**. I get the last available parking space in the lot. It starts out easy enough, but it gets harder and steeper the higher I go with a couple of very tenuous spots. I make it up easy enough, but when I look back, more nervous about getting down. I make it to the top as well as a father and his kids who are taking the way from the experience because they are fighting and bickering. They don't stay too long and I have some quiet time to take it in. I'm glad I came when I did because the weather has turned out to be beautiful and it is getting busy. I see some people taking a path and one mentions it goes higher, so I have to check it out. It's also a super steep area, but I climb up and there anyhow. There is one solo traveler up there and we help each other out taking photos of each other in front of the spire.

This is the best of all the vortexes and the most inspiring, maybe because you have to work more for it. I didn't plan it this way, but I'm glad I saw this last. You want to go early not just to avoid the crowds, but you really need to have a lot of energy to climb up and return.

I'm very careful in making my way down and have to sit and scoot in some areas because it is so steep and the only way I can reach my leg to the next rock. It's the reason I started wearing tube bandanas around my neck for hiking, so I can easily pull it on my head. The last thing you need is any distraction or visibility issues from hair getting in your face.

As I get near the bottom, two paramedics quickly pass by me with their medical back packs. When I'm at the bottom, two more paramedics go by with a kind of unicycle stretcher with one big fat tire in the middle. It turns out a guy broke his ankle high up on the back bowl of the rock. I can't see how they can get him down on the stretcher since it was a real task just getting down myself. I hear a fire fighter saying that maybe they will need a helicopter. Imagine this happening before cell phones? Someone would have to climb down, get in a car, and go get help. Whoever this is, I feel for that person and I'm very thankful it is not me.

On my way out I meet Jackie, a Navajo woman, who is selling jewelry near the trail head. She makes them with her children. She is a mother of nine and her youngest is 14. She is almost 50, but doesn't look it to me. I buy two necklaces from her.

Before I do anything else, I need a real lunch. I got to **Heart of Sedona Coffee** in West Sedona. The place is cool with a lot of nice artwork and has a bit of a living room atmosphere. I get the eggplant stuffed with spinach and asparagus. It's delicious and perfect post climb and to replenish me for the afternoon's activities. It's also next to a natural food market to grab so more water for my next hike.

I head down Valley Verde School Road to the back side of Cathedral Rock. The road goes from paved to dirt and my rental is covered in a thin layer of red rock sand. It goes a long way and right near the end is the trail head for the **Baldwin Loop**. This is a nice trail and very serene. It spend about an hour and a half on it and between this trail and Cathedral Rock, it's a given that I will sleep will tonight.

Sedona has a very prominent psychic, healing, and spiritual connection community. A lot of the psychic centers offer aura photos. I think of getting one ("when in Rome") and stop at a place, but when I see what they are, I'm not so interested anymore. I find Tony who works there, more interesting. He's a transplant from New York who used to work in the city, so going from there to Sedona is a big change. He's just moved here after doing a lot of one and two week stints here. I ask him about the adjustment and his biggest issue is not being able to get pizza after 9 pm. Yup, he's a New Yorker!

I cross the highway to **Java Love Café** for a cold drink after my hike. This place appears to me to be the coffeehouse of choice for the real locals. It's low key, eclectic, and they roast their own coffee.

Day 8 Wildlife Park and Final Day in Sedona

I start out at the **Red Rock Café** because it is next door to where I am staying and I can walk in 30 seconds. It's a pretty busy place, but I get seated quickly and the server was very good. I get the blue corn huevos rancheros, which is a really good meal and has some kick. I can't recommend the coffee since it is like most breakfast places, the coffee is awful. My guiding rule is that if a place has an espresso machine, you have a decent chance that the coffee will be good. If it doesn't and it is the type of place that keeps refilling your mug, the coffee will be lousy.

I head to the **Out of Africa Wildlife Park** in Camp Verde. Every tourist display has an \$8 discount, so I make sure I grab one before I head out. They make a real point not to call it a zoo. It's in the desert and has lots of land. I start out on the safari tour which is a school bus that goes into the fenced area and you can feed giraffe and see some animals like zebras up close. I learn a lot about some animals. One of the antelope is an endangered species that is likely to be extinct in 25 years. They are hunted for their corkscrew antlers. Some of the animals are sleeping, but I get to see enough to feel satisfied. I think the best time to go is probably when they open since the animals are hungrier and probably more active.

On the way back to Sedona, I stop on **Montezuma's Well**, another national monument. I wouldn't go out of my way for it, but since it is there, I visit. It is a large sink hole with water and the only place I have seen water on my entire visit. It is believed that the Sinagua Native Americans lived here and used the well to irrigate crops and as a main water source. When you leave, go back out the way you came and get on I-17 or you will pass the turnoff for Sedona and have to turn around to go back.

What I thought was going to be a trip to Sedona turned out to be so much more since I didn't limit myself to one area. I feel like my experiences have really allowed me to get a great flavor for the state and the people and I have had a truly unique experience.