



Canyonlands Hike Trip Notes

May 3-10, 2014

This was my second year to try for this hike as last year we had a medical emergency. I wasn't very nice to the Taurus Birthday Boys about minding their health while I tried for this trip again. Can you imagine that they were found to have purchased a bottle of Johnny Walker (Double Black and Platinum) each for each other? They called via Face Time and caught me just out of the shower, told me about all the booze, and I about jumped out of their cake, a nude mad-woman daring them to let Tom get hospitalized again. I hope they didn't notice. I finally remembered to wish them all a Happy Birthday.



Hikes

They were more challenging than expected. They were also more unique and diversified than I had expected. One has to be in awe of the size and variety of this huge Garden of the Gods. Some of the best can only be accessed by a long drive inwards, followed by an equally long and fairly strenuous hike. In most cases it was totally rewarding though I confess that some scrambling was more than I liked and was on the edge of my ability to scramble.

As in most good national parks, it takes a bit to get there. In this case is about a four hour drive from Salt Lake City. But other treasured parks also require a long drive from any major airport - such as Yosemite, Big Bend, or the Grand Canyon. Our leaders helped by giving us a hike in the in between and a couple of pit stops.

Hotels

If you haven't heard, where I park my junk and where I sleep is very important to me. In this case we had somewhat extreme with a not very nice hotel for the first two nights and then a lovely Inn downtown Moab for the other three nights. In the defense of our leaders there was nothing better in the town of Monticello. Pre and post hotel at the Salt Lake City airport was a nice Hampton Inn.

Photos compliments of Nola



Mesa Arch with view of Washer Woman Arch in the background and yes it was very cold and we even saw snow on the windshield this day. Then Chester Park loop – our big day with as much climb as the Grand Canyon and 14 miles of plenty of scrambling taking us over 6 ½ hours. I felt like Superwoman! I was sure this would be the toughest hike of the week – until the next day came and proved that wasn't so.



More in Chester Park loop and a rare portion that was flat.



White Rim from Grandview Trail; Schaefer Trail with a tiny looking but huge dump truck on the trail.



A very windy Canyonlands and another day of scrambling. Superwoman got deflated.

Notes/Emails sent from the trip

Monday in Canyonlands – from the Princess with the Pea

Salt Lake City was a quick stop for me as I only went in one day before the hike. (I've been there a few times recently.). The hotel very kindly gave me a nice upgrade to a suite which I'm much appreciated. It was almost funny in that they apologized that they couldn't find me a refrigerator so would I mind taking a suite that had a built in refrigerator.

It was quite a long drive to Canyonlands but we stopped for a two to three hour hike and then another small hike to view some pictographs. The day gave us quite the surprising panoramas and our drive to our first hotel was filled full of variety from low lands of farmlands, major mountain passes to desert areas to forestry areas. The hike ran along a rushing stream with a blue heron apparently fishing. Now how could you get more variety and all that?

It was supposed to be 90° but oddly the weather report said 90° but feels like mid-70s. I presume that is because of the high winds and a very dry lack of humidity. We would all drink a loss of water but have need for either very few are no pit-stops. We would come in covered with either sand or salt or both. Sink laundry left a lot of red sand.

Into the first hotel for two days has given me the lack of confidence to do their Rogue River wilderness trip. One of the fellow hikers brought his scrapbook of the Rogue River trip and the other fellow had also done it. Everyone seems to love it and it comes highly recommended. But it is back country lodges, it is going along the river and sometimes river-raft, and it is very remote. So being fussy about my hotel room in Canyonlands not having a refrigerator and worst of all not having a coffee pot, put all this into perspective. Like being a city girl or a zoo girl, I feel a need to be in contact and a need to have my coffee in the morning. I did about everything I could to bribe the hotel to find a coffee pot. Steve had already convinced them to find me a refrigerator (which had been promised but who knew to ask for the ever present coffee pot?).

After dinner I figured out that the refrigerator didn't work because the plugs didn't work so I moved it all the way across the room to a working outlet. Even then it took a bit of wiggling to make it work. Then the young gal from the reception showed up with a very ancient coffeepot but no filter and no coffee. Nola to the rescue with instant coffee.

In between these frustrations my room keys wouldn't work so I was back to the reception again. This happened three times in my two days. My trip for a working key card was maybe a good reminder to receptionist that I had bribed her with some cash earlier trying to get a coffee pot. Then the next day my phone was disconnected, reception didn't even answer when Tom tried to call nor for two hours while I tried to get them too, and cell service was non-existent. I don't exactly sound like a good backcountry lodge guest, do I, if I got frustrated over this? The crowning blow to get over in the Rogue River trip was to figure out that I could not take all of my "junk" (only a small pack) and that I would be out of range of the cell phone for three days.

Was the Cheapo hotel mess all worth it?

Even if it weren't, I'm convinced there is nothing better in the area. But think twice before trying Inn at Canyonlands. And Canyonlands Inn looks double awful. Yes, it's two different places.

Wow yes it was worth it just for the one hike. It took a 1 1/2 hour drive in and a 2 hour more hike to see the best on our Monday hike. It took us 14 miles of near 5000 feet up and down climbing for over 6 hours in the Needles District of Canyonlands. Some scrambling was needed. A long narrow slot canyon wouldn't have accommodated anyone with extra weight. It was wonderfully cool.

One hiker went back before we tackled the 5 1/2 mile loop. Maybe he was the smart one?

Picture Garden of the Gods on major steroids. Miles and miles of trails leading through some of the most amazing scenery and unique rock formations that just kept changing and changing dramatically. We couldn't quit taking pictures. Yet it was such a long and strenuous hike that we needed to keep moving and didn't give ourselves very much down time.

Our Tuesday hike is said to be in the second third of Canyonlands. It might be a mere 10 miles and we will see the confluence of the two rivers.

Because the hotel is so simple as is their breakfast, our leaders take us down the road to a quite nice cafe. Gotta start with good fuel. Plus we take a feast of a picnic lunch to eat along the way. My pack

with 90 ounces of water got used up yet never a pit stop was needed. The salt was like sand on our bodies when we came in.

Thursday being the next to last day of a wonderful week in Canyonlands and arches

Yesterday I thought I was absolutely the superwoman par excellence. Today I am down -- either by being old, or far too much Mexican food last night, or just too much hiking. Or all of the above. Most body parts are working just fine but that affected by the overage of Mexican food last night is why I was stationed in my room for much of the fifth hiking day. I'm sure they will tell me it was the best of the best and I will believe them because I'm stuck in my childhood when that was the story of my life. Either that or they had the best of the best because I left the party early.

Our four hikes have been absolutely amazing if not pretty much unbelievable. These canyons and hoodoos with their surprising Canyon and Desert features just never stop. Huge and expansive. If you didn't believe in a God, this place would do it.

There is so much! While I laugh about those who say they saw the parks, folks like leader Nola who has backpacked in multiple times must laugh at my thinking I saw it in a week. Most all the goodies we saw could only be seen on foot or from a helicopter.

On Today's hike the group will be looking at a number of arches including Landscape Arch said to be the longest stone span in the world. We saw one called mesa arch yesterday. It could be seen by an average tourist in a car and able to walk a mile. Grand View was a short one miler too though lots of steps. All the other views took sweat and muscles and for some of the hikers it meant big blisters and/or lots of moleskin. (My feet fortunately and so far haven't failed me and I've not blistered since I got orthotics in 2002 nor lost a toenail. Touch wood!)

Here is Landscape Arch with a 306 foot span with photo taken by Nola.



We have hiked extensive trails and cliffs into two of the three regions of Canyonlands. Both reminded me of the challenges, if not more so, of the Grand Canyon. They are separated by two rivers and we climbed a hilltop one day to see the confluence.

The Needles District might as well have been 100 times bigger and more extensive than Bryce Canyon. The Island in the Sky area made me think we really did have to climb to the sky to get to it. Both took plenty of scrambling and each had near 4000 and 5000 feet of elevation up and down, and each took about 6 1/2 hours to traverse the 10 to 14 miles per hike. The third section of Canyonlands called the Maze is pretty much inaccessible and closed off by the rivers. Not that I didn't think the first two were inaccessible enough also. Smile.

Note that even the leaders would now rate most of the hikes as a number 5 (top strenuous). Scrambling and more scrambling. I'd bet they soften it the next time they offer this tour yet it was doable if I made it.

Hotels. What a difference a city makes. We left Monticello and that junkie little hotel and moved to Moab after two nights. We were in the best Monticello had to offer but that wasn't saying much.

Three of the five days had us in Moab at a Best Western Plus which was very nice in all ways. If the price was triple, which I doubt it was, it was worth it.

Food stuff. I probably enjoy our lunches as much as anything but restaurants are in big supply in Moab and we did well if you don't count the Mexican restaurant having bitten me. I enjoyed it last night and maybe far too much. The economy is doing well here as all the restaurants have a long wait list. The huge numbers of customers at the T-shirt shops appeared to be doing fine too.

The area is well known for rock/crack climbing and we saw some climbers hanging cliff side. Moab is probably the center of jeep tours and ATV outings. We see a lot of motor bikes and bicycles. It was also likely the creation of the red dirt T-shirts which I have seen in other states.

The old hiking/ biking company I used for years called Timberline are in Moab with a bicycle tour. I am so sorry that they screwed up the hiking side of the business and that our favorite leaders were somewhat forced to create their own company. For hiking, Timberline simply doesn't exist as it used to and now parksplushiking.com is the same as the old Timberline for hiking. So many troubles at the old Timberline.

By mid-afternoon I was able to leave my room and wandered the town and took in the national parks visitor's center. They always have an educational theatre. Plus a few things to purchase.

Our last day or sixth hiking day will take us to Delicate Arch which is said to be the park's most photographed icon. We get another petroglyph and we've also seen pictographs. Carving vs painting. One wall we saw was called newspaper wall for all the messages left. Or so they thought. Maybe there was simply graffiti in those Indian days too.

Delicate Arch photos taken by Nola. Chuck and I are buried in there under the arch with our arms in superman pose which we felt like after such a week.



The End

Saturday I'm heading home but too late to get anything done in preparation for our Tuesday departure to first a house/apartment in Avignon then a hike in the Provence and Luberon areas. Is it possible to turn around in two days? Only if the laundry dries fast.

What a Great Trip! And I'm Not Even There Yet

MAY 7, 2014 New York Times

Wish you were on vacation right now? Don't. Taking a vacation won't necessarily make you happier. But anticipating it will.

I first explored this idea while reporting an article about happiness in 2010, the same year that a psychological study about the connection between anticipation and happiness was published online in a journal called *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. The authors of the study, researchers from the Netherlands, interviewed more than 1,500 people, including 974 vacationers, and found that the vacationers felt most happy before their trips.



As anyone who has taken a vacation knows, they can be rife with complications: flight delays, illness, family squabbles. And when you get home you have to catch up on all the work you missed. That's not to suggest that vacations don't bring us joy, but social scientists have been saying for years that we get an extra happiness boost if we consciously delay any type of pleasure — be it booking a trip to Bali months in advance or eating that sliver of chocolate cake tomorrow instead of today. Doing this allows us to build up positive expectations, to relish how enjoyable the experience might be.

But what I really wanted to know was whether the pleasure derived from anticipation is something that just magically happens after you book an airline ticket. Or can it be consciously increased by, for example, talking with friends about the trip, making an iTunes playlist or learning the local language?

Turns out, there is an art to anticipation. Savoring, said Elizabeth Dunn, an associate professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia and a leading happiness researcher, is an active, not passive, process. "It's better to immerse yourself," she said. Reading novels and poetry, watching films and television programs, browsing fashion and design blogs that are either from or about the place you plan to visit encourages you to not only learn about your destination, but to dream, providing some concrete details for your mind to latch on to. It may sound counterintuitive, but this building up of positive expectations and excitement actually helps our minds smooth over any minor discrepancies if reality doesn't quite measure up to the fantasy. "We're less likely to be bothered by these little holes if we build up our expectations ahead of time," Professor Dunn said. "So go ahead and assume it's going to be wonderful."

This advice is problematic only if there is a chasm between expectations and reality. But even then, anticipation is still important — because that's the part of the vacation that you were free to see however you wanted. Take, for example, the trip Professor Dunn took to Oahu, Hawaii. She spent plenty of time anticipating how wonderful it would be, which was a good thing because when she was at long last in Oahu she was attacked by a 10-foot tiger shark. The shark bit her leg to the bone but not into the bone, leaving her with scars though no physical impairments. It was, to state the obvious, her worst vacation ever. Yet Professor Dunn nonetheless pointed out that, "At least looking forward to it was still great." Lesson: even if your vacation is terrible, nothing can take away the enjoyment you felt when you were simply fantasizing about it.

Another advantage to delving into relevant books and photos before a trip is that it provides novelty as an antidote to everyday routines. Not only do we build anticipation for the trip, but we also learn something new. We humans adapt quickly to our circumstances, but that also means we get bored easily too. Counteracting

adaptation increases happiness, according to research by scholars including Sonja Lyubomirsky, a psychology professor at the University of California, Riverside.

Before a recent [trip to Paris](#) I watched classic films by Albert Lamorisse, Jean-Luc Godard and Éric Rohmer — but also hours of [France 24](#), the television news channel, and online videos like the splendid [tutorial](#) from Cosmopolitan France that demonstrates 25 ways to tie a scarf. There was the 2012 French television series “Les Revenants” (“The Returned”) that won an International Emmy award for best drama; the freewheeling “[Absolutely Fabulous](#)” episode (season 4) set in Paris; and documentaries including “[Mademoiselle C.](#),” about Carine Roitfeld, the former editor in chief of French Vogue, and “[Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel.](#),” about the bon vivant fashion editor and special consultant to the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute. Coincidentally, Professor Dunn co-writes in her latest book, “Happy Money,” that the French verb — *se réjouir* — is used to “capture the experience of deriving pleasure in the present from anticipating the future.”

For my trip, I re-read French history, philosophy, fiction and poetry while also combing through fashion, food and technology blogs like [Paris by Mouth](#) and [Rude Baguette](#). Consider creating music playlists as well. Make one called “Rome,” “Vegas,” or wherever you’re headed, and add songs that conjure those cities. Many nights before my trip I went to bed listening to an eclectic mix that flitted from Charles Trenet to MC Solaar to the score of an opera I planned to see in Paris. (Incidentally, Professor Dunn said you’ll be happier if you wait a few days before listening to your downloads because even if you don’t like what you bought, you’ll still enjoy the time when you thought you might.) If you are visiting a foreign country, use your commute to listen to language podcasts or recordings, or try a foreign language smartphone app.

Agreed-it's more fun to plan a trip (and book air and accommodations, which can be stressful) early. Then one has time to prepare for it by...

I sort of didn't read this too carefully, either. I'm going someplace this fall and what I like about traveling is I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE MY...

This is a great read. I'm going somewhere in the Fall and I'm sort of looking forward to it (both). The anticipation is definitely a part...

To store and organize any articles and images that catch your eye while you surf the web you’ll probably want to use a tool like [Dropbox](#) or [Pocket](#), which is what I’m using right now. With the click of the button I installed on my browser, I can save whatever I find online — articles, videos, images — to a minimalist interface that stores my digital clippings, allowing me to read them later, without an Internet connection. To keep track of inspiring design and fashion photos, Pinterest is helpful (examples from some French fashion blogs are on my Style board at [Pinterest.com/StephRosenbloom](#)). And if you want to count the minutes until your trip, you can download an app like [Vacation Countdown Free](#).

Among the most effective methods for increasing happiness is talking with friends about your coming travels. As happiness scholars attest, being social is a fundamental way to feel happier. I asked friends who lived in, or regularly traveled to, Paris about the places that had meaning for them — so not only did I build a private guidebook with chapters that I named for each friend, but I had long meals and coffees with people at home who are important to me. And, as it happens, simply chatting about travel can boost happiness. “People like each other better when they talk about experiential purchases,” Professor Dunn said, as opposed to talking about material things.

But what about the joy of reminiscing? Doesn’t that also create happiness? Researchers say yes, but anticipating the future delivers more happiness than reflecting on the past. One study, by Leaf Van Boven of the University of Colorado at Boulder and Laurence Ashworth of Queen’s University published in *The Journal of Experimental Psychology* in 2007, found that students felt happier while anticipating a vacation than while reminiscing about the vacation.

Certainly I enjoy reflecting on my time in Paris. But was my pre-trip immersion — books, blogs, movies, conversations — even more pleasurable than looking back over my shoulder?

Oui.

Itinerary

Sat May 3

9:05am Depart Newark EWR via UA#1711
11:54am Arrive Houston IAH Bush for plane change

12:45pm Depart Houston IAH Bush via UA#294
3:02pm Arrive Salt Lake City SLC

There is a fail safe 8:18pm arrival to SLC flight as back up

Hotel has airport shuttle

Hotel Hampton Inn & Suites SLC Airport – 1 night
307 North Admiral Byrd Road, Salt Lake City UT 84116 Tele: 801 530 0088

Sun May 4 – Day 1

8:00am Start tour meeting in hotel lobby

Summary from www.ParksPlusHiking.com - Boasting five national parks and seven national monuments, Utah is a hiker's paradise! In our inaugural season, we'll visit the state twice during our Bryce/Zion Canyon National Park Hike and this trip-- Canyonlands/Arches National Park Hike. In Canyonlands, we explore both the Needles and Island in the Sky Districts, hiking in a wilderness of canyons, buttes, and other rock wonders carved by the Colorado River and its tributaries. In Arches, we see how many namesake formations we can count amidst the splendor of the high desert terrain. The colors will amaze you, the views will astound you, and the experience will leave you wanting more.

Courthouse Wash - Distance: 3 mi - Difficulty: 2

Lodging: Inn at the Canyons – 1st of 2 nights
533 N Main St, Monticello, UT 84535 Tele: (435) 587-2458

Following our departure from Salt Lake City, we make our way south into Utah's fantastic canyon country. Stopping for a warm-up hike on the way, we'll explore lovely cottonwood-filled Courthouse Wash along the southwest boundary of Arches National Park. After hiking, we continue south to Monticello, our home for the next two nights.

Mon May 5 - Day 2

Chesler Park Loop - Distance: 11 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Inn at the Canyons – 2nd night of 2 nights

The Needles District of Canyonlands National Park is our destination, specifically Chesler Park. Here we spend the day amongst sandstone spires (a/k/a "needles") and stretches of trail entirely on stone

(a/k/a “slickrock”). We also hike for nearly a mile along the “Joint,” a long crack in the sandstone where tight fits between the rocks come along with welcome relief from the desert sun.

Tue May 6 - Day 3

Confluence Overlook - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 4 but I call it a 5

Lodging: Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn – 1st night of 3 nights
16 S Main St, Moab, UT 84532 Tele: (435) 259-2300

We're back to the Needles District to visit the source of the sandstone wonders all around us—the mighty Colorado River. Our best view of the river is actually at the turnaround-point of our ten-mile hike at the aptly named Confluence Overlook. Here we'll pause for lunch as we gaze down hundreds of feet to the famed junction of the Colorado and Green Rivers. After retracing our steps to the trailhead, we'll make our way to Moab for the final three nights of the tour.

Wed May 7 - Day 4

Island In The Sky - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn – 2nd night of 3 nights

One last visit to Canyonlands as we explore the Island in the Sky District on several short scenic trails. We'll admire panoramic views at Grandview Point, make the easy walk out to picturesque Mesa Arch and the White Rim overlook, and hike the Neck Springs trail where cattle ranchers used just one 40' section of fence—across the “neck” —to control 43 square miles of mesa/rangeland.

Thu May 8 - Day 5

Devils Garden, The Windows - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4 (I missed this day.)

Lodging: Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn – 3rd night of 3 nights

The heart of Arches National Park is our destination as we hike the longest and possibly most scenic trail in the park, the Devils Garden Primitive Loop. To name just a few, we will see Tunnel, Navajo, and Double O Arch. At 306', we will also see perhaps the longest stone span in the world, Landscape Arch. Want more? We do! So, we'll conclude this day of hiking with the short Windows Loop trail.

Fri May 9 - Day 6

Delicate Arch - Distance: 3 mi - Difficulty: 3 (I call it a 2)

For our final day in Utah's geologic heartland, we visit Arches one more time and make the three-mile pilgrimage to the park's most photographed icon, Delicate Arch. On our way there, we'll divert slightly to check out a Ute petroglyph panel. Along the trail we will also stay alert for collared lizard sightings; these large reptiles can run on their two hind feet when pursuing prey. After our hike, we return to Moab for lunch then make the drive back to Salt Lake City to say our goodbyes.

Fri May 9

Eve End of tour

Hotel Hampton Inn & Suites SLC Airport – 1 night
307 North Admiral Byrd Road, Salt Lake City UT 84116 Tele: 801 530 0088

Sat May 10

10:16am Depart Salt Lake City SLC via UA#5506

2:20pm Arrive Chicago ORD O'Hare for plane change

4:31pm Depart Chicago ORD O'Hare via UA#1582

7:46pm Arrive Newark EWR