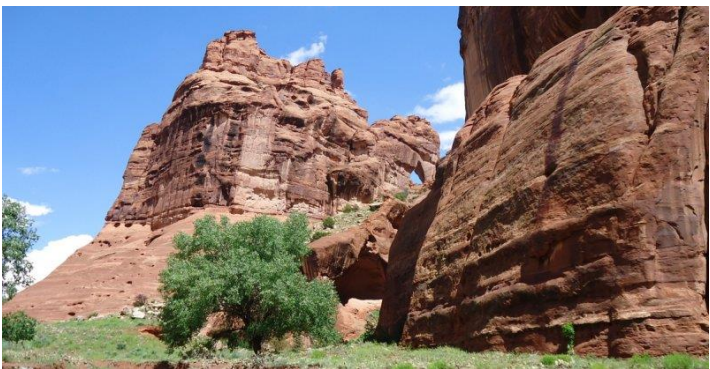




New Mexico: Chaco and DeChelly Canyons and Santa Fe Trip Notes
April 15-26, 2016

Trip Notes are getting shorter and shorter! The itinerary tells much of the story and beyond that, well, there's simply another trip to plan and another trip to enjoy and less and less time to write. And less and less folks who read.



Pictures above from www.ParksPlusHiking.com Ancient Wonders tour.

Highlights

- Dinner Friday night in Albuquerque with the very special Mrs. Gerrie (who is married to Mr. Jerry – another favorite) from New York and many hikes together. She had been on the previous week's New Mexico hike with her friend Margaret. (I also enjoyed hearing of their recent Patagonia trek.)
- The reason for this hike was to see these two famous canyons that are equally famous for being remote and hard to get to. Little did we know that rainfall would cause one of the canyons to be even tougher to get to (four hour drive instead of two hour drive and a lot of it over dirt roads.)
- Lodges on Indian Reservations are known to be simple. This one was slightly better and certainly much better than Havasu at the Grand Canyon.
- Chaco has amazing buildings. Not quite like the Incas but pretty impressive.



- DeChelly required scrambling down a few hundred feet at the start, up about 1200 feet at the end, and hiking across the bottom of the canyon, wading through 15-18 streams, and a total of about 14 miles. It also necessitated hiring an Indian guide. It was worth it.
- Santa Fe add-on trip was my third time there and always a delight and remembrance that it's all art and history. The oldest established American town in the U.S. Many 'oldest' treasures. Maybe it was proper that the visit was in honor of Dana's 40th birthday. That's OLD for some, YOUNG for some.
- I've (mostly) given up a camera but have a few iPhone shots to add here.



Overlooking Chaco Canyon. You know it from Kit Carson stories.



That's a narrow slot we climbed up into and went through before coming to our panorama trail where we could look down on the extensive building sites of this ex-market place. Some of the dwellings had amazing stonework.



I guess you figured out that these hikes are no mere stroll in the park? That print was larger than any of our shoes and confirmed by the Indian guide to be a new bear footprint. On our way into the canyon after the climb down.



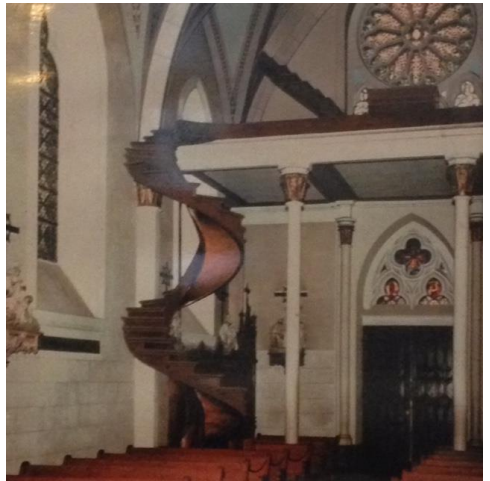
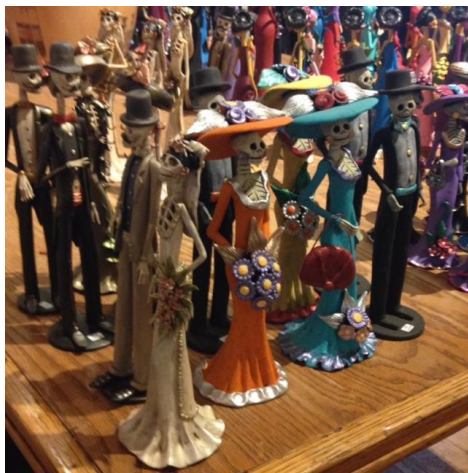
A short break half way up the canyon wall to get out. Here are a couple samples of the trail.



Finally to the top with the breathtaking view from the opposite side, 14 miles away, from where we started. Another day we hiked down into another portion of the canyon to see "The White House."



An old trading post, a national park, where the buildings and tradespersons remain, before going onto Gallup and a famous old hotel where we ate where the celebrities once ate. It was an eclectic town and an equally eclectic hotel lobby.



I would return to Santa Fe and even do over some of our historical walks and trolley tours. Here is inside the Casa Sera, some Day of the Dead statuary, and a picture-of-a-picture showing the mystical Loretta Chapel stairway before the banisters were added. It remains a mystery how or who did the building of the stairs which defy rules of building.



This is land of Georgia O'Keeffe. I defy you to convince me that her work wasn't sensual/sexual in nature. We were in her museum and also had a guided tour and lecture of her research center. The outside statuary is by her too, but the bronzes were out on Canyon Road.



One of the Santa Fe attractions is eating and the Enchilada dish in Casa Sera's courtyard was one of my favorite dishes, but inside the oldest hotel's courtyard for a meal was a favorite location. Chocolate shops abound. Nola and Dana were especially taken by the chocolate drinks.

But all good things come to an end. For now. It's off to another adventure to a far-away but still Spanish flair of a place: hiking from Granada to Seville.

Itinerary

Fri Apr 15

11:39am Depart Newark EWR via UA#936
2:36pm Arrive Houston IAH for plane change

5:42pm Depart Houston IAH via UA#786
7:00pm Arrive Albuquerque ABQ

Hotel Best Western Plus Rio Grande Inn – 2 nights
1015 Rio Grande Boulevard NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104 Tele 505 843 9500

Sat Apr 16

Host Hotel La Quinta Albuquerque Airport at 2116 Yale Blvd. SE as the pre/post-tour hotel
Tele: 505 243 5500

Sun Apr 17 – Day 1 of hike

8:45am Pick up at airport
9:00am Start hike – shuttle to airport unless Steve offers at last minute to pick up

Overview by www.ParksPlusHiking.com for Trail of the Ancients - In this brand new and very special "Plus" tour, we'll journey into the geologic and human past of a remote area of the American Southwest. We'll hike on trails used by the Navajo and Ancestral Puebloan people and explore ruins in far out, incredibly scenic Chaco Canyon and Canyon de Chelly ("da-shay"). We'll also visit a fascinating geologic area known as El Malpais ("L ma-pie") National Monument where ancient lava flows meet surrealistic sandstone bluffs and view ancient Indian artwork at Petroglyphs National Monument.

Rinconada Canyon/Volcanoes Loop - Distance: 5 mi - Difficulty: 2

We begin our journey back to the time of ancients in Petroglyph National Monument, located near the middle of the Rio Grande Rift Valley in Albuquerque. We'll search for petroglyphs, designs and symbols pecked into the rock, as we hike into Rinconada Canyon, watching for large jackrabbits as they dart through the brush. Later we'll explore JA, Black, and Vulcan volcanoes--classic and rare examples of a fissure eruption--before heading to Grants, New Mexico for the night.

Hotel Holiday Inn Express & Suites – 1st of 2 nights
1512 East Santa Fe Avenue, Grants, NM 87020 Tele: 505 287 9252
Yes coffee, WiFi, mini refrig and microwave

Mon Apr 18 - Day 2 of hike

Penasco Blanco/Pueblo Alto Trails - Distance: 9 mi - Difficulty: 4

Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, was home to Ancestral Puebloan people between 850-1250 A.D. During our visit to this very remote site, more commonly referred to as simply "Chaco Canyon," we'll spend the day exploring various ruins such as the famous Pueblo Bonito, Chetro Ketl, and Pueblo del Arroyo. We also follow the footsteps of the Chacoan people and climb to fantastic views of the canyon from the mesa above and explore the outlying Pueblo Alto complex. History comes to life in a remarkable place.

Hotel Holiday Inn Express – 2nd of 2 nights

Tue Apr 19 - Day 3 of hike

Narrows Rim Trail - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 3

Explore New Mexico's geologic past as we head to El Malpais National Monument. (El Malpais is Spanish for "the bad lands.") Here we hike a pinyon-covered bluff high above a narrow lava-filled valley--hence the name "Rim Narrows" trail. Besides terrific views along the way, our destination is an overlook of Ventana Arch, an opening in the sandstone cliff spanning 135', one of New Mexico's largest arches. After our hike, we shuttle into Arizona and our home for the next two nights--Sacred Canyon Lodge at beautiful Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

Hotel Thunderbird Lodge, previously known as Sacred Canyon Lodge – 1st of 2 nights
At Canyon de Chelly National Monument
Rural Route 7, Chinle, AZ, 86503 Tele: 928 674 5841
Yes coffee maker, free WiFi, refrigerator and microwave
<http://www.thunderbirdlodge.com/>

From the new owners site: *Yá'át'ééh, we are privileged to welcome you to a sacred place for our people, the Diné. As Navajo we believe that our people journeyed through three worlds in various forms before emerging from Mother Earth into this world, the Sparkling World. Thunderbird Lodge is operated by the Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise, an Enterprise of the Navajo Nation. The lodge sits on the site of a trading post built in 1896, and its cafeteria-style restaurant is located in the trading post's original building. The all-day cafeteria serves Native American dishes as well as continental cuisine. Adorning the walls of the dining room are excellent examples of Navajo Rugs and artwork available for purchase. In the center of the dining area is a vault-like room, that at one time served as a jail for the trading post.*

From the national park site: *Thunderbird Lodge is the only hotel inside Canyon de Chelly. The Thunderbird Lodge offers 73 rooms with full bathrooms, rustic furniture, Navajo paintings and cable television. One of the main attractions to Canyon de Chelly are the cave dwellings built by ancient Pueblos. These are reflected in Thunderbird Lodge's pink adobe construction.*

Thunderbird Lodge also offers guided Jeep Tours. Thunderbird Lodge is the only authorized provider of guided tours in Canyon de Chelly. When you take a guided Jeep Tour you get to see more than the sights. The Navajo guide can and will tell you the back story to all the places of interest along the way, as well impress the spiritual nature of the area. Guided Jeep Tours are given in ½ day and full day blocks, depending on how much time you want to spend touring.

Since Navajo still live on and work this land you will be privileged to see modern farms and communities along side the ancient Anasazi sites. The canyon runs 26 mile canyon is made of red rock with cliffs stretching 1,000 feet up. The anasazi built homes in the crevices of this cliffs that still stand today, though many of these dwellings have been reinforced to preserve them for future generations, it speaks to this ancient people ability to make for themselves sturdy, durable living spaces, complete with all necessities. Let yourself be amazed by the preserved dwelling, pottery, and art of the Anasazi, the ancient ancestors of the Pueblo, Hopi and Navajo

Wed Apr 20 - Day 4 of hike

Bat Canyon to Sliding Sands - Distance: 12 mi - Difficulty: 5

Be prepared for a scenic and adventurous hike as we descend this day into incredible Canyon de Chelly. Our exclusive Native American guide will escort us through the traditional home of the Navajo, where we will view the reds and oranges of spectacular rock formations accompanied by their native stories. We'll also marvel at ancient ruins tucked into the cliffs and hear the call of hawks and ravens echo through the canyon. This will be a very special day!

Hotel Sacred Canyon Lodge – 2nd of 2 nights

Thu Apr 21 - Day 5 of hike

White House Ruins - Distance: 3 mi - Difficulty: 2

Today we descend for a final time into the heart of Canyon de Chelly on a well-established trail to view up close the well-known White House Ruin, which the Ancestral Puebloans built about a thousand years ago. After our hike, we will shuttle to Gallup for lunch at an authentic "Old-West" landmark, then on to Albuquerque where our tour concludes

4:00pm End Time

5:00pm Pick up Thrifty rental car at Albuquerque airport and drive to Santa Fe

Hotel Inn of the Governors – 2 rooms for 4 nights each
101 West Alameda, Santa Fe, NM 87501 Tele: 800-234-4534 - 505-982-4333
reservations@innofthegovernors www.innofthegovernors.com

Inn of the Governors is located in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico. Our guests enjoy the easy stroll to nearby museums, galleries, restaurants, shops, and the Historic Santa Fe Plaza. You will see Santa Fe's rich tapestry of history and culture which give it a flavor unlike any other city. From the myriad of cultural influences in our city thriving with world class opera, subtle, yet striking architecture, world renowned artists, copious outdoor activities, and an overall sense of charm that will certainly surprise anyone who has not visited before. In addition, the clear blue skies, lamp-like stars, and picture perfect sunsets will most assuredly strike a chord.

NOTE that Dana returning home on Sunday around noon. Save room for Nola for Sunday night.

Mon Apr 25

Drive to Albuquerque

5:00pm Turn in rental car and take shuttle to hotel

Hotel Fairfield Inn and Suites Albuquerque Airport – 1 night – form in fiile
2300 Centre Avenue SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 Tele 505 247 1621

Tue Apr 26

8:39am Depart Albuquerque ABQ via UA #216

11:47am Arrive Houston IAH for plane change

1:21pm Depart Houston IAH via UA#1753

6:00pm Arrive Newark EWR

Packing

Nola suggests extra shoes for muddy Canyon de Chelly