

Try Out West for Vacation 2

It's time to continue our excursion through a small portion of the western part of our country through photos I took on a trip with my family. The first part of the trip is documented in an article with this same name, only a number 1 after it...heehee. For those that have been following along, I'll just pick up where I left off.

Jackson Hole, Wyoming: Day 7



After visiting Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park, we headed south to Jackson Hole. This is a lovely area surrounding Grand Teton National Park. We stayed in a lodge on the park property called Jackson Lake Lodge and we loved it! This picture shows the actual lodge where the shops and dining are located.



And you know me, the décor and the food was just as much a part of the trip as the scenery! The inside of main dining room was filled with western style furnishings, (See the chairs out of wood branches!) western murals and warm western colors.



No matter where I go, I order a caprese salad if it's available. (Check out the Italy articles and you'll see what I mean!) This one was made from organic tomatoes in three different colors. It was delicious!!



This photo I'm throwing in for the kids, but I enjoyed the moose butter just as much as they did!

Now on to the scenery! The view from the lodge was simply incredible. And this was the same view we had from our room. Thank goodness because the way our building looked when we drove up sent me into a bit of depression. However....



...even though the outside of the building was sort of old and weary, once we got inside and the kids had all their stuff strewn all over the room, it began to feel like home.



This lodge didn't have TV's in the room and it forced us all to play games together and we had a fantastic time. Not to mention, we could go out onto our own little balcony and just stare, because the view was all you needed.

Grand Tetons/Jackson Hole: Day 8

The next day we took a trip outside of our lodge to drive through Grand Teton National Park. The views were as pretty as a picture as you can see. We saw wildlife along the way and visited another lodge in the park called Jenny Lake Lodge.



This particular lodge was very small and intimate. The lobby was tiny and very quiet which made us feel a bit out of place with the kids. We noticed on the menus that the dinners were gourmet quality and we were sure more formal dress would be required. A lovely place for adults...if you know what I mean. Maybe next trip!

As we continued along going south on our tour for the day we came across a tiny chapel that I believe must be one of the most photographed places around. Because of its location, it has one of the most awe inspiring views as you are facing the altar.





We also managed to make our way into the town of Jackson Hole. This is a fun place for the kids because they can only take so much nature, so Jackson Hole supplies the shopping! It's just a couple of blocks of really great stores and restaurants. You could spend a lot more time there than we did, but we got in enough shopping to keep my daughter happy and had enough time to get our picture taken on the square at one of the antler arches.

You know, believe it or not, that same day we went on a chuck wagon barbecue for dinner, out through the wilds. No wonder my family thought I was trying to kill them now that I see everything we fit into a day!



My son and I traveled out to the barbecue site riding on this wagon. The guide was very informative and mentioned that bears had been seen there that week and that we should keep our eyes sharp looking for them. That really kept Cameron on his toes!



Bruce and Brittany decided to go by horseback because they are both horse lovers. Unfortunately, horses pretty much hate me. I've been thrown, stomped on and rolled off horses in the past so the wagon was the transportation of choice for me!



Grand Junction, Colorado: Day 9



This was not a favorite day for my kids because we spent the entire day in the car. It took us over 12 hours to drive from Jackson Hole, Wyoming to Grand Junction, Colorado. The scenery was as you are seeing in this picture but what stands out for me on this trip was the little prairie dogs. At least I think that is what they were. Anyway, there were hundreds of them living in little holes by the road and those darn things had a death wish. They would wait by the side of the road until we approached and then they would try to beat us across the street. I'm telling you, I screamed the whole way! I finally had to put my daughter in the front seat, (she just sleeps anyway) and hide myself in the back seat. I couldn't take it...

Silverton-Durango, Colorado: Day 10

As much as I disliked the day before, I adored day 10. We drove down to Silverton, Colorado through Ouray and it was gorgeous. I will say the driving was a bit treacherous because you were driving along the cliff edges, but I squinched up and leaned on my husband when we went around the corners! We arrived in Silverton in time to catch the Durango-Silverton train that took us from Silverton to Durango. It was a four hour train ride and it was fabulous. If there is anything I would highly recommend; it was this train ride.



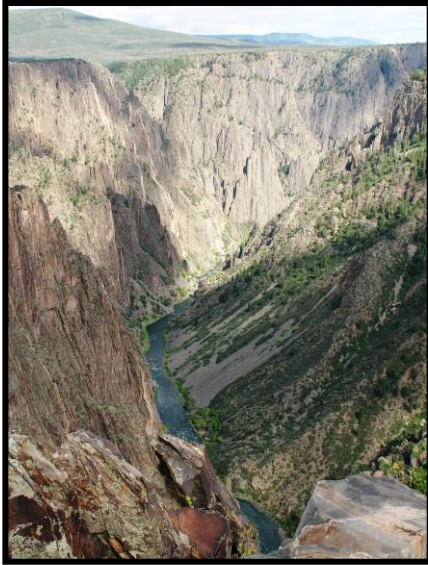
It was both thrilling as you swerved along the sheer cliffs and beautiful as you were able to take in the scenery. I took this photo from the train so you see how long it was. I was yet to go around the curve that was on the sheerest point of the cliff. I couldn't believe the train wasn't going to fall right off the edge. It was so scary I couldn't lean over the rail to look straight down.



Also, we sat in an open air car, outside instead of inside the heated cars. I loved being one with nature, but we were glad to have our winter coats, hoodies and extra blankets that we bought for the ride! (Don't laugh at my hair...train travel doesn't allow for a good hair day!) The indoor cars offered hot chocolate and treats, so it made being outside even more fun.

There is going to be a small hole right here in my travel log since I can't find any pictures of Durango. It was a quaint little town with lots of shops and restaurants. Brittany bought a pair of cowboy boots there and that was the highlight of our stay in Durango. We were only there for the evening and overnight and then we took the train back the next morning.

Vail, Colorado: Day 11



So the trip back to Silverton was as wonderful as the trip to Durango. We arrived back in Silverton around 2pm and headed toward our destination for the day, Vail, Colorado. Along the way we passed Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. No, I never heard of it either, but we had time so we rode into it and parked to take a peak over the edge into the canyon. I have never seen such a deep, narrow canyon. In fact, I read that it is only 40 feet across at its narrowest point! Again, like on the train, it was frightening to look over the edge. My husband and I walked out along the paths to the edge and we became quite freaked out at being along such a sheer cliff that it became almost too much to do to actually take a step further. A most interesting phenomenon!

The rest of the day was spent getting to Vail. We arrived there for a late dinner and pretty much right to bed!

Vail, Colorado: Day 12

From our hotel we were able to hop a bus into the ski area at Vail. Of course, it was June so there wasn't any skiing going on but there was still plenty to see and do. The area is full of shops, restaurants and lovely walking paths to spend a very nice day.





Close to the ski area is the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. It is basically one of the prettiest parks you'll see that includes a circular walking path, more flowers than you can name and water features.



There is a tiny museum and gift shop to help support the care of the garden.

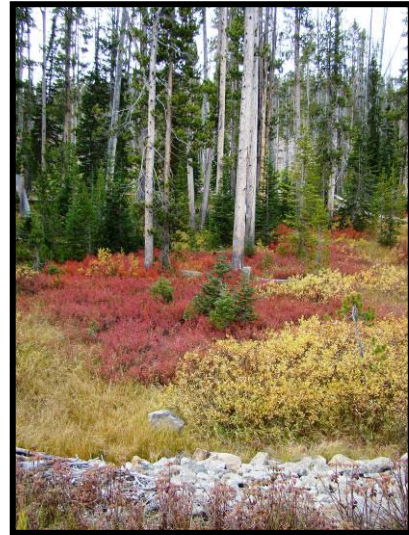


There were also playgrounds and some interesting rock sculptures meant for everyone to enjoy; both kids and the kid at heart!

Tampa, Florida: Day 13

All good things must come to an end, and by this time we were all pretty happy that it was time to go home. We had travelled about 1,200 miles by plane, about 1,500 miles by car, 50 miles by train, and we were ready for that last 1,200 miles by plane back home!

Since that trip, both kids have asked to go back and I'm sure we will. My husband and I did return last fall and took our time, visiting only Yellowstone and Jackson Hole. We just made it to Yellowstone before many of the roads were closing for the winter. The park looked very different in October than it did in June. It was an entirely different visit and I'll bet that holds true for spring and winter as well.



The two of us stayed in the same room we had when we were here with the kids at Jackson Lake Lodge. The only differences were the room being neater and the trees were more colorful!

When we moved on to Teton Village, we stayed at the Snake River Lodge and Spa. I loved this spot. ! It snowed while we were there and we Floridians were thrilled that there was a fireplace in our room. It was going for our entire stay!



This particular trip without the kids was a short one. We Left on a Friday morning and we were back home Wednesday afternoon. However, in such a short time we had some wonderful adventures, saw some amazing sights and ate like kings. It was wonderful.

I have been very lucky to be able to enjoy the beauty and majesty of this lovely portion of our country and I wish everyone could see it through their own eyes. The photos are but a snapshot of the panoramic view in real life. If you can take the time to visit the west, I promise you won't regret a single minute of the time you spend there.

Shari



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