

Insight Enchanted Canyonland and Vegas Tour 16/09/2016-27/09/2016

Were off, picked up on time from home in a chauffeured driven car arranged by Insight, we arrived at Heathrow in good time to enjoy the lounge.

Arrival at Phoenix and following immigration the super shuttle was there within ten minutes to take us to The Westin Kierland Resort and Spa , we opted to arrive a day earlier than the tour start date otherwise the coach would have collected us from the Airport, first impressions of The Westin Kierland Resort and Spa was class and could see why it was rated 5 star, we were greeted by the porter and speedily checked in, the receptionist acknowledged we were with the Insight group who were arriving the next day.

The breakfast was outstanding with a full range of cuisine including freshly baked pastries. After enjoying a morning by the pool and a relaxing float around the lazy river we visited the shopping outlet adjacent to the Hotel, that evening we met the group and the tour Manager AnandNachtajler for a light informal dinner, introductions were made the full itinerary was discussed.

Following breakfast we started our onward journey to the Grand Canyon via Sedona, the luxury coach was spacious and very comfortable affording plenty of leg room, included on board was wifi and emergency toilets.

During the trip up the mountains at various heights above sea level the habitat was covered in the famous Saguaro and Prickly Pear Cacti, further up we encountered the Ponderosa Pine trees.

Arriving in Sedona for lunch, there were plenty of eating houses which catered for all, we opted for a frozen banana dipped in chocolate covered in crushed nuts, amongst the many very interesting gift and souvenir shops were rock shops with many examples of the locally mined rocks including Obsidian black rock used for arrow heads.

Following a journey though Oak Creek Canyon and the Grand Canyon National Park we arrived at The Grand Canyon South Rim and was greeted with an awesome view overlooking the Canyon Walls, we met Tim the local guide who held a talk with the group on the history and evolution of the Grand Canyon, this guy was an expert in his field of geology and there was nothing he didn't know about rock formations showing examples of types of rock, Tim actually lived on the National Park.

After taking in the views we were checked in to the Lodge, no queuing as the keys were handed out on the coach, the lodge was comfortable, a private hosted dinner was followed by a walk to capture Sunset over the Grand Canyon. The next morning we rose early to witness sunrise on the Canyon walls followed by breakfast in the local food hall.

Onward journey to Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell, stopping over for Lunch at the Cameron Trading Posts which featured local gifts, arts and crafts. Lunch was a traditional Taco this filled the plate and was enough for two. Moving on through the painted desert we witnessed various rock formations known as Mesas and Buttes before arriving at the Dam. Once at the Dam the visitors centre was informative with a cinema showing how the Dam was built.

At lake Powell we were speedily checked in to our rooms, again the reception greeted the coach and handed all the room keys over, these were issued in turn as we disembarked the coach, the rooms were quality surprisingly being animal friendly, we witnessed several dogs staying in the hotel with their owners. A cruise around the lake was included lasting about 1 hour which took us to Antelope Canyon gradually narrowing to a point. There were two restaurants with plenty of choice with a selection of local beers.

Whilst at Lake Powell there was an excursion to Monument Valley and Navajo Tribal Park Guided Tour witnessing the famous mountain ridges seen in many films and TV programmes, following this Lunch was at restaurant adjacent to John Waynes Cabin seen in the movie She Wore A Yellow Ribbon, back to Lake Powell for an included three course meal in the main restaurant.

There was an option to either fly over the Grand Canyon or float down the Colorado River but we chose to stay at leisure in Lake Powell, as we have already experienced these. Travelling on to Bryce Canyon National Park stopping at Kanab for lunch there was more local arts and crafts.

At Bryce Canyon we were unfortunate with the weather as a storm hit and were unable to get a clear view of the Canyon but did witness the Hoodoos and the famous salt and pepper monoliths. Again check in was straightforward and keys handed out on the coach The lodge was very cosy and you felt like you were in the wild away from everything, the evening meal was held in the Main Lodge and food was plentiful, as many courses as you could eat and each course was big enough for two, I have never seen such a large slice of chocolate Brownie, the lodge was run and owned by Mormons and alcohol could only be served with the meal, all beers were low in alcohol and around 2.8%.

After a comfortable night in the lodge we rejoined the coach for our onward journey to Vegas Via Zion National Park, due to the storm it the gullies and rivers were running with silt and sand from the mountains, a spectacular sight and arriving at Zion we were told that many waterfalls had developed due to the rain, this does not happen often and we were quite fortunate. The spectacular views and scenery through the National Park was amazing and was probably the best experience, this was complemented by a shuttle bus laid on for our group with live commentary pointing out wildlife and many famous mountain ridges and cliff faces that have appeared in films for example The Eiger Sanction starring Clint Eastwood, the waterfalls created by the storm the night before were spectacular.

Arriving in Vegas we felt a little bewildered after the quite serene locations we had experience at the previous locations, but soon settling in the hotel was amazing, located right at the heart of the strip, the optional tour to Fremont Street was spectacular and the tour manager pointed out all the highlights including the Hand of Faith Golden Nuggett, the Million Dollars on the table and the famous light show.

Following this tour it was goodbye to the group but we enjoyed another three days in Vegas, we booked a show and visited the shopping malls, I always remember what I was told and that is what goes on in Vegas Stays in Vegas.

I would like to compliment the Tour manager AnandNachtajlerforhis knowledge, experience, punctuality, at times humorous gestures and organisation of a group, it was a great experience and one enjoyed by us.

I would also like to compliment the coach driver on her safe driving, punctuality, timely arrival at all destinations and for the cleanliness and comfort of the coach.

Having travelled with various different coach tour companies, I must say the whole experience with Insight was far superior.