

Colorado National Monument and Black Canyon of the Gunnison May 29 – June 4, 2024

Wednesday, May 29 – Grand Junction

Up early and drive to the airport. Everything goes well including a smooth ride through the construction on I-275. Get a bagel for breakfast at the airport. Fly to Denver getting in in plenty of time to make our connection. Sandwich and chips for lunch. Then an hour flight to Grand Junction. Get luggage and rent car. Can't find the car at first and have to press the beeper to find it.

Go to the Museum of the West. Many very nice pueblo pottery pieces. They also have some Hohokam pieces including a very large grey bowl (a yard across and 18" high). Next came their guns: rifles, pistols, and small handguns. At the end was a stagecoach.

Go up in the tower and view the surrounding area.

Go to the B&B. Very nice hostess. She suggests a wine cellar and Mexican restaurant for dinner. We enjoyed the wine bar. I had chili rellanos that were good. Jan got tamales, which were too bready.

Back to the B&B and watch television.

Thursday, May 30 – Colorado National Monument Day

Drive up to the visitor's center in Colorado National Monument (right across the valley from Grand Junction) up a very windy road, which upsets Jan's stomach. Walk from the visitor's center to Window Rock via the Canyon Edge Trail (1.5 mi). Drive along Rim Rock Drive (a CCC constructed road) stopping at many of the overlooks. Beautiful strata on the cliffs and hoodoos.

Monument road goes directly into Grand Junction. We go back to the B&B and then to Applebee's for dinner.

Friday, May 31

Enjoy French toast for breakfast. Pack up and head for the monument again. Go to Devil's Kitchen Trail just inside the entrance of the Monument before you drive up the cliff. Hike the Devil's Kitchen Trail. Enjoy going up the canyon. The trail gets too steep near the end. Don't get to the kitchen. Turn around and head back to the car (1.8 mi). Have lunch in the picnic shelter. Head to Montrose and check into the motel. Have dinner in the barbeque place just down the street.

Saturday, June 1

Motel has a very meager breakfast, just barely sustainable. Go to a bagel shop/bakery to get sandwiches for lunch. Then head to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (around here know as just the Black Canyon). Park is 15 minutes from our motel. Get into park with our elder pass. There is road construction and one-way traffic on part of the road. After a short wait, it is our turn. Construction ends at the visitor's center. Try to go in, but there is no parking. Go on to Pulpit Rock overlook. Then stop as Cross Fissures and Rock Point overlooks. Go back to Pulpit Rock for a potty break and the ranger's talk (not very informative). Drive to the other end of the road (High Point) and have lunch. After lunch, start down the Warner Point Trail. It is too rugged for these old bodies. Turn around after .35 mi (out of .8 mi). Drive back to the Visitor's Center and find a parking place this time. Go in, get our brochure stamped, and look around the gift shop. The center has a board with pictures of all the flowers that were out. Take pictures of it so that we can identify them in our pictures later. Walk out to Gunnison Point from the Visitor's Center. The canyon is so steep and so craggy that you can never see much of the river. What you can see is very turbulent. People supposedly run it, but, probably only experts. There is no place at the edge of the cliffs to get out if you flip. Head to the motel

to clean up. Have a good diner at Mi Mexico, again just up the street. Head back to the room and watch television until bed.

Sunday, June 2

Start the day with church. Randy Finds a Dunkin' Donuts right down the street and has coffee and a donut. After church, have breakfast at Stravin' Arvin's right around the corner from church. Huge breakfast. Return to room and change clothes. Go to Montrose Botanical Gardens and walk around for about an hour. Back to the room for a nap. Watch the news and have leftovers from last night for dinner. Go to the store and get some Pepto for Jan.

Monday, June 3

Go to a delightful bagel shop in central Montrose and have a bagel and cream cheese for breakfast. Then head for Black Canyon again to view the overlooks we missed. The road into the park is still single lane but they are working on it this time. Get through quite quickly. First stop is Devil's Lookout and then Chasm View. Next stop was Painted Wall View. Beautiful striations in the wall. Next on to Cedar Point. Even better view of the striated wall from here. Skip the next viewpoint and go on to Sunset View. Have lunch here and get a long view of the river exiting the park but still in the mountain chasm the river created. Go back to the previous overlook that we skipped, Dragon Point. That does it for overlooks. Go back to the Visitor's Center to identify some of the flowers that we saw. The deep purple flower was a larkspur.

Drive to the Ute Museum and go through it. The museum is, basically, Chief Ouray's house and on his farm. It covered the history of the Ute tribe and his dealings with the US government (not to successfully). The displays were a lot of beaded clothes and other items. Go back to our room at the motel.

Go out to Country Boy, a really neat pizzeria and microbrewery, for dinner. Sit at the bar and watch them make the pizzas and salads. And they were really good.

Back to the room for a bit of packing.

Tuesday, June 4

Pack and leave motel. It wasn't a very nice motel even though the people were nice. Eat breakfast at the bagel shop again. Drive past Grand Junction to Fruita and Dinosaur Journeys (a dinosaur museum). Go through various dinosaur skeleton displays. Go across the street to Wendy's for lunch. Go to one of the dinosaur bone mines and walk the Trail through Time, a 1.5 mile trail near the mine. Along the trail were some rock with dinosaur bones still in them. It was hot!

Drive back to Grand Junction, check in to the motel and nap. Have dinner outside in a nice Italian place. Back to the room to watch TV and pack.

Wednesday, June 5

Breakfast at the hotel (good this time). Dawdle around and head for the airport about 11:00. Fly to Denver. Lunch/dinner in the airport. Fly to Cincinnati and drive home. Everything went well. It is good to be back.