

# Grand Tour of Utah National Parks

Within a couple of months after the Glacier National Park Tour 2 years ago, I started setting my sights on the next big tour. I quickly decided on a tour of the five national parks in Utah. I had never been to any of the Utah national parks but relied heavily on legends of CA2Q and Google! I did a lot of research and planning over the next 18 months. During that time, at least 18 riders and 12 co-riders had expressed interest. As we got down to the final month we had locked in commitments of 12 riders and 6 co-riders. But in the final weeks, 4 riders (and 2 of their co-riders) had to drop out due to medical issues. And Mitchell dropped out because he got a job at Arlen Ness for the summer and a engineering intern. That was more important than the ride!

So with seven riders and 4 co-riders, we set out for the adventure on Friday June 3. Mike and Betty Goodrick, Mike and Peggy Friddle, Wolf and Zippy Coulombe all pulling trailers, and Jaime Patlan headed out around 5am to make the run straight to Vegas. They covered 530 miles arriving in Vegas around 2pm. They were then ready for partying in Vegas!



*Peggy Does Vegas*

Robin on her Can AM and me on my 1500 set out around 11am planning to just make it to Bakersfield that day. We took 580 to I-5 to and took Stockdale Highway across to Bakersfield. We rode 258 miles with the last 3 hours in 108 degree temperatures. We had stopped once for a gas and snack break and arrived at the hotel around 4pm. Don and Beth were about an hour behind us and met us for dinner that night.



*The DoubleTree pool was great in 108 degree temps!*

On Saturday, while the Vegas high rollers were sleeping in after a night of partying, Don, Beth, Robin and I got on the road around 7am. As we took off, when I put the bike into first, I heard a really odd noise from the transmission that did not sound good! But as we rode on, I didn't notice it again. We took 58 out of Bakersfield and stopped in Barstow for breakfast at Dennys.



*Don, Beth, Robin and I leaving Dennys in Barstow*



We then got back on the road and picked up I-15 to Vegas. After covering 284 miles, we made it to Vegas around 2pm. Robin's Can Am said the temperature was 117! I think her bike is off by about 5 degrees. But even at 112, I believe that was the hottest weather I had ever ridden in and was certainly the hottest Robin had ridden in. We both had Cammelbacks on the bike so we were staying well hydrated. It wasn't until we got off the highway onto the city streets when we really started to feel the heat. This was my first time stopping in Vegas. The first thing I noticed is that the stop lights stay RED forever and the lights are not synchronized going east / west. No, they are synchronized such that the light is RED at each block!



*Mike and Peggy Friddle, Mike and Betty Goodrick on the High Roller Ferris Wheel*

We left North Las Vegas around 7:30am. We took I-15 up to St George Utah where we stopped for gas. From there we took UT 89 to Zion. We arrived at Zion National Park visitor center around 10:30. It was already 92 degrees outside and the day was only going to get warmer. The Vegas High Rollers, (as referred to as the white trailer trash), quickly jumped on the tram that takes you through the park. That would be the last we saw of them until meeting at the hotel that night. Don, Beth, Jaime, Robin and I eventually caught the tram. The five of us stopped at several trails to do some small hikes at Lower Emerald Pool and Weeping Rock Trail. In between, we had lunch in the park at the Red Rock Grill. The park was not overly crowded, so getting on and off the trams was no problem and no waiting for lunch! The temperature got up close to 100. We spent about 5 hours in the park before getting back on the bikes. From there the ride on Zion – Mount Carmel Highway was stunning. I posted plenty of videos on facebook but they don't come out too good in PDF format! We hit UT 89 and headed north to the hotel in Panguitch for the night. We covered 249 miles that day.





Zion National Park



*Jaime, Robin, Don at Zlon*



Don and Beth stayed in a hotel in town and the rest of us holed up at The Quality Inn. I would definitely recommend this hotel.



*This wasn't your typical Quality Inn!*

The hotel had a great restaurant and the food was amazing. We watched the Warriors while dining and drinking!



*Jaime, Mike G, Mike F, Peggy, Wolf, Peggy and Robin*





*We were impressed with the presentation – it's a swan!*

The hotel was owned by an Indian (like from India) family and the restaurant was owned by a family from the Czech Republic. They were all dressed in western wear with strong Czech accents! The service was fantastic and they were very entertaining to talk to.

The next day was on to Bryce Canyon. Today would be a cool day with the temps never getting much about 80. We rode about 20 miles on UT 12 to Bryce Canyon Pines restaurant just outside the park where we had breakfast. Definitely recommend this place. We picked up some box lunches for a picnic later that day in the park.



*Breakfast before Bryce!*



After breakfast we headed into the park. We made a quick stop at Ruby's General Store at the park entrance to do a little shopping.



*Mike G has had enough of these stupid group photos*

We rode all the way to the end of UT 63 which ends up at Rainbow Point. There we did a 1.2 mile hike.



*The view from Rainbow Point*





*Your tour director and the only female pilot*

We stopped at a few places along the way. And then it happened again. I got on the bike, started it up, through it into first and it sounded like the gears were ripping apart! Now I'm worried. I'd been wanting to buy a new bike and was waiting for a reason to splurge for one. But I wasn't going to find anything within hundreds of miles from here. So the rest of the trip I really tried to baby the clutch and the transmission. There was only one other place where I messed up. I got in a position where I had to use reverse. As I pushed the starter button and the bike began to move, every couple of feet it would hesitate or slip as if there was a chipped tooth in a gear. I made sure to never use reverse again after that.





We kind of screwed up for lunch and instead of ending up at a picnic ground, we ended up at the Lodge at Bryce Canyon. We made ourselves at home and ate our box lunches. OK, breakfast was good, but do not get the box lunches to go. Oh well, they were cheap. Now we were ready for one of the highlights of the trip. UT 12 Scenic Byway is said to be one of the most beautiful highways in the country. The ride from Bryce Canyon to Torrey was another awesome ride. The great thing about this tour was everybody did what they wanted. Today, we ended up breaking up in three groups: The white trailer trash took off when the rest of us stopped for a break. Don, Beth and Jaime left Robin and I in the dust as we chose to ride at a slower pace and stop along the way to enjoy the scenery. We all ended up meeting that night at the hotel, The Broken Spur. For the day, we had covered 160 miles and the temps were in the high 70's. Some people hit the pool and others just relaxed in the room. This hotel also had a superb restaurant. There were a few after dinner cocktails and then it was off to bed. Once again, this was a hotel I would highly recommend. It is amazing to be out in the middle of nowhere and find these cheap hotels where the people are all so friendly.

One of the things we noticed while touring Utah was all of the Europeans who had rented Harleys out of Vegas. I think there were more Europeans on motorcycles than people from the US. But it got me thinking.....hmmmm, maybe we should plan a motorcycle tour of the Alps. Google it. There are plenty of motorcycle companies that rent motorcycles for touring. Some of them even have Can Ams!

So on Tuesday morning, we start with a good breakfast at the hotel before heading out on UT 24 for Capitol Reef. We got to Capitol Reef in about 45 minutes and entered the park.



*Ut 24 Capitol Reef*



As we entered the park, I knew we had a long day of riding and temps would be getting into the low 100s again. I also remember that Yoda Hole had advised that the ride to the end of the road in Capitol Reef is not worth it and he definitely would not recommend it. So I got on the CB and took vote. There were zero votes to ride into Capitol Reef, 9 votes to head on to Moab and 2 votes for Trump. So we made a U-Turn and got back on 24. We took 24 to Henksville for a stop for gas and then headed south on UT 95. This was Robin's favorite road of the whole trip.



*Water break on UT 95*

The temperatures were staying cool and we were making good time. So I took a vote to see who wanted to take a ride through Natural Bridges. The vote was 8 for the side trip and 3 for Trump.



*Natural Bridges National Monument – Sipapu Bridge*





*UT 95 crossing the Colorado River*

I went against the advice of Yoda Hole this time. He advised not to stop it is not worth it. Now if we were in Kansas and they dropped this park in there, it would be HIGHLY impressive. But were not in Kansas Toto! This is Utah and the rocks, the views, the scenery are out of this world!

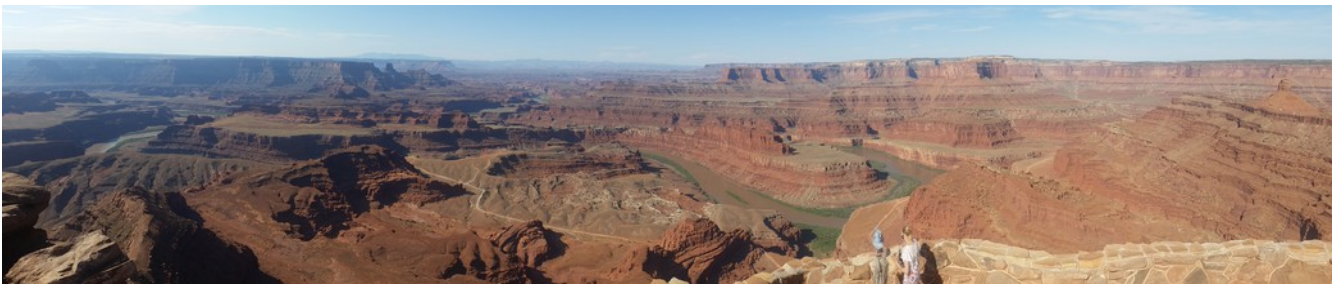
We stopped in Blanding at a Subway for quick lunch. Then on up UT 191 to Moab. The weather never seemed to get that hot. By the time we got to Moab, we had covered 270 miles for the day. Don and Beth had booked a room at the Best Western but the rest of us went the cheaper route and stayed at the Comfort Inn. After taxes, it was still \$211 a night! But the hotel was only 3 years old and it was really nice. We had dinner that night at The Broken Oar. Personally, I would not recommend it. The food was not that great. Although the waitress was plenty nice, the manager is a different story. I'll leave it at that.

The next day went went to Canyonlands in the morning. On the way, we stopped at Dead Horse Point. When then continued on to Grand View Point. Once again, the views were just incredible. We got lots of pictures. From there we headed on to Green River Overlook. Not nearly as impressive but also not far out of the way. At that point we broke up into separate groups and head off in different directions. We rode about 100 miles that day with temsps in the 80s. That afternoon, Mike and Peggy, Jaime, Robin and I did a jet boat tour on the Colorado. When we had set up the reservations before the trip, they did not have enough room on the boat for everybody in our group. So they (Moab Jett, great family run business), scheduled a boat just for our group. As it turned out, with some fo the riders dropping out, there were only 5 of us on the boat. But then still ran the boat with just on board. It was a wild ride! After pre-dinner cocktails we walked down to La Hacienda for dinner.





*View from Dead Horse Point*



*panoramic view from Grand View Point*



*Beth threatening to push Don over the wall*





*Jet boating on the Colorado*

After dinner Robin and I had a Hummer tour on Hell's Revenge. This is a pretty famous four wheel trail. You've probably seen pictures on TV commercials or other shows. The tour was about a 3 hour tour that ended as the sun went down. I'm not big into four wheel driving, but I will say that this was unbelievable. The vehicle was a first generation hummer. These things can pretty much climb a vertical wall.



*This ridge is about as wide as the Hummer*





*Hummer tour at Hell's Revenge*

Don and Beth had to head back earlier than the rest of the gang. So they had hit Arches that afternoon and had an early bed time so they could get up early in the morning to head home. By the time we got back to the Comfort Inn, the rest of the gang was hanging out in the lobby watching the Warriors who got their butt handed to them that night. And Jaime had made the right bets and was collecting his money. If you thought Jaime was a quiet one, you don't know Jaime! He was in a rather cheerful and talkative mood. Got Jack?

Thursday morning we all got up early for a morning ride to Arches. Yes, Jaime too. This would be our fifth national park in five days. It was an easy day and we only rode about 45 miles in 80 degree temps.



*Mike and Mike*





*The gang at Delicate Arch viewpoint*

Who are those strangers in the picture? Well word got out about my Utah tour at work. Although all of my riding buddies backed out, one guy didn't. George and Glo Williams met up with us in St George and tagged along during the tour up until about the time we got back into Nevada. They were in a pickup pulling a camper. They are two absolutely wonderful people and they added a lot of color to the trip!



*Jaime at Double Arch*



After a morning ride to Arches, we all head back into town and did our own thing. Most people did some souvenir shopping. We all met up at the Blu Pig for BBQ to celebrate Mike Goodrick's birthday. I think we all recommend the Blu Pig. It was an adventure.

On Friday morning we got up and started the journey home. The next two days would be the longest rides of the trip. We rode up 191 to I-70. The speed limit on I-70 is 80MPH! We moved along at a more casual pace and it's a good thing. Mileage really drops fast at those speeds. There is a stretch of road between Green River and Salina where it is 90 miles of nothing. No exits. No gas stops. Nothing. After a gas stop in Salina, we picked up US 50 and made it to Delta Utah for lunch. After a quick stop, it was back on the road to Ely Nevada.

I was unsure of the variability of the mileage of Robin's Can Am because we really hadn't had it out on any big trips. So I had carried a spare gas can in my saddlebag. Well about 45 miles outside of Ely, Wolf comes on the radio and says his low fuel light is on. I tell him we can pull over and put my spare gas in. But he decides to keep riding. About 10 miles outside of Ely, Wolf decides he doesn't want to risk running it dry. So we pull over. Well this crazy environmental gas cans today make it darn near impossible to get the gas out. We played with that thing for about 15 minutes before we finally could get the gas to come out. We covered 381 miles that day.

We all stayed at the Prospector Hotel that night. We met up in the bar for dinner and to watch the Warriors again.



*Mike's going to get Jaime to talk*

Saturday morning when we got up, some people were heading for breakfast at the hotel. You could see lightning not too far off in the distance as we were packing up the bikes. We were right between two big thunderstorms. I wanted to get out because the radar showed the bigger storm coming up from the south. I figured if we got out fast heading to the west, we could beat it. So we jumped on the bikes and rode! We didn't get too far before the rain started to come, but it was not heavy and did not last long. We made it to Eureka for breakfast. After a big breakfast, we were ready to take on the loneliest highway in the



country. By the time we made it to Fallon, I think we were all ready for a nap. After gassing up in Fallon, Mike, Peggy, Mike, Betty headed for Carson City to stay at Mike's parent's house. Wolf, Zippy, Jaime, Robin and I headed for Reno. Mike Goodrick was about 10 miles from his parent's house when the sidewall on his rear end (the bike) flew off. He got real lucky. He called up Towbusters who were there within 30 minutes. They got his bike to the Reno Honda dealer before closing who put two tires on the bike and got Mike home in time for dinner! We covered 320 miles that day.



*Should we eat or beat the thunderstorms?*

The Reno crowd had some fun bowling at the Grand Sierra Casino. Jaime was beating us all after 8 frames. But I ended the game with 4 strikes to take the crown! We had a great dinner at a restaurant at the Grand Sierra resort. Then off to bed.



*Robin, Zippy, Wolf, Jaime*





*Four strikes to end the game!*

Sunday morning we all met up in Carson City for the ride home. We came back over CA 88. At the highest elevations, there was still snow on the side of the road and at times we caught some light rain. It was a nice cool ride to end the tour that started out so hot! We made a stop at Lockeford Sausage then cut through the Delta to get back home. 236 miles for the day. For the whole trip we road just under 2500 miles in 10 days. It was a great trip and I would definitely do it again!