



## Part 1: Adventures By Disney Southwest Splendors Trip – July 2011

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First stop was on the side of the road for our first "mandatory" photo stop.

The saguaro is a large, tree-sized cactus native to the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. Saguaros have a relatively long life span. They take up to 75 years to develop a side arm. The arms themselves are grown to increase the plant's reproductive capacity. The growth rate of saguaros is strongly dependent on precipitation. Some specimens may live for more than 150 years. Whenever it rains, saguaros soak up the rainwater. The cactus will visibly expand, holding in the rainwater. It conserves the water and slowly consumes it. The



spines on saguaro having a height less than 2 meters grow rapidly, up to a millimeter per day.

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## Montezuma Castle

Montezuma Castle National Monument, located near the top of a Verde Valley cliff near Camp Verde, Arizona, in the Southwestern United States. It is one of the best preserved cliff-dwellings in North America. They were built and used by the Pre-Columbian Sinagua people, northern cousins of the Hohokam, around 700 AD. When European Americans discovered them in the 1860s, they named them for the Aztec Emperor Montezuma II, due to mistaken beliefs that the emperor had been connected to their construction. Neither part of the monument's name is correct.



The castle was carved into the limestone of a high cliff. This shows that the Sinagua were very daring builders. It took ladders to climb Montezuma Castle which made it incredibly difficult for enemy tribes to penetrate the natural defense of the vertical barrier.

The Sinagua dwelling was abandoned 100 years before even born and the Dwellings were not a more like a "prehistoric high rise complex". The last known record of occupation for any sites are for Castle National Monument around 1425 reasons for abandonment of their are not yet known.

Montezuma was castle. It was apartment Sinagua Montezuma AD. The habitation sites



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The dwellings and the surrounding area were declared a U.S. National Monument on December 8, 1906. It was one of the four original sites designated National Monuments by President Theodore Roosevelt after the passage of the antiquities act. The National Monument was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966.

There is a paved trail a 1/4 mile from the visitor center along the base of the cliff containing the ruins. Access to the ruins has not been allowed since 1950 due to extensive damage of the dwelling. About 350,000 tourists visit the site each year.



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However, when driving to Sedona, we were held up at a traffic jam. The roads were closed because of a vehicle on fire.



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### **Sedona**

Visited a beautiful and serene place called Sedona, Arizona with breathtaking red sandstone formations which are only found there.

### **Bell Rock**

The famous Bell Rock formation is one of the most prominent and visible vortex sites off Hwy 179 as you enter Sedona from the Village of Oak Creek. It looks like a giant Hershey's Kiss plopped down right next to the highway. It's often the first formation that visitors can actually get out and touch. Bell Rock's vortex put Sedona



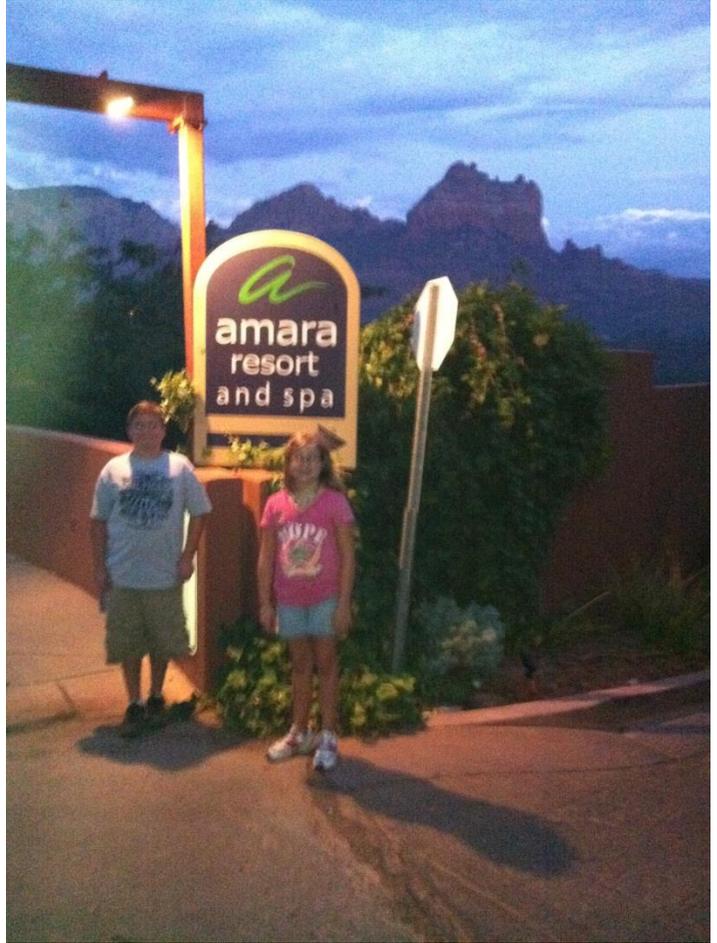
on the map for New Age enthusiasts and a broader market of tourists. A vortex is a swirling concentration of energy emanating from the earth. The 'electric' energy of this vortex has been called the 'activator' due to the intensity of the energy. This vortex will rejuvenate and increase your physical vitality and energy. It also appears to bring out a playful childlike energy in some that helps to release and free the inhibitions of our more serious adult self.

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### Amara Resort Hotel and Spa

Our hotel in Sedona was a desert retreat called Amara Resort and Spa. It had an ideal location next to Oak Creek with a spectacular backdrop of Sedona's renowned Red Rocks. Amara Resort is famous for its incredibly comfortable beds.



Our first evening, we had dinner with Cowboy Poets, Ken and Lynn Mikell, entertaining us afterwards with music and tales. Lynn's beautiful harp put a new twist on old time favorites. They have an extensive knowledge of the history of Western Music and enjoyed sharing it with us.

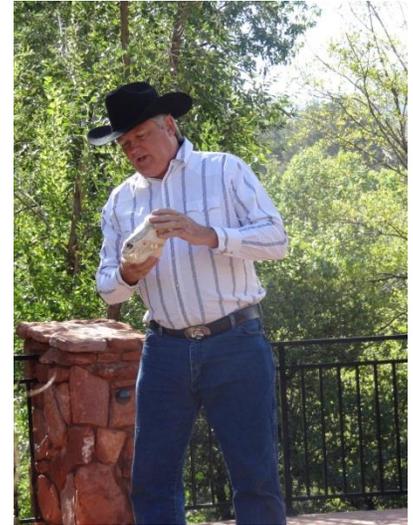


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### Animal Wrangler

The next morning, we were treated to an animal wrangler who brought a few "friends" for anyone to hold and view. Claire was sitting on the front row with Lonny, Luke and I on the back row until he brought out



his "friends". He had a tarantula, which is a very large arachnid, named Rosie.

Then, there was a gopher snake called Ginger. A gopher snake is a harmless snake which has an odd defense mechanism. It puffs up its body and curls itself into the classic strike pose of the pit viper. I was always taught that ALL snakes are dangerous! LOL! Surprisingly, both Luke and Claire, put the snake around their necks!!



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### Cowboys and Canyons 4 X 4 Jeep Tour

We took a guided 4X4 Jeep Tour through a breath taking scenic wonderland surrounded by seven majestic canyons into historic Dry Creek Basin. Our guide was named Wizard.

We relived the early cowboy days with tales of murder at the old "Van Derin" cabin. This was



the site of Sedona's colorful story of its only unsolved murder from the cowboy days. While there, we got word that Casey Anthony was hiding out in nearby Prescott, Arizona. Aaaaaaah!



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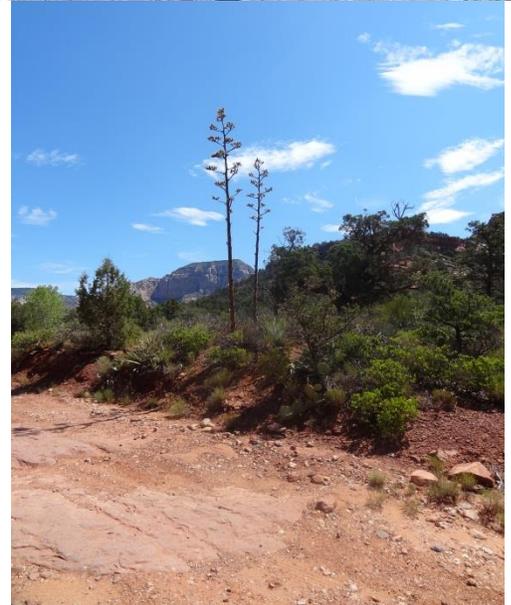
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The Juniper Tree produces berries which are used in a wide variety of dishes and is the primary flavoring in gin.



### Palmer Agave

The Palmer Agave is the largest native agave in the US. The flower stalk can grow up to 1 foot per day up to 18 feet high. Bet we could make some mighty fine tequila!



### Sedona Golf Course

Had a tiny peek at the Sedona Golf Course high in the hills of Oak Creek Canyon!

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### Dry Creek Canyon

This is why it is called "DRY" Creek Basin!



### Arroyo

Arroyo is a Spanish word translated as *brook*, and also called a wash is usually a dry creek or stream bed—gulch that temporarily or seasonally fills and flows after sufficient rain.

### Claire on top of the world!



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After Lunch, we did arts and crafts. Claire and Luke made a leather pouch and I made a beaded bracelet and necklace.



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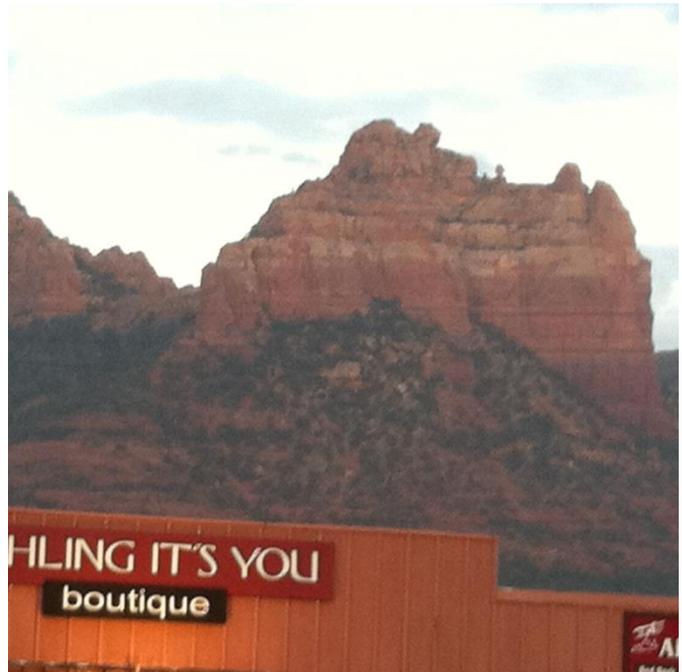
### McDonald's

The McDonald's in Sedona is the only one in the world without golden arches. They are turquoise because that's the only way the planners would let them build according to very strict city zoning codes. There are only seven natural colors allowed you can use to paint the exteriors of the buildings in Sedona. Wow!



### Snoopy Rock

Even Mother Nature is a fan of Snoopy and she made this rock to prove it! Snoopy can be seen doing what he does best -- snoozing on the roof of his dog house.



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## Cowboy Club

At Dinner at the Cowboy Club, Mom had a Prickly Pear Margarita while the kids had Sarsaparillas!



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### **Airport Mesa Vortex**

The most powerful and best known vortex site is the mesa where their airport is located on top of a mountain 500 ft above the city. I hope we grabbed some of that uplifting, positive energy to recharge our minds and bodies!

### **Panoramic view on top of the Airport Mesa-Capital Butte, Chimney and Coffee Pot Formations**



**Capital Butte** is also known as Thunder Mountain because it is said that it inspired Walt Disney to create Big Thunder Mountain Railroad ride. Disney's tribute includes a sign on the ride that says "Sedona Mining Company". It is one of the highest summits in Sedona with fantastic views.

### **Chimney Rock**

Chimney Rock is located to the left of this picture as a red rock spire form in front of the mesa.

### **Coffeepot Rock**

Standing tall at the right end of the rock formations, sits Coffeepot Rock. It mimics a percolator style pot, complete with spout and is visible from all over town.

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## Ducks down by Oak Creek at Amara Hotel



## Our Disney Guides - Tiffany and Chris



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## Junior Adventurers - Boys and Girls



## Evergreen Trees - Climbing to the top of the Colorado Plateau



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### Williams on Route 66



We got our kicks on Route 66! Williams, Arizona is the gateway town to the Grand Canyon. It goes down in history as being the last town to have its section of Route 66 bypassed. Its namesake, Old Bill Williams, filed lawsuits until the state built not one, but three exits for his town off I-40. This last stretch of I-40 wasn't officially opened until 1984 when Route 66 finally became I-40. Today, all of downtown Williams is on the National Register of Historic Places and its main street continues to be frozen in time.

### Masonic Lodge



Even in Williams, Arizona, there is a Masonic Lodge!

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### Gas Prices

Gas prices were significantly higher than in Louisiana



First Outcropping of the Grand Canyon – You Can see the North Rim of the Grand Canyon on left.

