



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### Grand Canyon via airplane and helicopter!

by Amaru & Suzanne, August 2nd 2007

Grand Canyon.... originally we planned to rent a car in Las Vegas, drive to the Grand Canyon and then spend a night or two at the South Rim.

After calculating the costs for the rental, accomodation, food, petrol and the time it would take for a return trip from Vegas we opted for a day trip instead, and the one we found had it all, airplane, helicopter and some time at the rim itself....perfect!! And the best part of it all? It ended up being a bit cheaper to do this than the road trip would have been.

The main reason that we chose this tour was the fact that it would take us all the way to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon which is supposed to be a lot better than the West Rim which is not really part of the National Park but on a Native American reservation.

Booking online, we requested the tour that started at 11am, unfortunately it was sold out (this booking was made about two months before arrival) so we had to opt for the 7am tour instead. The annoying part about this is that the pickup was at 4.45am.....that is just way too early for us =))



The tiny plane that took us between Nevada and Arizona



Nice and Tight  
At least the windows were big

After the extremely early pickup we were taken to their main office where we "checked in" and got weighed... interesting...

Now, after a 30min bus ride we arrived in Boulder City and boarded the HUGE planes we were flying with... propeller planes that fit around 15 people, clear access to the cockpit and some nice panorama windows to look out through.

About 5min after departure we were flying over the Hoover Dam, we weren't expecting it to be that close. We got an awesome aerial view of it from our airplane, it's quite a large structure but really..... it's just a dam, no more, no less. We could here also see Lake Mead, which is the largest man made lake in the USA.

After an hour we touched down in Tusayan, Arizona. Stepping out of the plane we noticed straight away a difference in climate compared to Las Vegas. We had around 18 degrees and the skies were a bit cloudy.... quite a nice difference to the enormous heat we had been experiencing in Vegas. The other thing that really stood out as well was the strong smell of Pine, it was very clear and fresh!

From here we were taken by minivan to board the helicopters. After watching a short security video of what to do in case of an emergency we were now told that we wouldn't be boarding these helicopters after all. So back into the minivan and 5 min later we arrived at a different helicopter company..... with BETTER helicopters!! It seems we were the lucky ones this morning =)



Our view over Hoover Dam



**Lake Mead**  
The largest man-made lake USA

Besides from the pilot, the helicopter boarded 6 people, they called out our names in the order that we were to be seated and Suz was the first person to be called.....I was the last! Suz then got to sit right next to the pilot in the front, best seat in the house. I was seated on the back....but at least I got a good window seat. It seems that they sit you according to weight....and yes, fatties go in the back =))

The helicopter ride was first of all very smooth, we don't know what we were expecting but it sure wasn't a ride that smooth, it was quite different from the propeller plane that we had done earlier.

The helicopter ride took around 30min and we loved every minute of it, our pilot was a very nice guy who kept talking to us over the normal recorded touristic tape that was playing on our headsets. Good thing he

did, since the tape was very boring and he was a really nice funny guy with a few stories about what had happened to him during these tours.

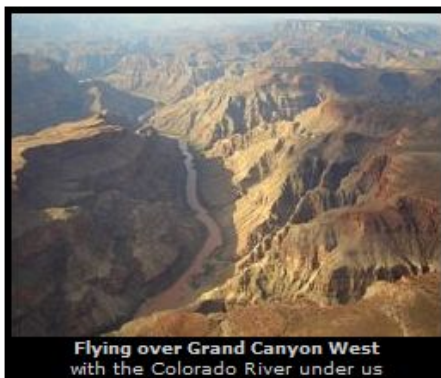
When we returned from the helicopter we were taken into the national park and dropped off in front of "Bright Angel Lodge", where we were now told that we had a good three hours before they were coming back for us.

So, we went for a walk along the ridge of the Grand Canyon and during the three hours that we spent there we got to see why people talk so much about it. When we arrived it was a bit overcast with some light rain, 20min later and big clouds were covering the view, at this point we were a bit dissapointed since we though that we would not get to see anything.

But then another 30min later and everything cleared up, and yes....it's a bloody awesome sight!!



**The Scenery starts to change**  
the closer we get



**Flying over Grand Canyon West**  
with the Colorado River under us

During the rest of our stay, the Grand Canyon changed every minute. We got some scattered clouds, more overcast and finally the day ended up with a blue sky. The different ways the light hits the canyon changes the way it looks. We just stood there watching it change in front of our eyes.

Eventually it was time to head back to the airport where we waited to board our airplane. A thunderstorm was approaching as we waited but luckily we managed to get in the air and away from the storm. We did manage to see some very big and scary lightning strikes from the plane though!

Another hour later and we were back in Boulder City and then Las Vegas....

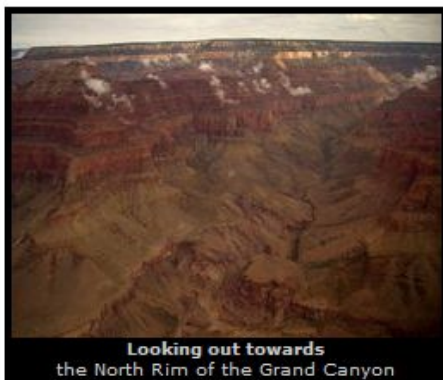
We absolutely loved this trip and feel that we got a nice taste for it, the next time we're around we'll just have to make sure to stay a day or two and experiance the Grand Canyon at sunset and sunrise.

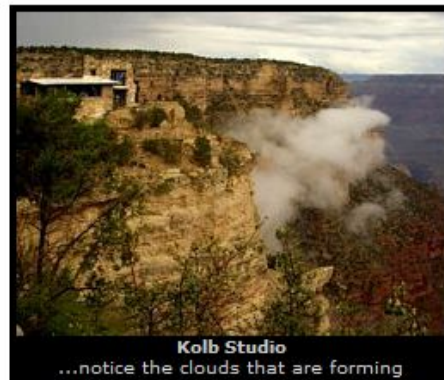
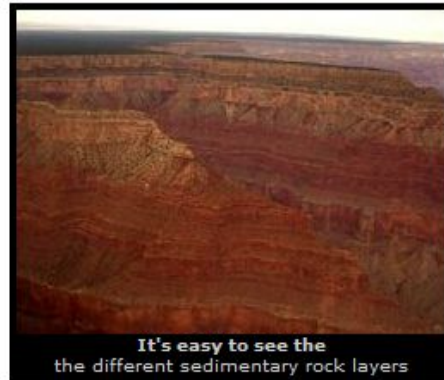
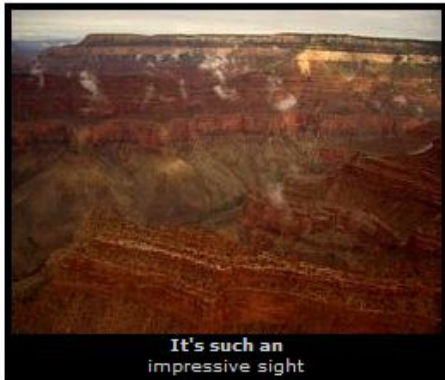


**We have arrived**  
in Arizona!



**That is a**  
very cool helicopter









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