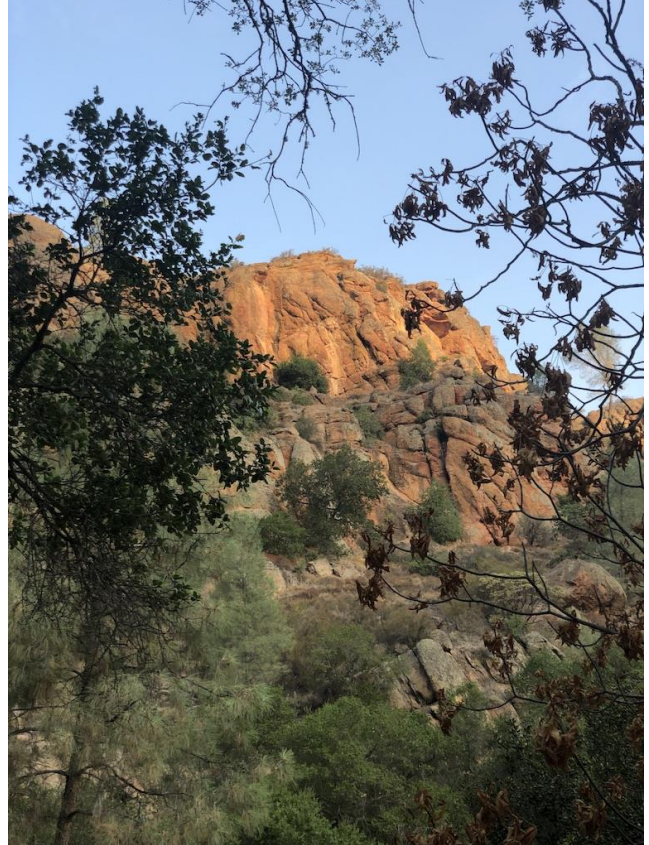


## Road Art – 1<sup>st</sup> Trip – Days 41-51 (End)

**Day 41 – 10/04/21, Pinnacles National Park, CA to Lake Nacimiento, CA**

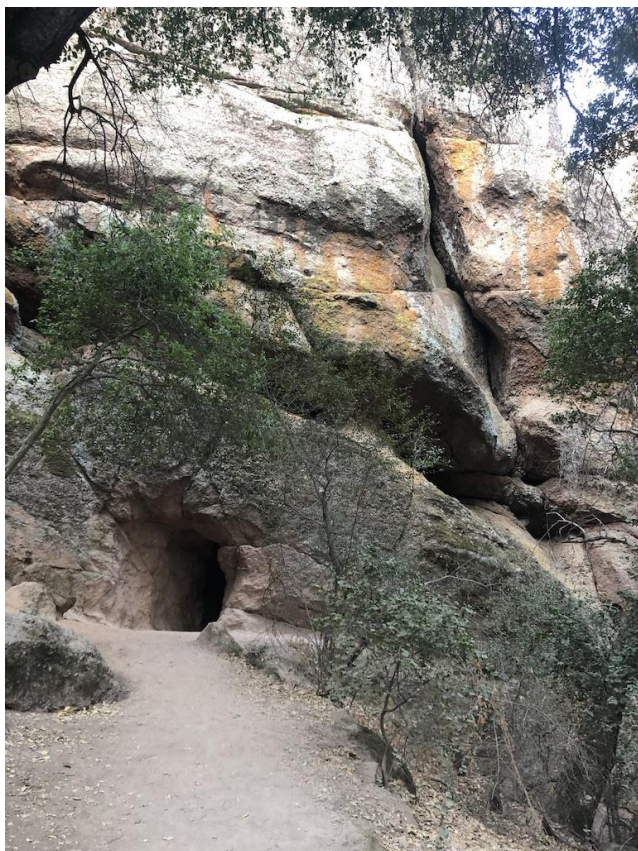
My morning started as usual, coffee, some warm oatmeal for breakfast, hiking boots on and tidy up the bed, ready for the day ahead. I had already decided to hike to Bear Gulch reservoir via Moses Spring trail and then deviating to Bear Gulch Cave trail. A beautiful morning to hike.



The rock formations looked like people perched on the mountain. It reminded me of a very different and natural Mt Rushmore.



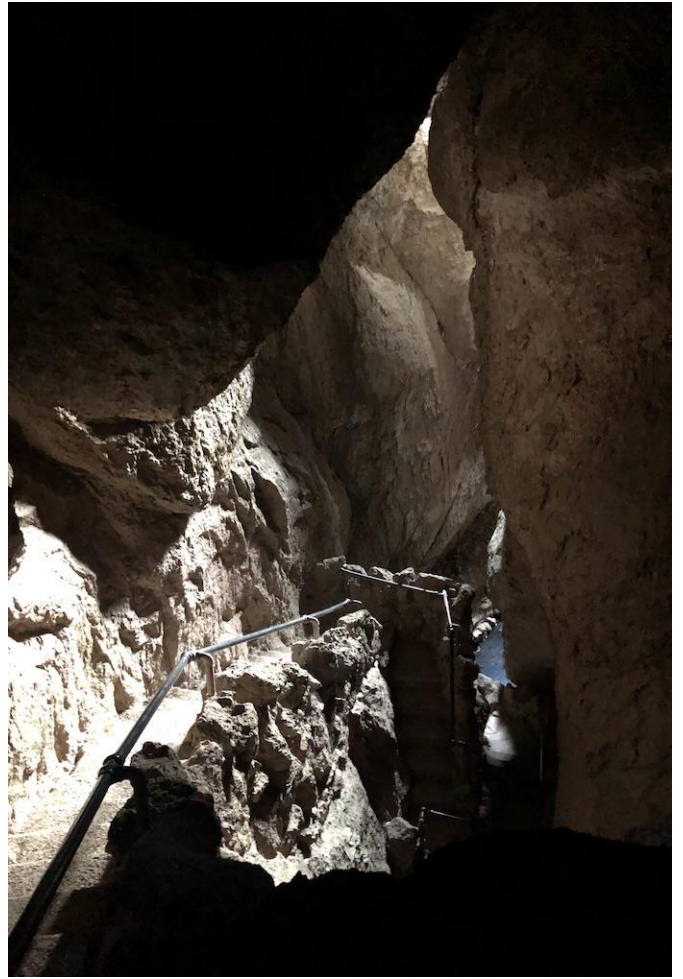
Located near the San Andreas Fault, Pinnacle is an excellent example of tectonic plate movement. This movement gave way to the above formations and between it and the fault action and earthquakes it formed the caves photographed below.



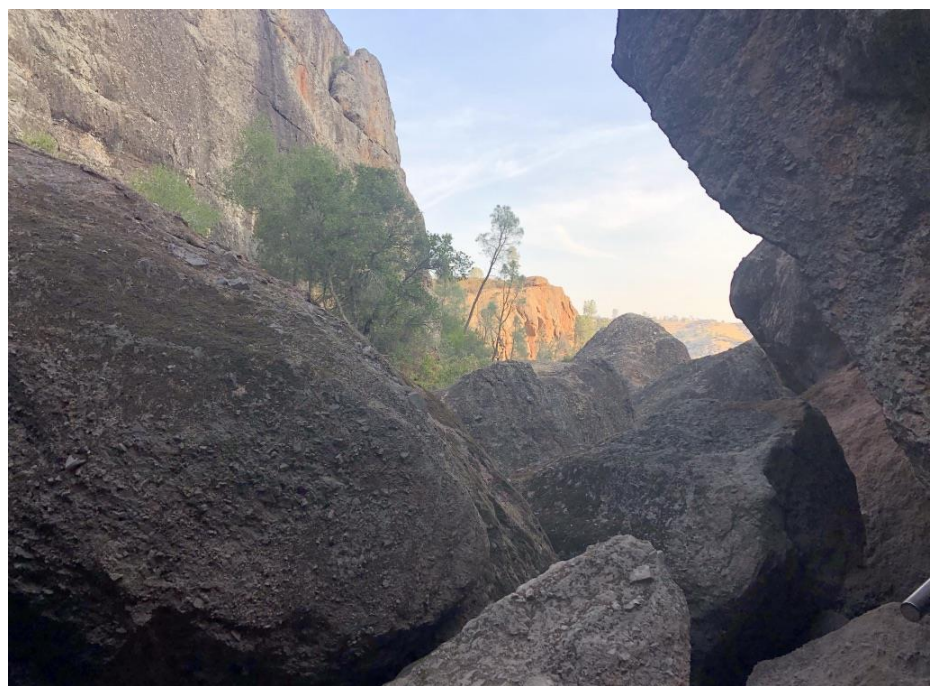
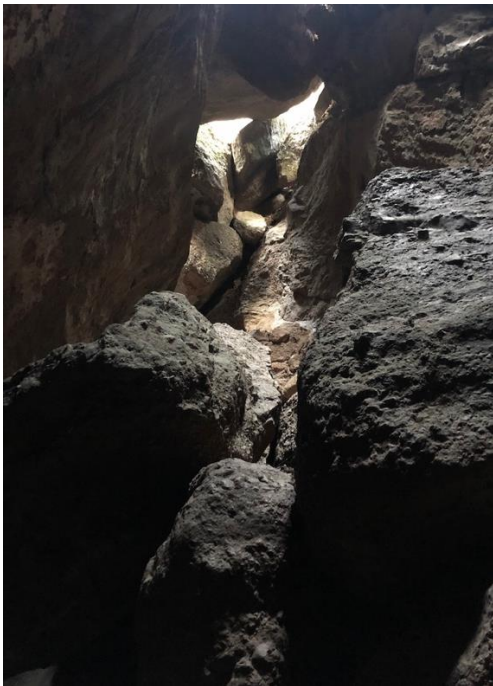
The talus caves of the park were formed when steep, narrow canyons were filled with a jumbled mass of boulders from the cliffs above.



I could not stop myself from thinking what happens if there is a tremor and I am buried in these caves, LOL



Eventually there was daylight again.



As I emerged from the caves, I had reached Bear Gulch Reservoir. The most stunning surprise and probably my favorite picture of the trip. I sat there and stared in awe.



The hike down via Rim Trail was great and the temperatures started to increase.



Continuing my travels south west, I passed miles of farmlands, many of them using precious water. Certainly, part of the water issue is farming, but food is also necessary.



Just a bit further, I saw a sign for San Miguel Mission. It was early and I decided to visit. It was beautiful, a 200+ year old community, that housed Franciscan Missionaries from cradle to grave. Fully self contained with a church, common areas, living quarters and a cemetery.

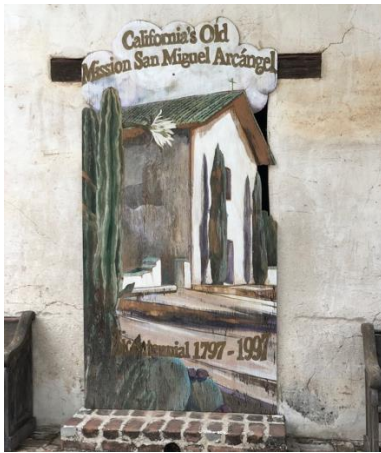
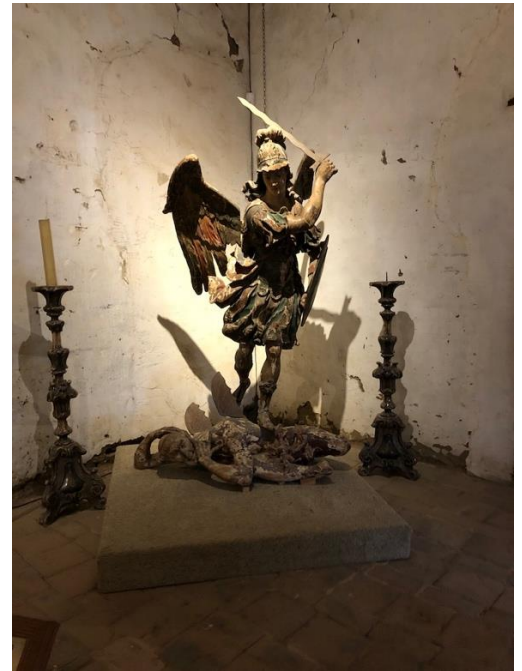


I love the courtyard style grounds and the Spanish architecture.



They had a "Museum" of the living quarters, very modest.





And of course, a beautiful church



Up next was Lake Nacimiento, I figured I would relax there and Kayak in the morning. That evening it was just me and the deer. The place was absolutely deserted. The lake is at 12% of its capacity and it shows. CA has been hit hard this year between the fires and the draught.



And a beautiful sunset to finish of the day





**Day 42 – 10/05/21, Lake Nacimiento, CA to Refugio State Beach, Goleta, CA**

It is so nice to wake up to beautiful views, there was a pair of eagles diving and feeding on the fish, and notice the water levels



After a nice paddle I hit the road, continuing my way south, I felt obliged to visit San Luis Obispo Mission. The SLO downtown is really nice and the mission is beautiful as well.



San Luis Obispo Mission below, in far better shape than San Miguel, although the museum was closed for renovations. I noticed that many places are being renovated, must be a Covid-19 opportunity given the low tourist activity.



And a beautiful church



For the evening I stayed at a campground on Refugio Beach, quiet and relaxing



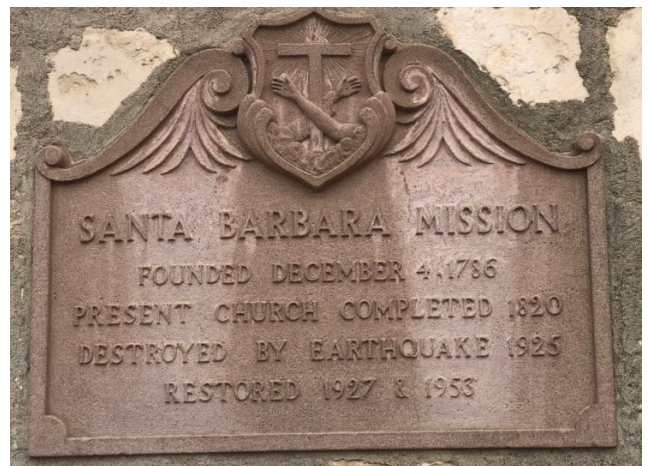
**Day 43 – 10/06/21, to Refugio State Beach, Goleta, CA to Trancas Beach, Malibu, CA**

After breakfast, I had a nice walk on the beach, a bit chilly, along with the morning fog.



And another Mission, in total there are 27 missions, from San Diego to Just north of Sonoma. I thought about perhaps visiting them all on a "Missions" trip, but unlike National Parks, the theme would get too repetitive. I will continue to stop and visit them randomly.

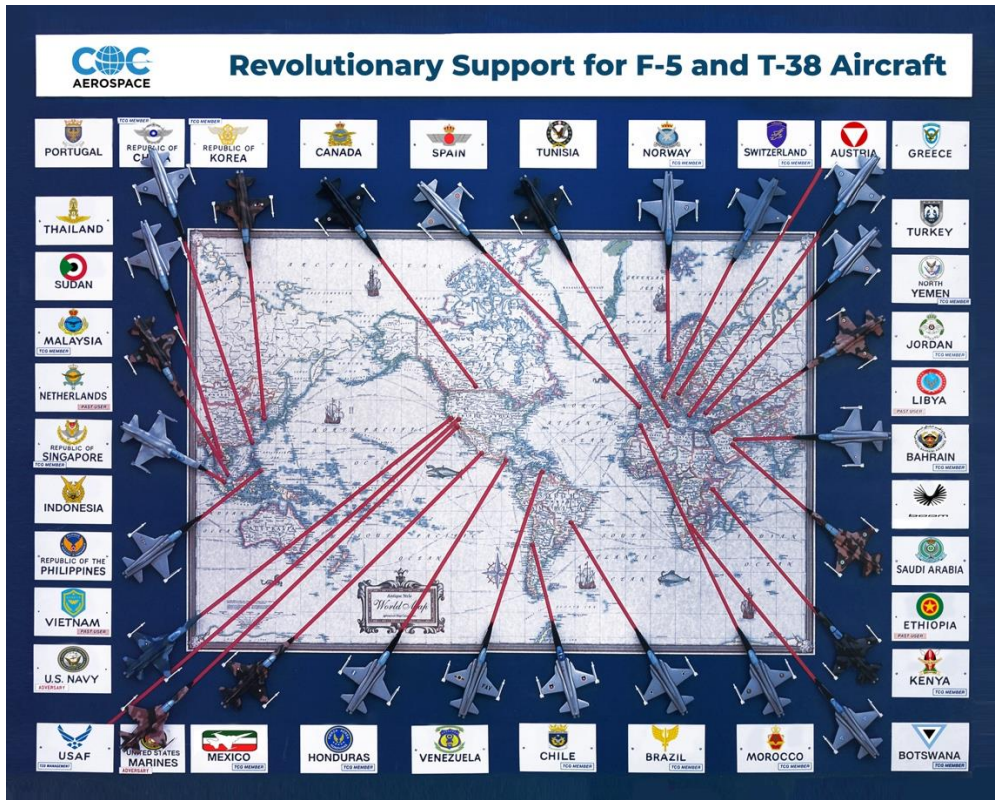
Santa Barbara Mission is very "Deluxe" and the wealth of Santa Barbara is obvious.





Since I was near Camarillo, I called my friend Chris, we have known each other for over 25 years. We met at swimming lessons at the YMCA in New Canaan, CT when our boys were 2-3 years old. We had a great visit and I was so engaged in our convo that I did not take any pictures. He kindly sent me one. Chris and his wife Teca, his company COC supports the aging fleet of F-5 worldwide, and Chile is one of their clients.





More beautiful coast on my way to Malibu. I boondocked on a quiet street surrounded by multi-million dollar homes, and my van felt like a million bucks as well.



**Day 44 – 10/07/21, Trancas Beach, Malibu, CA to Marina del Rey, CA**

I am getting excited for USC's Parents' weekend and seeing Christina tomorrow. I wanted to take it easy today and get a little exercise, so I headed over to Santa Monica and parked in one of their lots just south of the pier. They have a great bike path that goes for miles and miles to the north and to the causeway near the airport to the south. South:



To the north, you can go for as many miles as you like.



Lots of "Cheap" low income housing along the way:



If I were a dog, I want to be this dog



The pier and the End/Start of the famous Route 66. Random paddle board lessons







After finding a quiet street, I walked over to C&O Cucina for a delicious dinner. They had this sign, totally true and spot on!



**Day 45 – 10/08/21, Marina del Rey to University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA**

Yesterday we agreed to meet for breakfast at Martha's in Manhattan Beach. A great spot.



It was so nice to see Christina (and Kathie) after being away from friends and family for so long. Martha's did not disappoint, breakfast was delicious. We went for a walk on the beach afterwards and it was a beautiful morning. Since it was Parents' weekend, Christina wanted to get some work done because there was not going to be much free time during the weekend. I decided to hang out in Manhattan and Hermosa Beaches, loiter and ride the bike.



Gearing up for Volleyball:



# Manhattan Beach Pier



Later that afternoon, I headed over to USC and we walked around campus.



Christina has 5 house roommates, and all the parents and kids had a family dinner at El Cholo, it has been in business for 6 generations and 96 years. Thank you David for sending the photo. Me far end of the table on the left, then Christina, then Kathie.





After dinner, Christina took me to the 901, their YOLO and FOMO go to club, LOL. No social distancing here.



## Day 46 – 10/09/21, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

I parked the van at Christina's house, nice big flat driveway and stayed there last night and plan the same for tonight. All the parents want to get a tour of it, and now they all want one, HaHa. The plans for the day are: the campus store for some merch, tailgate party at the house, visit a few of the other houses for more tailgating, football game (USC vs Utah) and good night. Here are the highlights.



Another tailgate party



The game and the band.



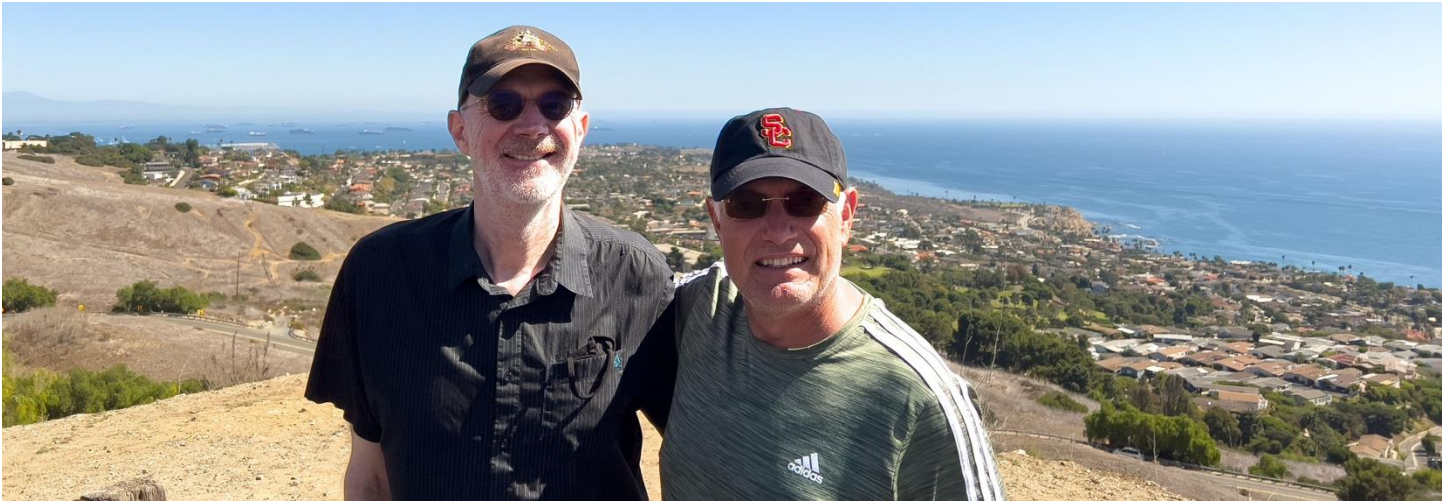


**Day 47 – 10/10/21, USC, Los Angeles, CA to RA Calimesa, CA**

Today, it started to dawn on me that my trip was coming to an end. I was in LA and was going to visit my friend Craig and his lovely wife Kristen. I have known Craig since junior high school, some 45+ years. After having breakfast together and giving my baby girl a big hug goodbye, I dropped Kathie at LAX and headed toward Kristen's mom's house in Rancho Palos Verdes.



We spent the afternoon catching up, had a great lunch at Nelson's with a fantastic view. After lunch, we visited the coast and took in the scenery. It was such a great relaxing time. One perk we had was Kristen, who kindly took several photos. Thank you Kristen!



Before it got too dark, I headed west to avoid LA traffic on Monday, and went as far as I could and stopped for the night at a rest area with plans of visiting Joshua Tree NP the next day.



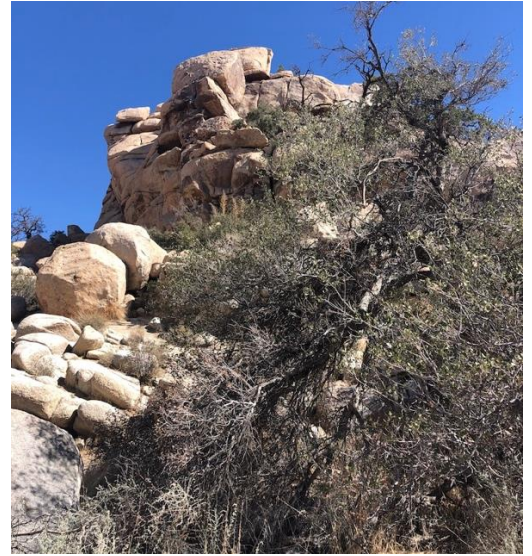
**Day 48 – 10/11/21, Calimesa, CA to Phoenix, AZ**

Joshua Tree NP was a short distance away, however morning sun heading east made the drive long. Although it was early on a Monday, a line to get in.



JTNP is one of the most hikeable NP, but only Oct-April, otherwise its way too hot.

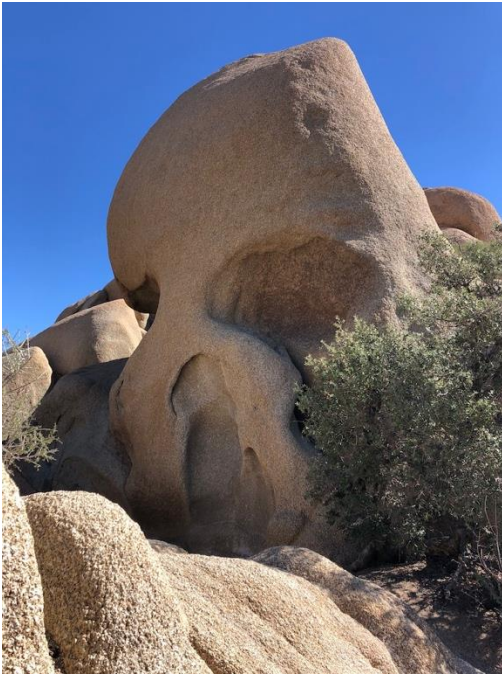




Its amazing to see green oases with real colors in a desert



Skull Rock, and the NP sign on my way out.



I continued my journey east, stopping at the Colorado River demarking the border of CA & AZ

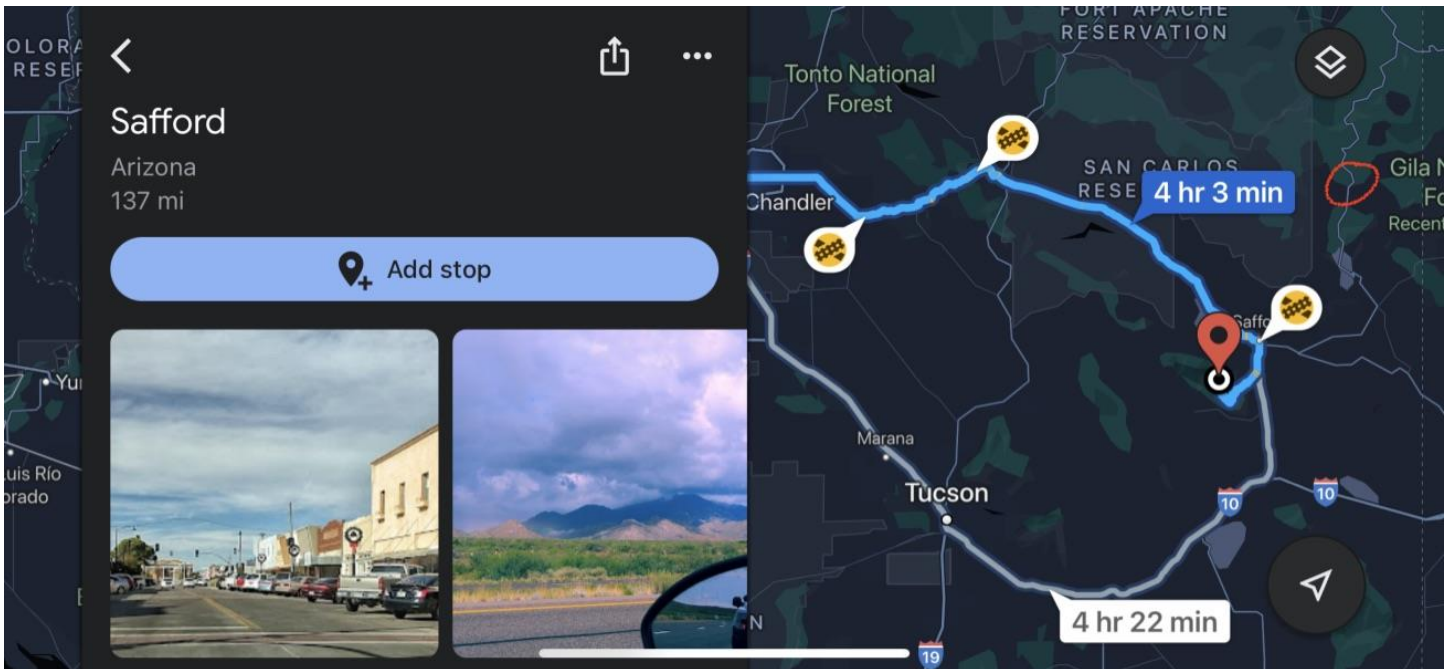


I made it to Phoenix and decided to go to Rustler's Rooste, a restaurant I visited from time to time while on business in Tempe. A good upgrade from last night's dinner.



### Day 49 – 10/12/21, Phoenix, AZ to Gila National Forest, Silver City, NM

I continued making my way east, with plans to stop short of White Sands National Park which I plan to visit tomorrow. Route planning 101, trying to avoid I-10, too boring and monotonous. For the night, I ended up staying by the red circle (upper right) in a very secluded national forest.



The ride was OK, with some scenic mountains and huge cacti's, 25-30 feet tall, hard to photograph.



And a sand storm, although it was mild.



I stopped to appreciate a canyon, with the sun, the reddish rocks were pleasing to the eye. Notice the tunnel entrance to take some climbing away.



The border, and finally at Gila forest for a Raman bowl supplemented with shrimp and the movie Rainman to keep me entertained. It was so dark out. I missed taking a picture of the spot, but it's on my tracker. So many stars outside, a couple of planets and no light pollution.



### Day 50 – 10/13/21, Gila National Forest, Silver City, NM to RA, Seminole, TX

I woke up to the coldest day yet, 29°F outside, inside a toasty 70°. After breakfast, I continued my drive east. The miles seemed endless.



The San Andres mountains in the far distance. White Sands NP is right behind them.



The rest area on I-10 had a very nice roadrunner made of recycled goods, what can you spot them? Shoes, sneakers, crutches, keyboards, etc.





Soon thereafter, after climbing many switchbacks, I was over the hill (The San Andres Mountains hills), HaHa. It's a beautiful mountain road, very scenic, but twisty. White Sands National Park, wow, totally different experience. Here are some pictures:



For my hike, I went bare foot, the sand was soft and cool, an amazing experience, it truly looks like snow drifts.



After White Sands NP, I continued east. Crossed the Lincoln National Forest, which was really nice and soon thereafter the road turned flat and straight, all the way to the Texas Border. I boondocked on a nice rest area along US-62 and had more Shrimp Ramen as I realized my 50 day adventure was coming to an end tomorrow.





**Day 51 – 10/13/21, Seminole, TX to Home, Dallas, TX**

The drive to Dallas was uneventful, but I did enjoy the approach and seeing Downtown.



## Some Trip Statistics

Route:



Traveled – 7,660 miles, 199 hours, 16.7 mpg, 37 mph average speed

States Visited -> TX, NM, CO, AZ, CA, OR,WA

National Parks Visited, I got my money's worth out of my NP pass.

- Mesa Verde, CO
- Channel Island
- Redwood
- Olympic
- Crater Lake
- Yosemite
- Pinnacles
- Joshua Tree
- White Sands

Enjoyed the most – Seeing Christina, but all my other visits were great, Nick, Chris & Teca, Craig, Kristen and her mom

Least favorite – getting my bike stolen in NM while hiking, expensive gas in CA

New toys – Inflatable Kayak, will never travel without it

My ROAD ART, for taking me everywhere, you are no longer for sale!

And last but not least, ANN, for making sure I am safe on the road and tracking me daily!