

Road-trip Across the United States

From Paris to Denver: 3092 miles by motorhome!

06/05/2015

The day has finally arrived to pick up our motorhome! After an early morning wake-up and a quick tidy-up of the house we try with difficulty to get a taxi to Camping World. After 20 minutes we finally succeed. It will cost \$90 for the 45 minute car ride! We can't believe how big the city is, so the ride was worth it. We are greeted by a brand new motorhome! A very nice woman welcomes us and gives us some helpful advice regarding our motorhome. Nothing too complicated, she explains how to drain dirty water, refuel, gives us the numbers in case something goes wrong etc. We set off towards San Francisco. The automatic transmission makes driving very easy and the motorhome runs like a dream.

We looked online for RV parking in the city (City Parking Co, 2860, Taylor St, San Francisco, CA 94133, United States). Once again we rented housing via AirBnB (725 Ellis St, San Francisco, CA 94109 - €349 for 3 nights). The apartment is nice and conveniently located in the city center. We have dinner at The Grove (2016 Fillmore Street) which is a very good chain restaurant. The food is good - sandwiches with avocados, chicken, etc.



07/05/2015

Today we visit Alcatraz. We set off on foot to the dock for boarding (which is also not far away where we parked the motorhome). We bought our tickets for Alcatraz in Paris online, which allowed us to retrieve them directly from the counter. The weather is good and after a 30 min crossing we arrive on the island. The tour is really great. We took the audio guide - a must! While listening to a very interesting story we walk the halls of this fortress - a very impressive visit! Back on the main land we have lunch at the marina where many restaurants (quite touristy) offer fish and other seafood. We then take a long stroll to Mission Park. After a good walk there, we enjoy a nice drink in a sunny park.

08/05/2015

The program of the day - visiting museums! Alas, the museums are closed on Tuesdays in San Francisco..... So our

visit to MOMA ends up being just a visit to its shop which is actually very nice. We decide to go for a walk and by chance arrive at Giants Stadium. It was quite impressive as it was a game day and the streets were full of fans. We carry on with our walk heading into the Mexican district, where there are many nice murals on the walls. It is surprising to see that businesses have their window signage in Spanish that people don't speak English in the streets! In the evening, we decide to go out to Bar Agricole, which turns out to be rather chic and serves very good cocktails.



09/05/2015

Now we are done with the cities and our motorhome adventure really begins! We head towards Yosemite National Park and make a stop at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge which is a very impressive must-see. We decide to do a lot of grocery shopping before entering the parks and stop at Walmart. Disappointing - there are hardly any fresh products. We go to Safeway which proves to be much better. We enjoy lunch at In & Out, an excellent fast food chain which offers only two burgers and fries on the menu!

We finally arrive at Hodgdon Meadows, location 59, which we booked online several months in advance (a must!).

We arrive at the campsite. There is a locker to store food safely away from bears, a small camping table and a barbecue. We are a little nervous about the bears and their keen sense of smell - we take everything that smells out of the motorhome! We go for a short walk close to the camp: it's beautiful, breathtaking! Luck is on our side and we see a baby bear - quite far away but nevertheless, incredible! Back at the campsite we sit around our campfire and prepare for the next day.



10/05/2015

We wake up rather early (07:00) and have a picnic breakfast in a pretty spot we discovered yesterday evening. After quickly tidying up and making sandwiches for lunch we set off for a day of hiking in the direction of Yosemite Valley. Our first trail is Inspiration Point trail (5km). It's a little steep but there is a magnificent view at the end (being the sporty types that we are, we strive to finish the hike in 30 min as opposed to the estimated time of 1 hour and 15 min)! Onwards we go towards Mirror Lake with our picnic (10km walk around the lake). We have lunch in the valley – it's breathtakingly beautiful! Back at the RV we take the road to the Yosemite Falls. They are impressive but packed with tourists. We drive on towards Glacier Point. The journey is a bit long but the views are superb. We carry on towards Sequoia Park. The drive is longer than we expected so finally we decide to stop for some 'wild camping'! We leave the road and park our motorhome in the middle of an orange field - perfect! The owner of the field catches us but is very nice and allows us to stay until the next morning.

11/05/2015

An early morning start with the tractors that begin work in the fields at 6am! We have a bit of a sleepy breakfast before getting back to the road towards Sequoia Park. We cross Kings Canyon Park and begin the day going up Little Baldy. We eat our sandwiches facing a magnificent 360 ° view over the park. We then head down to General Sherman Tree, the largest tree in the world. There are too many tourists, most of whom are walking around without any real interest, so we quickly return to the motorhome. We head towards Three Rivers and stop at a supermarket to buy food for a good dinner. We are disappointed when we realize that we are an 8 hour drive away from Vegas because we took the wrong exit out of the park..... We decide to drive into the night to make up for our mistake. As we do so we discover a beautiful lake (Three Rivers Lake) where we could camp with a beautiful view, but we don't stay because we have a ways to go! In the end we stop at 20:00 in Mojave, 4 hours from Vegas. We stay in an RV park with little charm, but at least it's free on Sundays!

12/05/2015

We wake up at about 8:00 and quickly get back on the road towards Vegas. Crossing Death Valley is very impressive - very hot, nothing nearby, even restaurants, the great escape! We stop at the Hard Rock Hotel where we had booked a room in advance online. Fortunately we easily manage to park the motorhome in one of the hotel parking lots. We go to a pool party in the afternoon at the hotel, the Rehab. Very nice, very Vegas! At 19:00 we head to 'The Strip' for drinks and dinner. We stop at Deny's, which turns out to be a pleasant surprise. After dinner we go to The Palm for a drink on one of the most beautiful rooftops in the city. Entry and drinks are very expensive but the view is amazing.



13/05/2015

We check out at 11am. A little surprise - we discover that they have charged us for all the mini bar items. We disagree and they repay us immediately! Be careful.....

We put our stuff in the camper and then walk along 'The Strip' visiting different hotels: Bellagio, Luxor..... We give in to the temptation of the blackjack machine. We bet \$20 and leave with \$80! Wooohoooo, we're going to be rich! We fetch a friend who is joining our trip from the airport in Las Vegas and head off towards the Grand Canyon.

14/05/2015

After a night in an RV Park we finally arrive at the Grand Canyon. Magnificent view! We do the Angel Trail which is not bad at all: 8/10. We then take the road to Lake Powell. We manage to find a spot that is a little isolated to park the motorhome on the opposite side of the town of Page, on the left after the bridge.



15/05/2015

We wake up early around 05:30 and leave to go to the opposite view point to have breakfast in the sun. At around 08:00 we go to the marina to rent a boat!

After a 45 min debrief with the boat renter we hit the water. In the distance we see a boat sheriff who stops a boat that had passed us a few minutes earlier. We slow down with other boats without really understanding why the boats are being stopped. The sheriff's colleague waves us to stop and tells us we were cruising too fast..... We didn't want to argue so we accept the fine of \$450..... a tourist scam!

In short, after a beautiful day on Lake Powell we take the road towards Bryce and Zion Canyons. After 3 hours we stop at an RV Park.

16/05/2015

After breakfast in a cafe we hit the road for a few kilometers to Zion National Park. Here we leave the motorhome at a visitor's parking spot and take a shuttle to the Grotto. The shuttle service is a good idea as it reduces the number of vehicles in the park. We arrive at the Grotto and head towards the Angel Landing Trail. It's fantastic but steep (really steep!). It's described as a 4-5 hour hike requiring 4 liters of water per person. We do it in 2 hrs and 30 min with 3 liters of water – winners!

The terrain is a bit crazy. Very quickly we take a strong, steep ascent under a blazing sun, but the view at the top is worth its weight in gold! It's really amazing! After a good picnic, the bravest of us tackle the Wayna Picchu ascent. It's pretty scary if you have vertigo and we have to cling to the ropes to avoid falling in some places.

We return to the motorhome and head off to Bryce Canyon (2 hour drive). We stop in a nice campground (KOA BBQ authorized).



17/05/2015

We wake rather late today around 10am! The scenery at the entrance of the park is really beautiful. We head to Bryce Point. We take a beautiful hike with a big descent into the canyon and a very loooong loop ... The return to the campsite is very long and physical. We then head off to Green River before heading to Arches National Park and Moab. The drive is not too bad (3 hours). We stop at a KOA campsite (Green River KOA).

18/05/2015

Breakfast is included in the cost of our campsite. We set off towards Arches National Park - 1 hour drive. After a walk around Delicate Arch, we visit two new arches: Landscape & Windows. Around 17h00 we return to Moab.



19/05/2015

We wake up early to drop one of us off at the airport in Moab. Afterwards we head on to Canyonlands National Park. The park is divided into 3 parts. We choose to do Island in the Sky section and the Upheaval Dome hike.

20/05/2015

We wake at 9am and set off to Monument Valley. After a short drive we arrive at the park. We park the motorhome and walk to the Visitor Center. We have a coffee in a tourist restaurant facing the park. The view is beautiful! We take a lovely walk around a big rock and then after lunch in the sun, we take the road towards Mesa Verde National Park. 3 hours later we arrive at Morefield Campground. The weather turns bad..... It starts to rain.

21/05/2015

Luckily the sun has returned! We go on a long hike in Mesa Verde but it's not as impressive as the others we have done so far. In the afternoon we head towards the south of the park for the Spruce Tree Trail. This hike is much better than our morning one – a 1 hour trail that descends into a beautiful canyon. Back in the camper, we head to the Great Sand Dunes and Alamosa city. The tail-end of the drive is very pretty.

22/05/2015

After a long, straight drive we arrive at the Great Sand Dunes in the early afternoon. We only take a short walk in the dunes because it's windy and sandy. Back on the road we head towards the Rocky Mountains. We stop en route for some back-country camping which is very nice.



23/05/2015

We finally arrive at the Rocky Mountains. There is a little bit of snow everywhere. The landscape has changed since the beginning of the trip. It's really beautiful.

24/05/2015

We set off to hike the Colorado Trail. However, it's a little deceiving as the trail is snowy and impractical. We return to the camper and continue driving, which is quite nice, but we can't go to the top as the end of the road is closed. We turn back and find a pretty hike to the bottom of the mountain next to the lake.

The trip is unfortunately coming to an end. We take the road towards Denver. We stop to camp in Boulder where we tidy the camper and pack our bags.

25/05/2015

We wake up early and go to Camping World where we return the motorhome without any problems. We then take a taxi to the airport.