



The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America

RICK'S ROADS

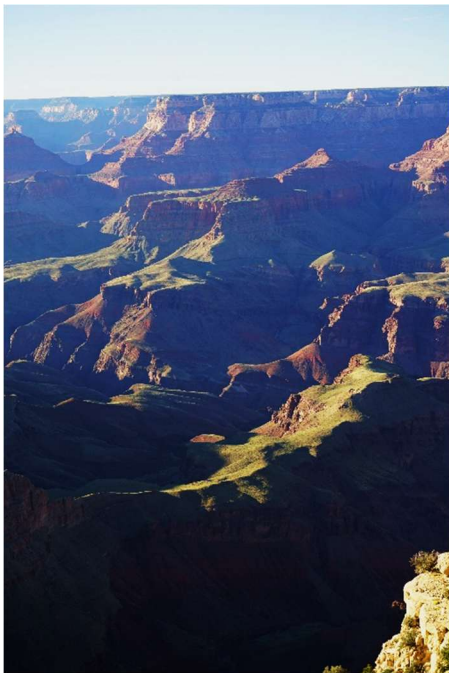
Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What



BLOG POST: 2022.09.24
Not Hiking the Grand Canyon



When I made my overnight reservation at Mather Campground, here on the south side of the huge gash in the earth, I had done so in anticipation of doing a long-overdue hike the next morning (i.e., today).



Bright Angel Trail – specifically the 12-mile day-hike version to Plateau Point and back – has been on my Bucket List for a long time. Yet, in all those visits to GCNP between 1984 and 2005 – years when I was an avid runner who could have breezed the 12 miles -- I never hiked below the rim.

I guess I was just satisfied by the amazing views that the rims provided. Or maybe I was too wasted on those trips to undertake a significant physical effort. Or maybe – and pretty likely – my crazy-ass crunch of a roadtrip time schedule only allowed an hour or two of quick photos from a variety of overlooks before launching back onto the road to the next destination.

So, *17 years* after finally hiking into the canyon – on the North Rim's only such route, the North Kaibab

Trail – I was going to delve into it again. The scenic photos and trail maps and Google Earth views had all stoked my fire to sit at Plateau Point for an hour or more and just soak in the 360-degree splendor. I made my reservation in January.

And in April, I screwed up my damn back. Kinda bad too. Nothing that required surgery, but enough to make even ordinary walking painful.



All the walks and hikes that I had taken in the last four months had been tests. If I survived them easily, then I felt a good run at BA Trail would be in the cards. At Lassen Peak, I allowed myself cautious optimism, but things went the wrong way from there.

When I also developed a sharp pain in my foot a few weeks ago at Yosemite, it became obvious that I'd be asking for trouble by trying this hike. Twelve miles on level ground would have been iffy; throw in a 1100-foot vertical gain in the final mile, well, my fitness just was not there. Sad admission, but a sensible one.

I know myself too well, though, and I could see my stubborn self waking up early and saying "Fukkit, what's the worst that can happen?" and getting in over my head.

So, to prevent that, when I got to Aspen Loop camp site, I immediately started getting drunk. Captain-and-Coke was the blend of choice. Many and often. I knew if I woke up hungover, there would be no way I'd hike off to disaster.

And it worked like a freaking charm. Because September 24th dawned a letter-perfect day: sunny, low-70's, light breeze – a gorgeous day for hiking -- and I never once considered lacing up the Timberlands for a downbound stroll.



That thin beige line that threads upwards towards the center of the photo on the previous page is the Bright Angel Trail. The spot where that line ends is Plateau Point. What must those views be like??

Yes, I know I can Google it, but I have not and I will not. I want to take my own photos from there. Next year.



As I was wandering around on the South Rim sidewalk, a large, adult doe elk came sauntering in among all the people and casually started to drink from the water sluice.

Many people gawked and snapped pictures, but nobody made any move to pet her or anything dumb like that. We let her drink in relative peace.

But I didn't stick around long. Glum due to my inability to take my coveted hike, I decided to move on to cheerier places.

There was one particular burger place that was calling my name, and it was a few hours to the south and west. So off I went thataway.

