
Stop 28. San Diego

Arrival datetime: Tuesday, May 21, 5:30PM
Sites visited: Balboa Park, Border Field State Park
Accommodations: Marriott Hotel and Marina, San Diego, CA
States traveled: California

The wind of the previous day had cleared out the sky completely. Rather than the deep blue gray hues of the previous days, the San Bernadino Mountains had both light and dark ridges, and clear patterns of vegetation. Again, we passed through windmill city. They were forty feet tall with three twelve foot spokes, most were pure white, though some had scaffolding like bases. They stood in lines thirty across and ten deep, scattered through the foothills as if placed for scenic effect by a landscape artist.

We had a detour off the highway and discovered we were not longer in the desert, but deep in the heard of farm country. Within 10 miles, we saw a dairy farm, what looked like migrant workers picking lettuce, thoroughbred horses, and rose gardens.

It became cloudier as we grew closer to the water. We had read on an information plaque at the Living Desert that n the desert because of the lack of humidity, 90% of sun's rays reach the earth, while in areas with lots of water, the atmosphere reflects over 50%, leaving only 40% of the sun's rays hitting the earth. However, we were still not exactly prepared for San Diego to be so cool. We wore jeans and jackets to walk around Balboa Park. There was a horticulture festival and the

flowers were everywhere. Though there were many varieties of perennials, cactus, and wildflowers everywhere, we were most captivated by the rose garden. It was about an acre or so and covered with bushed that were covered with blossoms. There were roses of every kind and color: bright primary color reds and yellows, deep blood reds, blushing pinks, pastel peaches, and snow whites. The leaves and branches were healthy deep greens and dark reds. Some blossoms were six inches across. Some single branches had six or eight such blossoms. Even the very small ones were perfectly formed, every petal in its place with no wilting or shedding.



A rose in Balboa Park.

We went to the zoo to see the Giant Pandas, and ended up spending over an hour looking at bears, big cats, and other,



Shi Shi, a giant male panda at the San Diego Zoo.

more unusual, specimens from around the world. We went to the Museum of Man, and were somewhat disappointed it was not organized in such a way to easily step through history in the order it occurred. Walking back to the car, we ignored some warning signs and took a shortcut through a ravine. Jennifer slipped in the mud, getting her jeans and T-shirt filthy. She changed in the parking lot and we proceeded to our hotel.

Staying in a city Marriott again was welcomingly familiar. We took full advantage, worked out, played tennis, ran along the harbor, roamed the shopping village and restaurant row in the evenings, and used the in-room high speed Internet connection. The Marriott Marina was adjacent to a “Marine Park.”

There was one information sign that told of the wildlife in the area, but the only specimen we saw were seagulls. There were many other information signs along the harbor in the park, but they displayed only apologies that the content was not yet decided upon but would be sometime in the future. We got the impression that, unlike other parks labeled “Marine” where marine stood for marine life, in this case, marine stood for powerboats. They were by far the dominant species in the vicinity.

In between these activities, we drove out to a beach south of the city, Border Field State Park. We wanted to see the Pacific, to complete our traversal of the country. In fact, only Michael had actually done the complete traversal, as Jennifer started

from home, but Shea Stadium is on the bay. “Rim to rim,” Michael smiled, his Grand Canyon drive becoming a microcosm of the larger journey. We congratulated ourselves on making it all the way to the Pacific Ocean, and marveled that we had done it in a car.

It was too cool for us to picnic or swim, though the only other park visitor was sunbathing. But we took a long walk on the sand, watching the waves roll in. The State Park bordered of Mexico, and the US Border Patrol watched us from their sports utility vehicles, beachcombers, and helicopters. We smiled and nodded at them, but they were all official decorum. We stopped at Imperial Beach for lunch at the end of the Pier. The staff was

enthusiastic, a young woman praised out order as encompassing the freshest selections of the day, as if that meant we must be clairvoyant. As a young man hailed us over the counter, he declared that our fresh halibut and swordfish sandwiches were the most perfect he had made and so were the onions rings.

The sun was hot enough to make our walk on the pier pleasant. We were entertained by struggling surfers that never seemed to stand for more than 3 seconds. Our later walk through the San Diego Gas Lamp District was also pleasant. Even though the young men hawking seemed in top physical condition, we were not feeling so weak as to take advantage of human-bicycle-powered taxi services. We had a



The Pacific Ocean at Border Field State Park.

superb Italian meal in the Acqua Al 2, a restaurant patterned after one of the same name in Florence.

Miles traveled:	263
Departure datetime:	Thursday, May 23, 11:00AM
Departure weather:	68° Sunny