

It was hard to leave Grand Canyon behind this morning, but we know there are many more wonderful places to come. Before we left, we were treated to a special guest arriving by helicopter at the hotel. Obviously a sleigh is not Santa's preferred mode of transport at the Grand Canyon. He arrived with Mrs Claus via helicopter while we were having breakfast!

Most of our 4 hour drive today was through pretty uninteresting desert landscape, but we did have a few interesting stops along the way to break things up. First up was Winslow Arizona, where we just had to stand on the corner. Apart from the very famous corner, there's not a lot going on in Winslow. Our next stop was Holbrook and that was even more backwards than Winslow. These are classic small towns that appear to be kept alive by people who are nostalgic about Route 66. They are great fun for a quick visit though. It was lunch time when we were in Holbrook, so we fine-dined at Joe and Aggie's cafe.



We had planned to stop soon after at The Painted Desert in Petrified Forest National Park. However they were doing bridge repairs at the interstate off ramp and it was a major detour to get there. We decided to drive straight through to our destination instead and spend more time at Canyon de Chelly. Canyon de Chelly is part of the Navajo Nation, a semi-autonomous Native-American governed territory. There is a 16 mile south rim drive that goes out to the Spider Rock overlook. Spider Rock is an amazing sandstone spire that rises 800 feet from the canyon floor. We were surprised to find lots of snow at the Spider Rock overlook and even more in the canyon floor. We've come to the conclusion that the steep sided canyon doesn't get much sun in the winter so the snow doesn't melt easily.

The views of the canyon and Spider Rock were just beautiful, especially with all the snow around. The kids loved the canyon but I think they loved playing in the snow even more. The snow is so light and fluffy here, vastly different from their last experience of snow in October at The Remarkables.















We are staying at Sacred Canyon Lodge tonight, a Navajo owned lodge inside the National Monument. It's all built in Pueblo style with Navajo furnishings, so we very much feel like we are in the Navajo Nation. It is definitely off-season here with maybe 4 other cars in the whole complex. Most of the time we were at Spider Rock we had the whole place to ourselves. We fine-dined again tonight, this time at the lodge cafeteria. The food was pretty average but it was quick and easy, and left us time for a nice relax in the evening.

Tomorrow we continue the road trip into Colorado. If the weather is kind we are hoping to walk into the canyon before we leave - but the forecast is for possible snow tonight so who knows what we'll wake up to.