

Trip 2 – Episode #20 – Big Bend National Park – Part 3

After our fourth day at Rio Grande Village, it was time to move on. But we'd only really explored about a quarter of Big Bend. Everything we read said that the road through the Chisos mountain range, the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive and the Santa Elena Canyon would provide us with an amazing experience and we weren't disappointed.

Again, lots of photos, not much need for words. You're welcome.







At one point we saw a sign that pointed to the Sotol Vista. We never miss a chance to see a vista. And this was one of the best ever. 360 degrees of magnificence. We'll attach a video of the 360, but here are a few stills. We met some other travellers there – ranchers from the Houston area - and had a lovely chat with them. The awe of nature brings everyone together.







After taking in the vista,
we continued on toward
Santa Elena Canyon,
which we could see off in
the distance, long before
we got there. It's that
notch in the ridge in the
photo below.



Of course there was still lots to see before we got there.



We saw a sign for Tuff's Canyon and stopped to take a look. We found a trail we could walk along that allowed us to see right down into the canyon. Very dramatic.





Here's evidence
that we were
actually there
and these aren't
photos I grabbed
from the internet.



And below, more
of those odd
looking pink-
purple cacti.



We continued on toward Santa Elena Canyon, with me snapping as many shots on the way as I could.



And even when we got close to the notch, it still seemed far away.



When we finally walked between those two ridges, we discovered that it was right on the Rio Grande.



And in order to get to the trail in the canyon, we had to ford the Rio Grande!



Some tried an alternate route, but that looked a little too challenging for us.

So we just walked, shoes and all to get to the other side. (There's also a video below capturing the gripping drama of our valiant journey, with music even!) But it was worth it, even though our shoes will never be the same.







As we climbed higher to each lookout point, the views, each way, got better and better.









Okay, we confess,
we didn't make it
all the way to the
end of the trail.

The fact is, we felt
like we'd seen so
many magnificent
views, and we
still had miles to
go before we
slept.

And of course ,
we had to ford
the mighty Rio
Grande again!

So we turned
back, and caught
a few more shots
along the way.





This photo is the last view of our time in Big Bend National Park, a truly memorable experience. Thanks again to Jeannie Eichler. It was a definite high point.



We weren't sure where to stay once we got out of Big Bend. There were a few possibilities. Like Study Butte, which the young man in the convenience store we stopped at pronounced "Stoody Beutay".

We parked there briefly. Fortunately it wasn't a Thursday.

There didn't seem much reason to stay, so we carried on.

The scenery continued to be interesting but the camping options were few.



We finally settled on a campground in Presidio. The people we met at the campground were very friendly, but we have to say we did not feel compelled to stay in Presidio, which seemed to be pretty much of a ghost town.



We did find a Mexican restaurant that prepared delicious nachos and brisket burritos.

But we were ready to move on to places that were a little more interesting. So we stayed the one night in Presidio, and got a pretty nice sunset.



The next morning, we set out to find spots of greater interest. And boy did we find them!