

Trip 5 – Episode #2: Valley of Fire

Valley of Fire doesn't sound like the kind of place you'd drive an hour to get to. It sounds more like a place – or a movie – I'd run the other way from.

But just before we left Toronto, we had dinner with our friend, Jennifer Ward, and she told us about Valley of Fire State Park. She said it was about an hour out of Vegas and we *had* to go. And so we did.

After the glitz and fake beauty of Las Vegas, what she described seemed like the right place for us.



We entered the park, and at first, it seemed no different from so many of the places we'd driven through.



Okay, so they have big horn sheep. That's pretty cool. But still...



But then, things started turning red.



And then there was more red. And weird and interesting outcroppings of red.





And then everything was red. Like it was on fire. (As the name suggests) And from here on, I have to apologize, once again, for the number of photos. There was just so much to take in and at every bend in the road there was another jawdropping sight.



We were able to book a night in one of the campgrounds. This was our spot. We couldn't believe our luck.



After claiming our spot (it was first come, first served), we drove around to see as much of the park as we could.



Every moment was eye-popping.



We stopped a few times, and hiked a bit to see things from different perspectives.





In some areas, there were a variety of colours, pastels and creamy tones.









We even saw some more bighorn sheep – females this time.





Eventually we got as far as we could go – to White Domes Trail.



Here, we went for a *real* hike. Okay, it was only about a mile and a half, but for us, that's a real hike. And it was breathtaking – in lots of ways.



We met some people coming up in the opposite direction and they assured us that this part was the most difficult part of the trail.



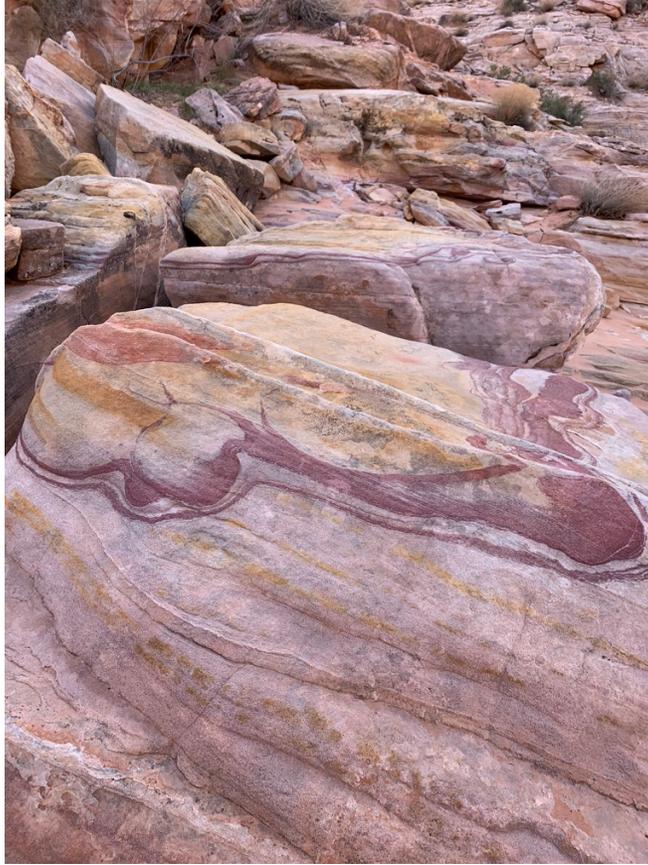


We passed this area where they noted that Valley of Fire had been the location for numerous movies, TV shows and commercial shoots. Not at all surprising to discover that Star Trek used it. The place definitely has an Other Worldly feel to it.





These almost looked like pictographs, but there was no signage suggesting that they were, so I guess it's just natural art.



We met up with a couple who took our photo, and we took one for them.











On the way back to our campground, we saw another herd of bighorn sheep. It was a banner day!



And we were still amazed at all the different colours and contours.





We got back to our campsite in time to catch the last bit of sun hitting the far ridge. It was an exhilarating day.



The next day, we drove out a different way, so we got to see a bit more of this incredible state park.



One of the stops was Elephant Rock, as Jim so brilliantly points out.



And if you squint, you can see the emaciated elephant. With Jim's help, of course.



We can't believe we'd never heard of Valley of Fire before.
We can't believe how incredible the place was.
We can't believe anyone would choose Vegas over Valley of Fire.
We can't thank our friend Jennifer enough for telling us about it.

