

Trip 5 – Episode #4: Joshua Tree National Park, Again

Last February, we decided to go to Joshua Tree National Park, which we'd read and heard much about. But we were unable to get a camping spot, so we only spent part of a day driving through it, with our mouths agape.



This time, we managed to get a camping spot, so we were able to explore it more. Which meant our mouths were agape for a lot longer.

For the first while, it's kind of typical desert landscape.



Then you get to the cholla cactus garden, which is pretty cool.



They're such interesting looking cacti. They look kind of cuddly, and in fact they're called the "teddy bear cactus". But, of course, cuddling them would not be a good idea. In fact, if you brush against a cholla spine, and it hooks onto you, a segment of the cactus will break off, allowing you carry it off and help propagate the species.



So they're actually pretty smart, for a cactus.

The other thing that's so interesting about this garden is that it goes on and on ... and then it stops. And you don't see any cholla cacti again. (Unless of course, you've carried one of their stowaways to a new home.)



But then, what you start to see is Joshua Trees (after which the park is named) and these incredible rocky formations.



In many ways, the striking rocky outcroppings are similar to what we saw in Valley of Fire State Park. They've just got a different palette.



Our camping spot was in the Jumbo Rocks Campground.



And it was pretty spectacular.





Once we were settled in our spot, we went for a little walk to see our surroundings.



As you can see by our clothing, it was a little chilly. But still amazing.









It wasn't a magnificent sunset, but that was okay. Because everything else was magnificent.





The next morning, we left our campsite and drove through the rest of the park, stopping a couple of times explore more of this extraordinary landscape.

This is called Skull Rock, for obvious reasons.



When we climbed higher, the weird formations continued as far as we could see.



So often, it looked as though someone had carved faces or characters in the rock.





When we continued driving, we got into the park where the Joshua Trees take over.
And they're in interesting sight.



We didn't think we could pass by this sign without checking it out.



But, though we searched high...

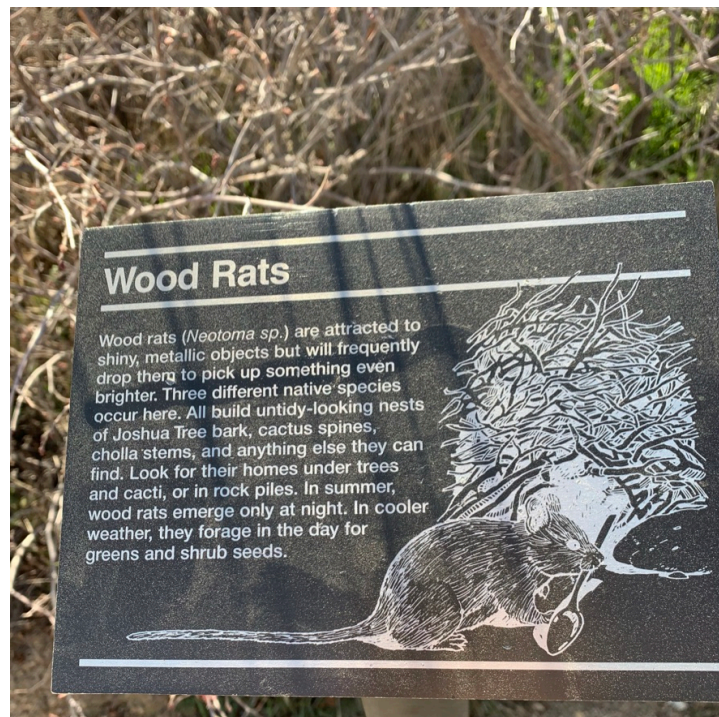


And low ...



We didn't find anything horrifying.

We may, however, have solved a mystery. On this sign, we read about the Wood Rat, which apparently is attracted to – and may steal – shiny things. In the sign, we see it carrying off a spoon. So, we may have found out what happened to our missing fork.



We continued on through Joshua Tree National Park, happy that we returned to enjoy its wonder.







And ready to move on to our next adventure.

To do that, we had to follow – yes it's actually called this – Old Woman Springs Road.



So, this old woman and her husband followed that road ...



And it got us where we needed to go.