A Grand Road Trip in the Majestic Western USA

After the dust settled on our Hyundai Elentra there were 5300 miles, eight states, and nine national parks of travels behind us. It was the first domestic vacation that I had taken in a number of years and I didn’t want to get cheated. It was time to knock Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon off the list. There were many highlights and many awe-inspiring moments in nature where all you could do is say ‘wow.’ At the end of the summary I will tell you what we would do if we were to do it all over again. We started and ended in Las Vegas and completed a 22 day loop that went up the west coast, east to Yellowstone, south to the Grand Canyon, and then back to Vegas. We stayed mostly in Airbnbs with a few nights in hotels. Here is summary organized by our overnight stops:   
  
**Las Vegas (1 night)**. Seda had never been to the Strip so, after arriving on our flight, we quickly checked into an Airbnb located a couple miles away, grabbed a very tasty pizza at Gramaldi’s (highly recommend!), and headed for the Bellagio. Going through this joint pretty much gives you a summary of the Strip with the endless gambling options and also the elaborate botanic garden. After seeing the water show out front and ambling around for another hour or so we called it a day.   
  
**Death Valley (1 night)**. We were lucky (unfortunate?) enough to visit Death Valley in the hottest recorded month in history. It hit 130 Fahrenheit on the scale at the visitor center while we were there. As soon as you got out of the car it simply felt like you were in a furnace. It was overwhelming unlike any other weather-related feeling I’ve had before. You could do much other than a quick couple minutes to snap a picture at each site. We check out Artist’s Drive, Badwater, Mesquite Flat sand dunes, and Zabriskie Point. I suppose with more time and a little less severe heat there would be other interesting things to do. On the way to the park I was happy to snag some yummy desert honey at a corner with the honey truck and an ice cream shack. We stayed at a nice Airbnb that night in Cedarhurst, CA. We bought our national parks year pass card here for $80 and definitely got our money’s worth out of it with so many national parks and monuments that followed.   
  
**Sequoia/Kings Canyon & Yosemite National Parks (3 nights)**. Next, we based ourselves in Fresno and made day trips in to Sequoia, Yosemite, and then Kings Canyon National Parks. Seeing the forests of giant redwoods was certainly one of the highlights for me on the trip. There is nothing like walking and driving amongst these majestic giants. I only wish we had had time to do more hikes in these two parks. In Sequoia the visitor center itself is a highlight as it is situated underneath the redwoods with an excellent set of trails leading out behind it. We hiked there for a while and then headed over to complete the hike to Moro Rock. The rock is huge and leads out to fantastic views of the surrounding area. The cut out walking leading to the top is interesting in and of itself. We then headed over for the short hike to see the General Sherman tree before sunset. 