

## Trip 2 – Episode #27 – The Middle of Nowhere and the Center of the World

Who hasn't, at some point in their lives, exclaimed that they were "In the Middle of Nowhere"?

Well, as we drove through Arizona toward California, we actually found ourselves officially *there*. Or at least that's what the sign said. Who knew the Middle of Nowhere was in Sentinel, Arizona?



We have to admit, we didn't feel inclined to drive the few extra miles to get to the so-called Middle of Nowhere. The prospect of Gas, Diesel, Food and Historic Sites didn't convince us to go check it out. But we thought it was amusing enough to double back so I could get a photo of the sign. Ah, the way we suffer for our art.

A little over an hour later, we finally made it to California.

When we left Toronto at the end of November, we had expected we'd be in California for Christmas. We were only off by about a month. We had no idea there would be so many distractions along the way. Like doubling back to get photos of signs that say things like The Middle of Nowhere.

One of the first things we learned when we got to our RV park in Yuma, right on the California side of the border, was that even though the sign said we were now in the Pacific Time Zone, we weren't.



Because so many people go back and forth across the border between Arizona and California every day, they don't acknowledge the time change. So even though we were officially on California Time we were still on Arizona time.



The RV resort was, as advertised, right on the Colorado River.

We got a spot about as close as was possible to the river. Which meant we could see it through the greenery across the roadway. And that was just fine.



Once again this was a community of many residents who stay every year for the winter months. These people have a trailer parked there, or a manufactured home on the grounds, so they pay for it all year, and many of them have really made it their home.

They build out decks and gardens, and add decorative features that make a statement, both visually and literally.







I spoke to some of the regulars and they told me that the owners of the park had pretty much given up on trying to maintain the riverfront, so the residents had taken it over. With pretty nice results.



There were some nice views on the path along the river. And during our three-day stay, we got one gorgeous sunset.





We met a couple of our neighbours. One, April, was from Alberta, and we had a nice chat as she was riding around on her bike with her dog Charlie in the rear basket.



We also spoke to our neighbour Willy, who is 92 and has been going to that park for 25 years. I asked him the all-important question, “Where should we go next?” and he told us about Felicity. Also known as “The Center of the World”. How could we miss that?



Okay, at first you might think, “Oh I didn’t know that was the Centre of the World.” But then the smart ones among us (meaning all of you) would say, “Wait a second. How can there be a Centre of the World? Isn’t *everywhere* the Centre of the World?”

Well, there are two people who decided that Felicity, California *is* the Centre of the World. And they happen to be the town’s two residents, a French-American named Jacques-André Istel, and his wife Felicia, after whom he named the town.



Apparently he wanted Felicity to be officially acknowledged as the Centre of the World, and he managed to convince both Imperial County, California and France’s Institut Geographique National, to legally recognize the area on his land as the official Centre of the World.

Then he went on to build monuments to commemorate the special spot.

He built a pyramid to mark the actual Centre.



The “Stairs to Nowhere”, a 25-foot spiral staircase is actually from the [Eiffel Tower](#), although its purpose in Felicity is decorative. (I couldn’t help wondering if I stopped halfway up the stairs, I’d be in the Middle of Nowhere.)



And he built a chapel. Admitting that he’s not especially religious, he said “But if you’re going to build a House of God, it’s got to be on the highest spot.” So he brought in 150,000 tons of dirt for a hilltop to build the chapel on.



And in case you're wondering what those triangular pieces are in front of the chapel, they're granite panels on which he is having the history of the world engraved.

The panels include everything that he deems worthy of telling future generations, from the history of humanity to the Marine Corps Korean Wall Memorial. There are currently close to 500 engraved panels.

Unfortunately, we didn't have the time to properly explore the Centre of the World, which we really felt badly about, especially since the *entire* population of Felicity came out to greet us.



So, in the space of a few days, we had been from the Middle of Nowhere to the Centre of the World. And really, it's all just about your perspective, isn't it?

For us, the Centre of the World was about to be San Diego.