

Attu's Adventures in Grand Canyon National Park



**Written and Photographed by
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Leaving our hotel in Flagstaff, Arizona, Mingo and I pass through the magical San Francisco Peaks. In the glow of the rising sun, brilliant colors awaken my bear brain to another pleasurable day traveling to a new locale for more research, exploration and, of course, fun! In a few hours these bear eyes will be absorbing the beauty of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River.

Right now, we are in awe of the stunningly beautiful, forested, extinct volcanoes along the way. Humphreys Peak is the reigning peak in this chain and the tallest mountain in Arizona at 12,633 feet above sea level. Humphreys Peak is also the only area in Arizona with a tundra life zone. Why is there an arctic tundra life zone in such a warm place?

This zone exists because of the high elevation! At over 12,000 feet, Humphreys Peak is much cooler than the surrounding Colorado plateau which has an average elevation of only 7,000 feet. For every one thousand feet of elevation gain, the temperature drops approximately four degrees. This means if it were a balmy 50 degree day on the Colorado plateau, it would be a freezing 30 degrees at the summit of Mount



Humphreys. Winter weather for some, but not for my furry body! So with enough elevation, even a desert climate can have a tundra life zone!

Would you like to stand on the highest and coolest place in Arizona? That would be a great peak to climb!



Wow! What an unbelievable panorama before my polar bear eyes. The canyon is much more spectacular than I thought possible. This canyon is a grand canyon!

As the rays of the early morning sunrise penetrate into the canyon, I enjoy

watching as colors explode from the different rock layers. Reds, purples, greens, tans, whites and dark rocks join into a delightful symphony of color. All I can feel is awe-inspired by this immense vista!

The Grand Canyon is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. As I look out across the canyon, I notice the differing widths of this magnificent canyon. The two rims of this 277 mile long canyon can be less than 4 miles apart or as far as 18 miles apart. While the canyon's maximum depth is 6,000 feet, the average depth is about 4,000 feet. Grand Canyon National Park boasts about 1,218,375 acres of land and has some of the best white water rapids in America. Grand Canyon is also a hiker's paradise with hundreds of miles of rugged trails leading to beautiful, pristine places.

I sure hope Mingo does not want to explore all those beautiful places. I will be a very tired bear if that happens. I hope to meet you along some of these cool trails.



What an incredible and breathtaking adventure Grand Canyon exploration entails! Meeting new friends and hooking up with old ones was also wonderful. I learned so many facts about Grand Canyon, its geology, history, plant life, recreational activities and animals from my new ranger friends, Ranger Jenny and Mingo. Plus, I saw elk in the meadows and Big Horn Sheep on the trails.



Hiking was tiring but also very pleasant, and Mingo and I ate in many of the restaurants on the rims and even in town. If that happens too often I might even start to miss Mingo's soup dinners. Well, maybe not! Absolutely not!

Of course, I cannot miss talking about the fantastic sunsets over this chromatic canyon. The colors and formations are magnificent, something I will remember for my entire life. I think you will love these sights too! When you visit the Grand Canyon, I hope you have as much fun as I had.



Be sure to do some hiking so you can see the canyon from a different perspective – from the bottom. You will be handsomely rewarded for your effort. I hope to see you on the trail or on the rim soon!

