

Austin Sept 27 - Oct 2, 2008

Idyllic weather - high 80's day
low 70's night

Long day - 2 flights
Seat Phx OK, Phx to Aus very uncomfortable
in small, regional plane w/ rock hard seats
(thank god for my seat pad)
We did not like US Airways -
numerous swly people, incl. one on
the first flight who made us stow
our butt pads in our luggage, else
considers them a 3rd piece of luggage.
mine wouldn't fit in my suitcase so
I strapped it on my back under
my backpack and she couldn't see
it there. I got mad, which didn't
feel good. People around me were
egging me on and encouraging me
in my ~~to~~ attempts to wear the pad.

Got lost looking for hotel using
Google. Freeways here are incredibly
confusing - tangled webs. But getting
lost is a great way to learn your

way around a place.

Our hotel is very nice, it's "green" and has lots of nice touches, like mini "Bell Brand" soaps & suede-like bedspread. Also has a kitchen & living room & free wireless. Also solar panels & herb gardens all around & bench on porch.

Drove to downtown for dinner at The Iron Works. Food was mediocre. Atmosphere was nice though - quiet, with a back patio overlooking a creek.

Walked up to 6th St, which was a truly seedy ^{low-bottom} scene of dive bars & down & out people. Like Pioneer Square meets Broadway. The bars that did have music were incredibly loud.

Drove back thru very low-income n'hood looking for grocery. Kind of depressing...

Grackles in trees - noisy!

Sunday Sept 28

183 S to Lockhart & finally found a grocery store - they're called HEB here. Makes for many bad puns (Heb'en)

Impressions so far:

Lots of churches & McCain signs

A few yellow wildflowers still blooming

lots of radio stations - about 1/2 Spanish

Scenery - ^{farm} ranchland - like drab version of

E. WA with some cactus

Sultures

Gorgeous front porches

Lockhart: small town w/ beautiful old courthouse

Grant got sausage sandwich at Black's

ACL (Austin City Limits) festival is this weekend. Like Bumbershoot but better music.

But expensive, crowded, & sold out, so we're not going.

I-35 S to Guerne. I-35 is UGLY.

Guerne is cute but touristy. A lot like Winthrop but better flowers.

Had a good turkey/swiss melt on German dark bread on a breezy patio w/ Willie singing gospel (not live, alas). Walked down to the Guadalupe River to watch "toobers" as they're called here.

46 west to Boerne (rhymes w/ Journey). Lots of billboards, despite Lady Bird.

Cascade Caverns near Boerne.

Guide - 1/4 Cherokee, manic/depressive, recovering addict w/ a nose ring. Turned out to be an architecture student & extensive traveller. Uncle is CIA bigwig in Mexico.

Almost had the tour to ourselves but at the last 2nd 8 more people showed up. The cave is beautiful, though not as spectacular as some.

Barbecue
D.V.S.

Roasted corn

Armadillo
windy weather
trees

Roasted corn - (grilled)

shuck

grill for a few min.

wrap loosely in foil

grill 35 min.

Stopped to buy roasted corn from a friendly old guy at a roadside stand. Yummy.

Lots more smokers here.

Lots of prickly pear cactus.

From this point on, just lots of driving:
Bardonia to Fredericksburg to Lukenbach to
Driftwood & back.

The Salt Lick BBQ in Driftwood was great. Best restaurant potato salad & coleslaw I've had. Beans & brisket were yummy too. Nice atmosphere, lots of stars outside.

Some of the scenery was very pretty, but not as pretty as many places we've been.

roadrunner!

Baldwood

Bitter than
DICK

Monday Sept. 29

Hamilton Pool Preserve was incredibly magical. You walk 1/4 mile along a fairyland creek with bald cypress, knees sticking up, to a green pool surrounded by a limestone amphitheater, ferns & stalactites dripping from the ceiling, the sound of trickling, dripping water (it's a waterfall in the rain). Lovely water temperature. Swam until I saw a branch floating in the water that wasn't a water moccasin!

Loud people, so come early & on a weekday.

Pedernales Falls St. Pk:

Roadrunner on
across
road!
Found a rural back road to get us here, avoiding 290. Gorgeous high plateau scenery much like E. Oregon. The Falls, though low right now (long drought) were gorgeous. Turquoise blue pools on a granite(?) rock slope. Very toasty out, but a nice breeze helped.

Jaybirds Tues

Drove back to Zilker Park, which was a mess after the 3 day music festival. Found the native center, where it had been suggested we might see an armadillo back in the Preserve, but no such luck.

Then drove to Barton Springs Pool, which wasn't as nice as I'd thought it would be.

Grant's blood sugar was high so we came back to the hotel to rest.

Dinner at Threadgill's was not very good... The place is famous because it's where Janis Joplin started out.

Tuesday

Conference in downtown Austin. Walked up to beautiful Capitol Bldg on morning break. Walked down to river at lunch - hot! Guadalupe River is pretty & there's a hike/bike trail along both sides.

Grant picked me up at 5 and we drove to "SoCo" (South Congress) district.

Awesome folk art store called Turquoise. The proprietor regaled us with ~~their~~ stories of his trips to buy directly from artisans.

They buy pottery from a town in Chihuahua called Casa Grandes, where it's blisteringly hot, far away from anywhere, and you ~~have~~ can't put anything on the floor at night due to all the scorpions & snakes.

Dinner at Guero's Taco Bar was good, not great, Tex Mex. After dinner stroll through hip, ramshackle neighborhood of bungalows - a small one was selling for \$549K!

While Grant was packing he realized that his camera & sweatshirt were stolen from the car last night - he had thought he locked it, but he must have pushed the wrong button in the dark.

Wednesday morning up early to drive Grant to the airport, then back to conference.