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Subject: Postcard

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Last night we went to La Ventana, the best restaurant in Grants, New Mexico. In a town the size of Grants "best" does not necessarily mean "good". But in this instance it was very good. We each had Ray's Pasta, a tasty creation of shrimp, spinach, mushrooms, tomatoes and olive oil over penne pasta.



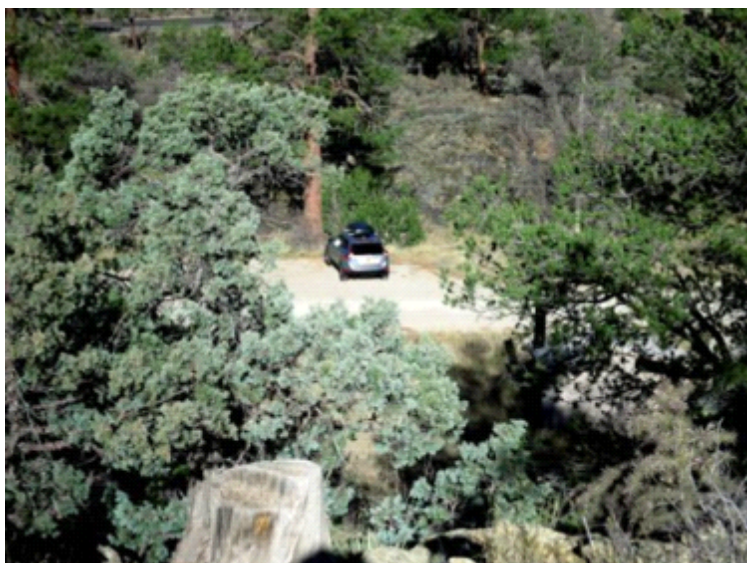
This morning we again went to La Ventana but this time it was the stone arch in El Malpais National Monument. El Malpais translates directly as The Bad Country. It is an endless field of old lava in which only a few hardy conifers survive.



Sandstone bluffs, too tall to be covered by the lava flow, stand in the bleak, black landscape. La Ventana (the arch) is part of one of the bluffs. It can be accessed from the road but we chose to hike to an observation point on one of the bluffs.



So we took the Narrows Rim Trail. We didn't know much about it because the ranger station hadn't opened yet when we stopped in. But we found the trailhead and parked the car.



We said see ya later to Vici and began our slog up the bluff. We were not deterred by the loose sand nor the ankle twisting stones that a demented orthopedist had strewn on the sand nor the 86 anthills that we passed. Nor did we turn back when a tree clobbered Sheila on the head or when the hike turned out to be 2 miles farther than the website said. We just crunched a lot of red ants and trooped to the top.

It was pretty on the bluff, and we could keep that feeling as long as we didn't look over the edge at the wasteland.







Finally made it to the top.



Yes there was a view of La Ventana but it wasn't worth a dang. Too early in the day and the sun was behind it. We left. We made lunch. We ate. We drove to the La Ventana parking area along the road. Now we could actually see it.





La Ventana translates as The Window. Yes you can see through it. No there's nothing to see.



We were up there, where the cloud is touching the rock.

Tonight we'll revisit La Ventana (the restaurant). In case you were wondering, it has no windows at all.

D&S