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## Day 1 – South Kaibab Trail

There is no car parking at the trailhead so we caught the Hikers' Express bus at the Back Country Information Center. The express buses only run at 6, 7 and 8 AM and having to be on a schedule was stressful. J



South Kaibab is one of only two trails from the South Rim to Phantom Ranch. Bright Angel is more popular because it has potable water in several places and has a gentler slope– 10 miles to Phantom Ranch versus 7.5. South Kaibab is chosen for one of three reasons: 1) you see that it's shorter and think you're real smart; 2) you don't care what happens to your knees and calves; 3) or you want some variety. We were a #3.





There had been a rockslide so we cleared the trail.



Proud member of the mooch brigade. These fat squirrels dogged our every step, ready to pounce on a dropped pretzel or an unguarded bag of trail mix. Ever vigilant, we warded them off with hiking sticks and colorful curses.





This is Ooh Aah Point – so named because, starting here, you say those words as you step.



We met this guy looking for the Lost Dutchman. Trust us, he would have much better luck looking for a lost German.



Ooh! Ooh! Aah! Aah!



First time we had seen a freight train. Phantom Ranch is wholly dependent on mule transport for good stuff down, trash up, and private duffle both ways. This baggage looked happier than a lot of the riders we saw.



The black bridge signals a mile to Phantom Ranch.





The river's real green right now. Everyone seemed to have a theory about why it's so green. We think it's due to its color.



Our cabin. It was built in the 1920's. Inside are two sets of bunk beds designed for hobbits or creatures even more diminutive. The hot water faucet is disconnected and the water closet is actually a closet. Two wooden chairs bring you to a new level of discomfort if you sit on them for more than five minutes. There is sufficient space between the door and the floor to allow for interesting visitors, the interior lighting is dim, the only window with a screen won't open and the curtains don't cover the windows. It still beats the hell out of tent camping.

We ate some lunch. Is Snickers and Peanut M&M's lunch?

Supper was a peppery beef stew with lots of green beans, carrots and potatoes. It comes in a pass-around metal pot with a huge ladle and one full scoop is a meal. The second last guy to serve himself took two scoops and handed the empty pot to the last guy (Dana. Nice man. Lives in St. Ann's, IL). Yes, even down there. There was a green salad with ranch dressing, cornbread as dry as New Mexico and for dessert we had chocolate cake. The cake is also dry. We remembered from last time to cut off the bottom half and just eat the top with the icing. Others at our table were soon doing the same. Oh, and we were able to get Dana some stew from the kitchen.

D&S