

Published April 1, 2009 on www.travelblogs.com in response to the query:

Travel Destinations that Surprised Us

My response was one of twelve travel bloggers' responses chosen to print.

Grand Canyon, USA. (Tammie Dooley from [Solo Road Trip](#))

My son and I set out for the Grand Canyon to celebrate his graduation from HS. Seventeen hours later a parking lot filled with buses, crawling with fellow travelers, greeted us. Both of us had envisioned the Grand Canyon with its sweeping vistas of color, water, sky – not this. We'd projected ourselves into a pristine environment, feet dangling over the side of a steep drop-off, wind ruffling our hair. Struggling to a point that finally provided a glimpse of the canyon, we returned to the car dejected by our disillusion. At the exit a Ranger asked how we'd enjoyed the Grand Canyon. "We were hoping for something, uhhh, quieter with better views." The Ranger said, "I don't know how much time you have, but if you travel to the North Rim of the canyon you'll get what you came for. Only 10% of the people seeing the Grand Canyon see the North Rim. There's only one drawback, it's a 5 hour drive from here." We thought "exclusivity, feet dangling over the sides, wind ruffling our hair – we're there!" Wildlife, sunshine, and the slightest of breezes met us this time. Giddy with seeing the panorama before us, we frolicked on the unprotected edges of the pristine North Rim until dark. It was better than anything we'd dreamed.

Actual link: <http://www.travelblogs.com/articles/12-hidden-gems-great-destinations-that-caught-us-by-surprise>