

Review of Roswell, New Mexico

This month we continue our journey around what I call the Southwest Loop which runs from Fort Stockton north along Highway 285 to Interstate 40 West to Flagstaff to I-39 south to Phoenix and back east along I-10. This route has a huge number of natural wonders and man-made attractions to experience. In the last issue we visited Carlsbad Caverns, the first stop along the Loop. In this issue we continue north to Roswell, New Mexico, for a bit more whimsical review.

Much has been written about Roswell and it's now (in)famous encounter with a UFO in July 1947. (For some background see Reference 1.) I certainly can't cover the entire argument pro and con in a short review so I will instead just discuss the town from a tourist's point of view.

Roswell is located directly north of Carlsbad along Highway 285. In town, the highway becomes Main Street where you will find such world famous attractions as the International UFO Museum and Research Center, the Cover-up Café, several souvenir stores and one McDonald's which looks suspiciously like aliens have crashed into it. Obviously the town is making the most of its notoriety but I have to say I was a bit disappointed that all of the alien related attractions seemed to be within about 1 city block of the museum.



As a skeptic, albeit an open minded one, I had expected the UFO Museum to be a bit one sided and try to push the view that the incident had involved actual aliens. The museum does a decent job of presenting both sides of the issue with eye witness accounts and artists conceptions of the alien craft but it also covers the official government account of the story. But that is where the real mystery gets interesting.

Apparently, the government's account of what transpired changed about half-a-dozen times and the museum posts these government documents as well as newspaper clippings from the time. Interestingly, they even have a copy of a report in which a government official says it was a UFO. What follows is a series of contradictory government "explanations" for the accident from weather balloon to high altitude parachute test to Top Secret Nuclear test monitoring equipment. Even as a skeptic, I can see where these contradictions would lead someone to suspect some sort of a cover-up and would hatch all sorts of



conspiracy theories. The government's honesty is certainly suspect given the inconsistencies.

After a stop at the museum, check out the nearby alien themed souvenir shops, and be sure to get your green alien antenna topper! I mean who doesn't want one of those? While walking around the area, be cautious because aliens are watching you from every light post. Finally try lunch at the Cover-up Café or the local McDonald's. (Really a poorly disguised alien craft, though the food is suspiciously earthly).



Overall, Roswell is interesting and its notoriety is a big draw. I have to admit that I wanted to stop "just because" but I'm glad I did. I wouldn't go a long way out of my way to visit, nor would I plan a vacation around the town, but if you're passing anywhere nearby, it's worth the stop.

As for the mystery of whether aliens actually crashed all those years ago, I'll have to let you visit and decide for yourself! (Cue X-files theme song and the Cigarette Smoking Man)

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Reference:

<http://www.roswellufomuseum.com/incident.htm>