

Goodbye Arizona

Written by
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Today we were up early and even though we were leaving Arizona for New Mexico on our trek east, we were in no rush to get on the road. The sun was shining, it was already 19C and the forecast was calling for more of the same weather we have been enjoying in the Verde Valley since we arrived a week ago. Our destination today was for [Gallup, New Mexico](#), a few short hours away and the forecast there wasn't as promising. They were calling for cooler temperatures, a little cloud coverage and some very high winds, not something we were looking forward to.

We drove north on Hwy I-17 towards Flagstaff, passing the same terrain we covered whenever we went to Sedona, and then drove east on Hwy I-40. We were at a higher elevation, hence the temperatures dropped, but only a little and we could feel the wind pushing us along. We are not fans of driving on the interstate highways because there are so many transport trucks on them and they typically aren't as scenic but it was really the only highway going to our destination, so... as expected there was not much to see, just flat desert, billboards and run-down house trailers, however in the distance we could see a brown haze. At first we thought it was smog but then we realized there was no major city for hundreds of miles. We thought maybe it was smoke; perhaps there was a brush fire ahead and then we realized it was a cloud of blowing dust!

As we approached New Mexico, the scenery improved immensely with beautiful rock formations but still lots of dust clouds. We'd made good time so rather than stop in Gallup, we kept going on towards Albuquerque but shortly after that, the flow of traffic slowed down. Soon enough we found out by listening to the CB radio that the highway was closed ahead due to the high winds blowing huge dense dust clouds across the road and closer to Albuquerque there was a large grass fire which was making visibility there non-existent. We were diverted to a good highway running parallel to the interstate and found an RV park that we could stay in for the night and hopefully, things would improve by morning.