

## Camping in the Desert

Written by

Wednesday, 30 March 2005 16:00

---



This morning we woke up early, a pattern we seem to have gotten into when we know we are going to be on the road. The sun was shining, the sky was cloudless and sapphire blue and the wind was blowing in from the northwest. We packed up, ate breakfast and went for one last swim in the pool (which was wonderfully warm) before we set out at 10:30 AM with the mercury reading 21C. We knew we would only be driving for less than four hours, so we took our time because we could. We drove east on Interstate 8 towards Yuma, a route that has become very familiar to us because we have driven it several times already over the past week.

When we crossed the Colorado River, we were in Arizona and we set our watches and clocks forward one hour, something we haven't done in almost a year. In Yuma we took Hwy 95 north towards the Castle Dome Mountains through the [Kofa National Wildlife Refuge](#). We were slowly climbing in elevation, to roughly 1100 feet, after having spent the past week below sea level and the change in desert vegetation was immediately obvious. There were still lots of flowering creosote bushes and hundreds of smoke trees but now there were also giant [Arizona Cacti](#) everywhere. The closer to [Quartzite](#), (our destination today) we got, the more cacti we saw and the outside temperature, which had reached 27C in Yuma, was dropping. Soon the Kofa Mountains were on the east side of the highway and the Dome Rock Mountains were on the west side. It was gorgeous!

Tonight we are camping for free in the desert. [Quartzite](#) is famous in the RV world for desert camping and apparently during the months of January and February, this whole area is a sea of RVs, upwards of 500,000. There are numerous events, from gem shows and swap-meets to a Bluegrass festival scheduled back to back for several weeks in a row drawing crowds of campers from across the continent. There are many long-term government-run campgrounds where you can get a 7-month permit for \$140 and though there are no hook-ups, there is water and a dump station on site. There are a few full hook-up parks around the town and where we are staying is free for up to 14 days but there are no dumping facilities or potable water. We want to return here, perhaps next year when the place is jammed with other RVers, (just for the experience) but for now we are content to be among a few others camping in the desert overnight.