

The Salton Sea

Written by

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We wanted to learn some more about the [Salton Sea](#), which we passed on our way from Desert Hot Springs so today we drove north again only this time on the other side of the lake. The whole area is in the midst of some very strong winds but we hoped it wouldn't affect our sight seeing abilities. We drove past more fields of sugar beets, which have been growing since they were planted last September and are due to be harvested next month. A couple of interesting things about this whole area, Imperial Valley, is that it is below sea level and it is ranked among the top 10 agricultural counties in the US. More than 460,000 acres of this area, technically desert, is highly valued farmland producing over \$1 billion annually.

Just north of El Centro there is a marker indicating that it is 100 feet below sea level and a little farther north at the city of [Calipatria](#), it is considered to be the "Lowest Down City in the Western Hemisphere" at 184 feet. By the time we reached the Salton Sea, the surface is at 230 feet below sea level, it is saltier than the Pacific and is considered to be one of the world's most productive fisheries. Apparently Tilapia are so plentiful you need no licence to fish them and it is possible to catch a hundred pounds a day! At any rate, today no one was fishing anywhere on the lake due to the high winds which caused it to be a large sea of large, foamy whitecaps.

We wanted to walk along the shores so we drove into the [Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge](#) however the wind was so intense we decided to drive a little farther instead. At one point the salty froth was blowing across the road and it left a splotchy mess all over the car, (which Rick worked on when we returned to the motorhome). The few times we stopped to take pictures left the interior of the car covered in a fine dust and we both had traces of grit in our eyes. We decided not to proceed any farther and came home after stopping to buy some groceries in El Centro. The wind is still quite strong this evening and the one thing we were most thankful for was that we weren't trying to explore the dunes today or our sightseeing may have been reduced to staying at the RV Park all day. Hopefully things will be calmer tomorrow!