

Sent: Saturday, October 1, 2022 8:21 PM
Subject: Postcard

Springsteen's song has nothing to do with either South Dakota or geology. No matter. With his song as our theme we carhopped around Badlands National Park on the Loop Road.



Carhopping is driving through a National Park, hopping out at the observation points, taking pictures, then hopping back in. It also includes short walks to official vistas often on paved or boarded paths. Carhopping is how most people see the parks. It's better than Sudoku.

Our first stop was at Yellow Dome. It is a yellow dome. It is like nothing else in the park. The rest of the park is like everything else in the park.



For example, this is Burns Basin, kind of a lumpy Painted Desert.



This is Panorama Point. It is kind of a spiky Burns Basin.



And after that almost everything looked like Burns Basin or Panorama Point.

Except possibly Fossil Trail which has a non-descript, featureless white geology and a 300 foot circular boardwalk. We figured the name came from the visitors, none of whom were under 70.



Needing a break from this endless rockiness we stole off to Wall Drug, an iconic piece of Americana just north on I-90. It's a gift shop. It's a café. It's a camp store. It's an art gallery. It's actually a drug store and it's huge and it's packed with customers. Including ourselves. We bought stuff.

Fearing for the quality of Wall Drug Café food, we ate at a nearby place called Red Rock Café. There are no red rocks around Badlands National Park but there is a great big one, suspiciously looking like it was painted, outside this restaurant. Inside there are tables, chairs and burgers so we ate. It was good. Our waitress had an endless repertoire of ketchup jokes. They were bad. Tipped her anyway.

Back to the Badlands Loop Road we probably had the best part of the ride.



Bighorn sheep (don't be fooled by little horns – it's a bighorn).



Bison butting heads. Bevis is on the right.



Then we encountered Prairie Dog Town. Must have been thousands of the little chubby guys. They made strange chirps and occasionally leaped in the air. The show was worth the drive.



Extra credit if you can correctly identify this bug. You can even incorrectly identify it. We probably won't know the difference.

We will be back.

D&S