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Strange RV Encounters: World's Largest Kokopelli and Montezuma Castle in Arizona

12



The Weird, the Wacky, and the Wonderful



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In between checking out all the [weird rock formations and energy vortexes in Sedona](#), I took a day trip to Camp Verde, Arizona, to see the World's Largest Kokopelli and Montezuma's Castle.

World's Largest Kokopelli

I'll admit I didn't know a kokopelli from a cannoli before discovering that the "World's Largest Kokopelli" was in nearby Camp Verde. The kokopelli is a Native American fertility deity depicted sporting a wild hair style similar to a mohawk, playing a flute, and waving one foot in the air. He appears to be dancing. In some depictions, he also has a large phallus, but not this particular one.

The World's Largest Kokopelli presides over the parking lot of a small strip mall, perhaps not the most dignified of places for a deity, fertility or not. Nevertheless, you can visit the 32-foot statue on Highway 260/Finnie Flat Road, just south of the I-17 and exit 287 interchange in Camp Verde, Arizona. You can't miss him -- he's bright yellow and very tall.

Montezuma's Castle -- Maybe, Maybe Not

I don't want to lie to you, Montezuma was never there. It might seem odd to name a castle after someone who never stayed there. Maybe they hoped by naming the castle after him, he would someday visit. Actually, early European settlers mistakenly believed it to be Montezuma's castle and so named it long after the Indians had vacated the premises.

[Montezuma Castle National Monument](#) was built by the Sinagua tribe around 1200 AD and was occupied for about 200 years, long before Montezuma's time. The cliff dwelling pictured housed about 35 people. It isn't obvious in the photo, but this dwelling is about 100 feet from ground level. That's a pretty big first step. Can you imagine the time it would take you to get to and from the house climbing 100 feet of ladders? What if you were carrying spoils from the day's hunt? Or just needed to go to the bathroom? (I'm pretty sure they didn't have indoor plumbing. I would not have made a very good cliff dweller.)

You can visit Montezuma Castle National Monument seven days a week. Take I-17, then exit 289. Drive east for approximately half a mile, then turn left on Montezuma Castle Road. There is a small fee to get in. The area is a bit hot during the summer and fall, but the walk to the castle is only a short 1/3-mile from the park office/gift shop.

On my next stop, I'll take you to see Seligman, Arizona, the birthplace of Historic Route 66.

To see more photos, [follow more of my weird, wacky, and wonderful RV adventures on Flickr](#).

My next stop: [Strange RV Encounters: Seligman, Arizona, Birthplace of Historic Route 66](#)

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Read how it all began: *Strange RV Encounters: An Introduction.*

Published by [Juliana Mathews](#)

In the summer of 2011, Juliana bought an RV, gave up most of her possessions and began traveling around the country with her cat, seeing all the weird, wacky and wonderful roadside attractions. She writes... [View profile](#)



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