

## Interesting Day

Written by  
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We had a slow start this morning, probably because it was cold out last night and we were in no rush to face it. Yesterday's temperatures were the lowest we have had in a while with the overnight temperature dropping down to about 8C and we just aren't used to it. We stuck around until after lunch and then we ventured out to see the [Montezuma Castle National Monument](#) and the Montezuma Well, both near here.

The temperature had recovered nicely to 24C and thankfully the weekend tourists are gone so we were able to enjoy these places without any large crowds. When Montezuma Castle was discovered by early settlers in the late 1800's, they presumed it to be of Aztec origin, hence the name. It was not a castle, however it was a dwelling built by the Sinagua people possibly as early as 900 AD but deserted by the early 1400's. Despite it's age, it is 90% original even though it endured years of unmanaged public exploration and excavation before being declared a National Monument in 1906. The history is fascinating with plenty of informative placards throughout the park and the scenery was beautiful.

From there, we drove to [Montezuma Well](#) a few miles northeast of the monument of the same name. The "well" is actually a natural limestone sinkhole surrounded by desert, a true oasis and a real mystery to modern science. Approximately 1,400,000 gallons of the 74F water flows through this well everyday and its source is still under investigation. The water is loaded with arsenic and carbon dioxide, making it inhospitable to fish, yet ducks, leeches and scorpions feast on tiny shrimp-like creatures called amphipods that do thrive in there. There is plenty of evidence in the way of ruins, artefacts and a primitive irrigation system that show this water was used by the Sinagua to water their crops. Verde Valley has some very interesting history and we feel fortunate to have learned about some of it today.