

myADVENTURES with THE EXPERT TRAVELER

ADVENTURES IN AMERICA: ARIZONA



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I'm always surprised when people seem shocked that I list the Southwest United States among my favorite places to visit. "But, Gig," they say, "you've been all over the world!" That's right, I have been all over the world – more than once – so I know true beauty when I see it.

This installment of The Expert Traveler begins a four-part series on the fabulous travel opportunities to be found across the U.S.

Not much can compare with the striking views of Mesa Verde and Monument Valley in Arizona.

Mesa Verde represents perhaps the best architectural ruins of North America. Eons ago, the Anasazi Indians of the great Southwest settled in the exceedingly beautiful plateau of this canyon area. Differing from the plains

Indians with their nomadic teepees, the Anasazi built permanent dwellings of stone and hand-mixed bricks right into the mountain cliffs.

For unknown reasons, this peaceful, agrarian people

abandoned their homes leaving for us only the legacy of their magnificent, ancient civilization. In 1906, former president, Teddy Roosevelt, named Mesa Verde a national reserve. This was one of "Teddy's Parks" preserved for future generations.

As you approach Mesa Verde National Park, the topography changes to plunging canyons and long views of mesas in a kaleidoscope of colors. The park itself is

Arizona sunsets are breathtaking especially as the backdrop for the silhouettes of the state's infamous Saguaro cacti.

