

## A numbers game - My trip to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon

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About 8 years ago, before work and family took up all my time, I quite liked travelling. One year, my girlfriend and I were travelling in the US and we decided to go to Las Vegas. Did you know Las Vegas has only been a city for just over 100 years? It was founded in 1905 and the first casino wasn't built until 1931.

We decided to visit Vegas for my birthday on February 12th. We booked a flight from California and a hotel for a reasonable price. That's when I noticed a surprisingly good deal. There was a trip to the Grand Canyon available for only \$12 each. It had to be too good to be true! But I decided to book it and see. After all, if it turned out to be a scam, I would only lose \$12.

When we arrived in Vegas at our casino hotel, we walked straight past all the tables and machines. Neither of us had any interest in gambling. We explored the hotel and the city before spending far too much on ridiculous cocktails and enjoying the night.

The next day we had our \$12 trip to the Grand Canyon. At 8 o'clock in the morning we waited outside our hotel and a huge four-wheel drive humvee came to pick us up. We got into our luxury vehicle and the tour operator drove us the 130 miles to Grand Canyon West. The whole time we couldn't help but feel like he was going to tell us that we needed to pay more!

When we got to the Grand Canyon we were directed to the Skywalk, a horseshoe shaped bridge that extends 70 feet over the edge of the canyon. After this the tour guide told us to come with him where we got in a helicopter and flew 4000 feet down to the Colorado river where we got on a boat and travelled up and down.

Following this unforgettable experience, we went back up and were bought lunch before getting back in the car and travelling, partially off-road, back to Las Vegas.

On the way back, we noticed a small sign in the car that said tour guide tips are recommended at 20% of the tour's value. We also found a brochure that showed that the tour we had paid \$12 for was worth over \$600! We did some quick maths and realised that we would be expected to give a \$120 tip for our \$12 tour.

As we pulled up to our hotel and got out of the car, we thanked the tour guide and gave him the only cash we had on us, which was \$40, before quickly walking away both delighted and ashamed by our bargain of a lifetime.