Our Visit to Salt Lake City

Visiting big cities makes it to Gary’s travel bucket list for each state, but not mine.

However, when I read that Salt Lake City is set against a rugged backdrop of the Wasatch Mountain range to the east and Salt Lake City to the west and has one of the most striking landscapes of any US city, I was excited to see the city (or at least the surrounding area).

We parked our home on wheels in West Haven, which is about 30 miles to the north of Salt Lake City. Gary and I discussed driving the dually or taking the motorcycle into the city. The motorcycle would be much easier to park, but Gary didn’t find an easy route from West Haven to the city which didn’t include traveling on the interstate. So, we took the dually.

Once in the city, we drove around looking for a place to park.
We found several underground parking garages, but we didn’t know if we would fit. Side note: We still need to measure the height of the dually.

While driving around, I saw a caution sign for falcon viewing area. And then saw this eagle.

Back at the RV, I did some research and discovered that peregrine falcons do nest atop buildings in Salt Lake City. Nature in the city, I love it!

And this eagle sculpture sits atop the Eagle Gate Monument, which is more of an archway than a gate. This archway spans 76 ft across State Street. The original gate marked the entrance of Brigham Young’s property and was erected in 1859. The original eagle was made of wood. This eagle is made of bronze, weighs 4000 pounds, and has a 20 ft wingspan. It’s quite impressive.
With no help from his iPhone or me (I hadn’t researched parking options because I didn’t know we were going into the city today), Gary pulls over, jumps out of the dually, and checks out this downtown map for parking options. While waiting, I look around and realize we’re in City Creek, a place for world-class shopping and dining in Salt Lake City.

With no help from this map, Gary decides to drive around another block. Finally, we find street-side parking with a bonus. It’s free on weekends.

After the drive and our search for parking, we realize it’s after lunchtime. With packed lunches but no park in sight, we decide on a picnic in the truck instead of carrying our lunch and trying to find a place to eat. Our picnic location proved to be a shady spot and a nice spot for people-watching.

After lunch, we had one stop to make before we could start sightseeing. We needed to return a movie to Redbox. Fortunately, Gary found a kiosk on the other side of the block. We ended up at Harmon’s in City Creek. What a place to go grocery shopping!
Our first sightseeing destination in Salt Lake City is Temple Square, which is reportedly the number one tourist attraction in Utah. Since I hadn’t researched and mapped out a plan, we simply strolled the streets and somehow stumbled upon most of the sites in and around Temple Square.

While looking for parking, we saw this house which I researched later and learned that it’s called the Lion House. This house was once part of Brigham Young’s residence and now houses the Lion House Pantry Restaurant.

After the Lion House, we saw a sign for Temple Square which led us to...
A green oasis in the center of Salt Lake City

This building is the **Church Office Building** which has an observation deck on the 26th floor. We didn’t get to see the city views, because this building was closed on Sunday.
Salt Lake City Temple
Joseph Smith Memorial Building

This building was built in 1911 as a hotel. Reportedly, every president from Taft to Reagan has stayed at Hotel Utah. Today, this building is a premier venue and event space in Salt Lake City.

A glimpse of Utah State Capitol from Temple Square
East Gate and South Visitors’ Center

At the East Gate, we learned that there are two visitor centers at Temple Square.

The South Visitors’ Center has displays detailing the construction of the temple, a scale model of the temple, and interactive exhibits showing each room of the temple. As well as a view of the temple.

Interesting note: Construction of the temple began in 1853, but it wasn’t completed until 1893. Since the Mormon’s realized that transportation of materials slowed the construction of the temple, they stopped construction to help build the transcontinental railroad. The completion of the railroad helped speed of the construction of the temple.
The Assembly Hall was constructed in the Gothic Revival Style using granite stones left over from building the temple. It was completed in 1880.

The center tower is 130 feet high and the truncated spires were originally chimneys.

Inside we admired the stained-glass windows and learned about the 3000-pipe organ.
Throughout Temple Square, we saw well-manicured grounds, stunning architecture, and interesting sculptures.
The Mormon Tabernacle

The tabernacle was completed in 1867. It is home to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Outside the tabernacle we found a walk-up tour of the Assembly Hall, Tabernacle, and exterior of the Temple. On this tour we learned...

This dome-shaped auditorium was constructed using bridge-building techniques (the dome is basically a collection of 8 bridges) and is considered an architectural wonder.

This tabernacle is known world-wide as one of the most acoustically sound buildings on earth. During the tour, they demonstrated that you could hear a pin drop from the pulpit to the back of the room, 170 feet away. Amazing!
We also had the chance to hear the famous 11,623 pipe organ during the organist’s recital practice.

After the tour, we headed to the North Visitors’ Center to see the statue of Christ that our tour guide told us we shouldn’t miss.

**North Visitors’ Center**

In the North Visitors’ Center, we saw a 14-sq-ft relief map of Jerusalem during the first century; paintings that illustrate stories from the Old Testament and of Jesus’ life; and a 11-foot statue of Jesus standing in a room that is painted to look like the Milky Way.
What a magnificent site to see!
What a wonderful place to consider God’s creation.
The LDS Church Conference Center

The LDS Church Conference Center opened in 2000. The auditorium seats 21,000 people and is considered the largest theater-style auditorium ever built. We saw people on top of this building but had no idea that they were on a 4-acre rooftop garden. Wish we had seen that!

Before Gary and I walked to the Capitol, we found a great place to have a snack in a big city while listening to the sounds of water under the shade of trees.