



Jeff's Most Overrated Places

Description

Over the years I have been to many places that I felt obligated to visit because of their popularity in guidebooks and online. Most of the time there is a good reason for the acclaim and I can accept the long lines and crowds necessary to visit them.

Other times, I find myself at a complete loss for an explanation for the hype after making the obligatory visit, and feel like I genuinely wasted my time.

Some places are just not what they claim to be. Others lack value for the cost of the experience or require too much effort to make their visitation worthwhile. And some places have become so overrun with tourists that whatever charm they once held has long ago disappeared amid the masses of humanity.

With all that in mind, here are my **Most Overrated Places**.

11. The Colosseum in Rome



How in the world is the Roman Colosseum, one of the greatest architectural triumphs of the Roman Empire, on this list? Well, take a look at the photo and then imagine the packed hordes within the structure.

Over-tourism has made the Colosseum almost unbearable in the summer. Iâ??ve been in the Colosseum twice and both times it was very crowded. Itâ??s almost impossible to appreciate this great stadium when you are wading through a mass of people struggling for space.

The ticketing process is also dominated by resellers buying up all the time slots for access as soon as they open, leaving casual tourists with no option but to substantially overpay for a chance to see it.

Of all the sites we visited in Rome, the Colosseum was by far the least enjoyable. We had a better time on Palatine Hill which has a fraction of the visitation and contains sites rarely seen by tourists, like the Domus Augusti.

See the Colosseum once, in the low season, and then spend your time elsewhere.

10. Pike Place Market

I think every first-time visitor to Seattle ends up at Pike Place Market and it isnâ??t exactly a bad place for finding local foods and souvenirs.

But other than buying a package of delicious Chukar Cherries, itâ??s not a particularly interesting place to visit.

With a ton of great museums in Seattle and terrific outdoor adventure awaiting within a two hour drive in any direction (three national parks, Puget Sound's islands, etc, and even Victoria, Canada a ferry ride away), I wouldn't prioritize on visiting Pike Place market (except as a quick stop for cherries).

9. Denver 16th Street Mall

Every time I see the Denver-area list of tourist attractions this downtown open-air mall is listed. I cannot understand why.

The 16th Street Mall contains a number of chain restaurants and stores, and nothing you can't find elsewhere.

At night it is plagued by vagrants and crime. Parking in downtown Denver is also fairly expensive and vehicle break-ins and thefts are common.

Unless you have a far different, more worthwhile reason to visit downtown Denver, don't do so in order to visit the 16th Street Mall.

8. Four Corners Monument

In case you don't know, Four Corners is supposed to mark the geographic location where four states (Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico) meet. The only such spot in the United States. The only problem is that it's not even on the correct spot. Nobody bothered to have surveyors verify the location where 4 states actually meet beforehand.

I visited Four Corners as a kid and I admit I thought it was cool. Naive as I was as a teenager. My kids still want to visit Four Corners too, and eventually we'll go just to cross it off the list for them.

But in the Four-Corners area it is by far the least interesting and least worthwhile tourist attraction.

If you go there consider it an act of charity for the local Navajo Indians who charge admission to see a fake geographic location.

7. Southern-Most Point Buoy in Key West

Speaking of incorrectly-located attractions.

In Key West there is a famous buoy that marks the "Southern-most point in the continental USA". It's not. Key West is an island and the southern-most point would be somewhere in the Florida Everglades.

The buoy isn't even the southern-most point in Key West. There is a more southerly spot in near-by Zachary Taylor State Park or a spit of land just east of it.

At the buoy youâ??ll see a long photo line of people waiting to take a family photo at the buoy, but you can save yourself the time and know that everyone in that line is being misled.

Somewhere in the Everglades is an unmarked spot of the actual southernmost point in the truly continental USA. If you find that spot without becoming an alligator or crocodile meal, be sure to take a photo!

6. White House Tour



The historic home of the US President listed as an overrated attraction?

Well, with all the hoops that you have to go through to even get into the executive mansion, starting with requesting a pass from a congressman, then the insane security line, followed by about 15 minutes of being rushed through a few rooms, it quickly becomes one of the most disappointing experiences in the capital city of the USA.

Do this once in your life as an American, and then spend time at all the more worthwhile museums and historic sites in DC.

5. Times Square

I'm sure I offended fans of NYC, but the truth is Times Square is the very definition of nothingness, dressed up in flashing lights. So I have no problem listing it here.

As devoid as Times Square may be it's not the top of the list, however.

4. Venice Beach

I could list any number of dirty, crowded beaches here but this one is kind of the epitome of the why-bother beaches. California has dozens of beautiful, clean beaches that aren't crowded and full of weirdos. I don't quite understand the whole people-watching thing but I guess if ogling down-and-out people is your thing, here you go.

Sure it has quirky charm. But still!

3. Disney Parks

Maybe I've become a grouchy, budget-conscious old dad. But this is a classic case of cost vs benefit.

Disney has some of the biggest and most impressive amusement parks in the world. But they have become so greedy in their pursuit of monetary gain that it is hard to even want to go.

One-day tickets to the parks are well over \$150 a person. Forget spending just that, however. Add in the cost of parking, food, the silly genie pass, souvenirs and you'll blast a hole through your wallet in no time.

When you leave the park having spent 3/4 of your time waiting in line in the hot sun for a total of four rides, you'll wonder why you bothered.

Some people have no issue spending tens of thousands of dollars (literally) to go on a resort vacation at Disney. But there needs to be some reasonable limit to the cost.

Children grow up watching Mickey and the characters are a part of our culture. A trip to the Disney parks are an experience that every family should be able to experience at least once. I know that for our family it was something that we wanted for our children. But it isn't something that we'd do over and over again anymore. There are too many better ways to spend the many thousands of dollars necessary for the experience.

I actually used to live close to Disneyland in Anaheim and we would end up going quite frequently when it was less expensive and more enjoyable. Back when Disney was less political and more of a happy place. But with the current state of Disney it's just not the same.

2. Aspen

Speaking of blasting a hole in your wallet. Most Coloradans know there are plenty of better and more enjoyable ski resorts than Aspen (and its posh friends Vail, Telluride, and Breckenridge).

The cost of lift tickets at these places are all over \$200 for one day. And the meal waiting for you at the bottom of the hill after a day of skiing? Caviar. Nothing says we cater to the very wealthy than to serve caviar at the apres-ski.

Yes, the scenery in the area is great, but great skiing can be enjoyed all over Colorado without the cost and exuberance.

Make no mistake, ski trips are usually pretty pricey. Even the less hoity-toity resorts have lift tickets that run in the hundreds.

Some advice:

- 1) Rent your equipment elsewhere, or buy it if you go frequently. That will save you time and money.
- 2) Go later in the season in Colorado, just after spring break for the best rates (the best snows happen in March, not December).
- 3) Ski-in, ski-out is usually worth the extra cost and convenience.

1. Hollywood Walk of Fame and Mannâ??s Chinese Theater

There are plenty of places in the LA-area that are overrated (I could even say the entire city of Los Angeles is overrated), but this attraction is the epitome of a waste of time, money and effort.

Hollywood has long been just a dirty, crowded city with expensive parking and odd-ball people hanging out on every street corner. It will likely take up most of a day just to drive into the congested heart of the city to see the stars on the sidewalk. And after you find the star of your favorite actor, you'll shrug and say "Now what?"

Parking is expensive, but you'll want a secure spot. Hollywood is a crime-infested area.

I once saw a premiere of a movie called Constantine (starring Keanu Reeves) at the Chinese Theater. Entering the theater was a memorable moment.

But once inside it's just another theater and the same movies you'll see everywhere else.

At the end of the day you'll have a hard time saying you had fun visiting Hollywood. You'll just feel like you endured a long day with little to show for the effort.

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