

Seattle trip 2006

Attractions

We were eager to visit the Space Needle made famous in the opening animation of the Frasier television series. We enjoyed a great view of the city from the top of the Space Needle and afterwards we visited the Science Fiction Museum located at ground level in the Needle's shadow. Our first encounter in the museum was of a globe on which were projected various aspects of the SciFi genre, and it was mesmerizing to us. Yep, we're total nerds. It was a big thrill to see the books of favourite authors like Ray Bradbury, Philip K. Dick, Ursula Le Guin and Madeleine L'Engle featured in the cases. In addition, memorabilia from Star Trek, Star Wars and the Alien Movies were on display. Keeb recognized the mother alien right away.

Our next visit was to The Experience Music Project and the most interesting exhibit to me was Jimi Hendrix, a Seattle native. I also got to attend an art exhibition there, for an extra five bucks, and enjoyed that very much. They had juxtaposed impressionist paintings with contemporary artists and photographers. This was all the art I got to see in this city as the fine art museum was closed for several months. Maybe they heard I was coming! Although we could not enter the fine art museum, we checked out the giant, sculpture of the man with the hammer outside. Keeb even sportingly waited for me to take a photo of it, he is quite patient with me when I go into tourist mode.

Culture

Keeb read about a tour that included Native American culture so of course I was enthused. We headed out to the Tillicum Village on Blake Island where we had a salmon lunch cooked in the tradition native way - so we were told. We were also entertained with Native American dances and stories originating from the various tribes. Some emphasised their folklore and others described traditions that were handed down. After the show one of the women who was serving drinks at lunch came outside and sang songs while beating a drum. She even sang part of a Cherokee song we knew from Rita Coolidge's "Waleela" album which was a pleasant surprise.

Entertainment

We went to Giggles comedy club one night and despite there not being any big names it was a lot of fun. My favourite comic of the night was Armenian.

Food

The two most memorable meals we had were at Daniels and Joeys. Both of which were on the waterfront near our hotel at Lake Union.

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Shopping

Two of our friends were full of praise for the Pike Street market and when we visited it we were not disappointed. It was a most diverse place. I think the open-air fish stalls were a bit much for Keeb but I took them in stride as I had seen a similar setup in La Boqueria market in Barcelona. We threaded our way past the food stalls, including the first ever Starbucks coffee shop, and found the ethnic stalls. I bought a belly dancing cd from an Egyptian proprietor. Then we hit mecca – BLMF which was the best second-hand book stall ever. Just walking in and seeing the proprietor reading was a good sign and his knowledge of books was impressive, because of his recommendations, I ended up reading books that I might not have picked up on my own. We even went back to the Pike Street market another day just to hit that book stall again.

Freakshow

Between Keeb and I, we have ridden on public transport in London, New York, Chicago and Toronto and no city can come close to the unusual characters we saw on the Seattle buses. There seemed to even be a zone for them – the closer to the bus driver the less marbles the person seemed to have. One man droned on about his guitar on boarding the bus and suddenly volunteered he was Pisces. The driver seemed unmoved by this admission. Two men with loud hillbilly voices. Keeb pointed out they could have walked out of the movie "Deliverance". They kept up the chatter until their stop and then one, without a trace of the accent and in a totally different voice thanked the driver. Keeb thought they were actors, I thought they were just plain odd. Then we sat opposite a morbidly overweight woman who yawned incessantly while the man next to me smelled of dog. I honestly did not know where to look!

When we were on the street discussing the freaks of that day, we noticed a woman behind Keeb shrouded in the plastic ponchos they use in beauty salons and colouring gel was dripping from her hair. She must have heard the tail end of our conversation because she told me "I did not run away from my appointment, I needed something from my car" and turned and went flapping down the street away from us.