

Gods Country

by Jennaye Derge



A camp spot set against a sandstone tower.

Monument Valley, Utah, certainly isn't lacking exposure in the media. Hollywood Westerns and landscape photographs have featured the vast desert panorama, with its sandstone towers and buttes. But sometimes overlooked is its lesser known neighbor, Valley of the Gods. Located just across the highway from Monument Valley and close to Mexican Hat, Utah, it is a place arguably just as spectacular with its plethora of sandstone architecture. Furthermore, whereas Monument Valley is located on Navajo land, which requires visitors to pay an entrance fee, Valley of the Gods is BLM land and can be publicly accessed completely free of charge. And while it may be lacking Monument Valley's fame and trails for exploration, it makes for a great place to pitch a tent, cozy up and share ghost stories with a mouthful of s'mores under the stars.



A lizard skitters through the cryptobiotic soils of the desert.



A snake basking in the sun reminds us to watch our step.



The blooming desert against the red rock backdrop makes for a virtual geologic kaleidoscope