



Baja Bits & Bytes

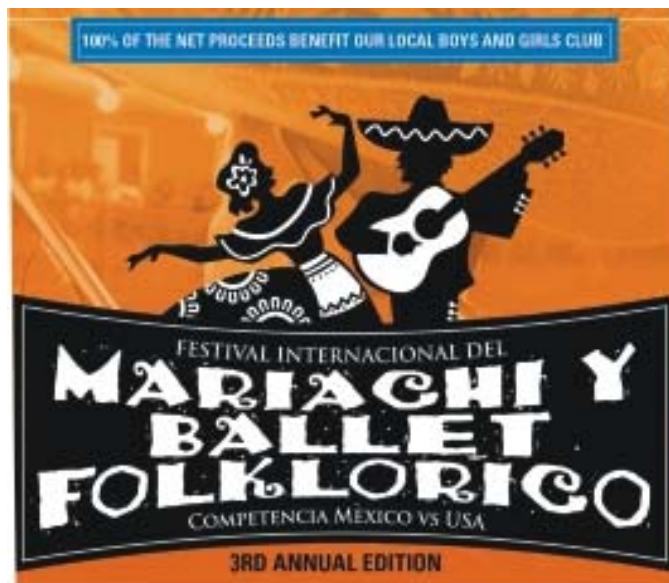
NEWS AND UPDATES FROM DISCOVER BAJA TRAVEL CLUB

SEPTEMBER 2012

3RD Annual International Mariachi & Folklórico Festival

The Rosarito Beach Hotel will be hosting the 3rd annual International Mariachi & Folklórico Festival. The setting will be the ocean-front gardens of the hotel

You can get all the details about the Festival including the dates, special hotel rates, ticket packages, the Talleres (Student Workshops), the Participant's Showcase, the mariachi & folklórico 'Olympics' pitting the best from Mexico and the U.S against each other in a friendly Competencia, and the Saturday evening (October 6th) Extravaganza featuring the Grammy Award-winning Mariachi Divas and other top international performers on their website: www.mariachiforgringosii.com



The net proceeds will go to support the Rosarito Boys and Girls Club.

New Public Affairs Officer for American Consulate



The American Consulate General in Tijuana announced its new Public Affairs Officer, Amy Grier, last month. She will be serving in Tijuana for the next three years.

As Public Affairs Officer, Ms. Grier is responsible for all media and cultural issues pertaining to the states of Baja, Baja Sur and Sonora.

Amy is a career diplomat and has served at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul Korea and as the U.S. Consulate General in Dusseldorf, Germany. She has also served as the Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia and Public Diplomacy officer for the Western Hemisphere at the Department of State in Washington.

Originally from New Hampshire, Ms. Grier holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is accompanied in Tijuana by her husband and two young sons.

Visit the Valle de Guadalupe

With it's very successful Vendimia (wine festival) 2012 now a page of history, this is the perfect time of year for a visit to Baja's Valle de Guadalupe.

There are now 67 wineries in Baja California and there were 729,000 people who visited these wine-growing areas last year. New restaurants in the wine region have boosted the total number to 28 and there are now 13 hotels in the area.

Be sure to visit the new Guadalupe Valley Museum which we featured in our August newsletter, as well as the Bodegas de Santo Tomas, south of Ensenada.



Perfect Fall Trip to Mata Ortiz October 17-22. 2012



It promises to be an unforgettable trip to the charming village of Mata Ortiz in Chihuahua, Mexico. The village is home to Juan Quezada the famed potter who rediscovered the art of making pots or "ollas" in the ancient Mesoamerican pottery tradition.

Do some holiday shopping or start your own collection of these one-of-a-kind pieces of art. We'll visit homes of

gifted potters, whose crafts have appeared in museums worldwide, and have the opportunity to purchase their magnificent art.

This 6-day 5-night trip will include a night in Bisbee, Arizona with an optional tour of the Lavender copper mine. Once in Mexico we'll tour Paquimé, the site of magnificent ruins dating back to the 1200s. We'll stay in Mata Ortiz for three nights with plenty of shopping as well as excursions to petroglyphs and local sights.

Back into Arizona, our last day we'll explore Kartchner Caverns State Park, the dramatic caves which were opened to the public in the last 13 years.

We will travel in a comfortable 15-passenger van. Substantial room will be needed to carry our precious pots home, so seating space is limited. Price is \$850 for DB members and \$900 for non-members.



There is a \$220 supplement for single occupancy. This price includes all transportation, lodging, meals and tours. All the planning and work is handled for you. Don't miss the fun and adventure. For more information or an application packet, please call Carol at **DISCOVER BAJA** 800 727-2252

Gas Prices In Baja



PEMEX prices have increased a little over the past month: Magna (regular) \$3.03; Premium \$3.19 and Diesel \$2.07.

Peso Exchange

As of 9/14/12, the Mexican Peso is exchanging at 12.71 to the US dollar.

FROM OUR MEMBERS:

COMMENTS, INFORMATION AND "FIELD NOTES" FROM OUR DISCOVER BAJA MEMBERS

Discover Baja member, John Fox, of Seal Beach sent us an interesting report of his August 2012, 2,000-mile round trip down Baja to surf at Scorpion Bay, San Juanico, Baja Sur with his wife, two kids (6 and 8), and two dogs.

The Spirit of Baja

My family (including our dogs) had a wonderful trip to Scorpion Bay and “El Espíritu de la Baja” or “The Spirit of Baja”, as we have officially named the 1985 Dodge Van 4x4, lived up to its name.

We came to the rescue of two stranded motorists, one was out of gas, which we filled with about 3 gallons just outside of San Ignacio, and the other was a flat tire outside of San Juanico with about 3 different styles of nuts on one wheel, and they didn't have all of the socket sizes needed to get the wheel off. As it turns out, we didn't have the right tools either and others were able to see the distress and stopped to help as well.



We got one speeding ticket for going about 40mph in a 30mph in Ciudad Insurgentes. We didn't 'actually' get a ticket, since the officer didn't fill anything out, but he was happy to compliment us on our Van and take my 600 pesos back to the commander office for me, so I could be on my way. ;-)



Surf was small and fun. Everyone got into the mix including Sota Sioux, our 9-year-old lab, getting the most attention out in the lineup. With her consistent BARKING OR WIMPERING out in the lineup, waiting for the next wave, she was simply too eager to get the next wave to contain

herself! She also had to jump off and doggie paddle and visit anyone within 20 ft. Too fun, but beware of long scratches on your back!

Daughter Kyer was content with getting on the board with Dad. Son Karson however, toward the end of the trip, worked his way out into the lineup with the BIG BOYS. At six years old, he has officially paddled into his own waves and stood up on his board for significantly long rides. It was heart-bursting to watch.



The weather held up nicely and we got to meet some wonderful locals and expatriates. There are about four restaurants in town (pop. 600??) and DAN'S PIZZA is open on Friday and Saturday only, to ensure that they were packed on each day.

Owner Dan was an American with a dream, and a pizza oven. What we ate 1,000 miles from the US border, three hours to the nearest gas station, in a dirt-road fishing village in Baja Sur, Mexico, was some of the best pizza I have ever eaten. Thin style, slightly burned edges, spicy sauce, and just the right amount of cheese and toppings. When a restaurant uses corn meal to slide the pizza around in the oven, you KNOW there's some real knowledge there. Epic pizza and cold beer as the sun sets, with a bike ride to and fro, was memorable to say the least.

Our campsite was a bit of a 'sprawl' due to the kiddo factor, but we were fairly organized all things considered. The tent on top was a curiosity for the locals and the other camper/surfers, but only because they

considered it AWESOME! With the great weather, we could get a nice breeze at night, and look up at the stars (you could see the Milky Way) through the open style tent (no rain cover). With our queen size foam setup and memory foam topper, it was some of the best sleep I have EVER had. The waves crashing on the rocks below, no bugs, no dog hair or crumbs from the kids; it was our little oasis with a 360-degree view...it was simply awesome.

School started the day after we got back to Seal Beach so we still have camping stuff spread out, waiting to get cleaned and back into storage! We now have a 3rd grader and a 1st grader on the same school schedule, at the same school!! That will last exactly three years, until Kyer goes to 6th grade... arghhh. How fast they grow up.



Editor's note: Thanks, John, for sharing your great experiences and pictures.

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