

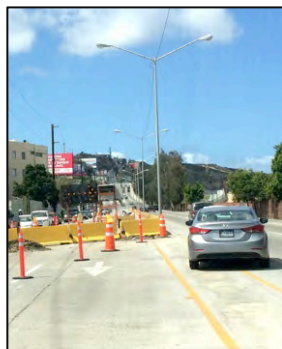


April 2016 Newsletter

BAJA NEWS

For more Baja news, see:
www.discoverbaja.com/baja-california-information/baja-news/

Via Internacional Construction in Tijuana



Due to construction on Via Internacional in Tijuana, there is a partial closing of the road with traffic being rerouted. Northbound travelers should plan on taking Calle Segunda to the San Ysidro border. Southbound travelers can still take Via Internacional but will need to use a different entrance after crossing the border. For directions, photos and more information: <http://bit.ly/1RMzH8T>

Vizcaíno Road Work

There is currently major road work being done on Mexico 1 south of Vizcaíno. Traffic is being rerouted onto a parallel side dirt road that is in good condition.

For updated road conditions along the peninsula, please see:
www.discoverbaja.com/baja-california-information/road-conditions/

From the DBTC Office

The Discover Baja offices will be open on Saturdays by appointment only. Please call 800-727-2252 by Friday 4pm in order to make an appointment for Saturday.

Spring is a beautiful time for a trip to Baja! The wildflowers are in bloom and the weather is perfect for all of your outdoor adventures. Call us to get your Mexican auto insurance and FMM tourist permits before heading south.

See you in Baja!
Hugh, Carol, Jen, Maythé & Monica

DBTC BAJA CAJA *All of the Baja info you need in one box!*

PESO EXCHANGE RATE: \$17.7 to \$1 U.S. dollar

PEMEX PRICES: Northern Baja: Magna: \$2.49/gal, Premium: \$2.74/gal, Diesel: \$3.06/gal
Southern Baja: Magna: \$2.93/gal, Premium: \$3.11/gal, Diesel: \$3.06/gal

FISHING LICENSES: Day: \$12.25, Week: \$31.20, Month: \$42.80, Year: \$54.40 for members.
www.discoverbaja.com/go/fishing-licenses

PREPAID FMMs: \$30 DBTC members only. Advance seven-day FMMs now available for \$5 each.
www.discoverbaja.com/go/fmm-tourist-permits

BOAT TEMPORARY IMPORT PERMITS (TIPs): \$45 fee for DBTC to handle processing. Service for DBTC members only. www.discoverbaja.com/go/temporary-boat-importation/

NAUTICAL FMMs: \$10/person fee for DBTC to process. Service for DBTC members only.
www.discoverbaja.com/go/nautical-sportfishing-fmm

MEXICAN AUTO INSURANCE: Special yearly rates for members. www.discoverbajaonline.com

ON OUR RADAR FOR APRIL

For more information about the events below and to keep up on all of the latest Baja events, see www.discoverbaja.com/events

APRIL 6 California Poppy Day



It's California Poppy day! The vibrant flower is in bloom all over the peninsula (in addition to a variety of other wild flowers).

APRIL 17 San Diego's Day at the Docks



San Diego anglers won't want to miss Day at the Docks on Sunday, April 17th from 9am-5pm at Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma. Look for the Discover Baja booth where DBTC members get a free giveaway! More on page 4.

APRIL 22-24 Newport to Ensenada International Yacht Race



This is one of the largest international yacht races, starting in Newport, CA and ending in Ensenada, Baja California.
www.newporttoensenada.com

APRIL 22-24 Gastrovino Todos Santos



The 5th annual food and wine festival will take place in Todos Santos and bring together local culture, cuisine, wine from the Valle de Gaudalupe, and live music.
www.gastrovino.mx

APRIL 23-27 Norra Mexican 1000



This on-road/off-road rally is open to vintage and modern vehicles and runs from Ensenada to Cabo.
www.norra.com

APRIL 22 Earth Day



It's Earth Day. There's no better way to celebrate than to get out and explore!

REMINDER: Temporary Vehicle Importation for Mainland Mexico

It's important to remember that temporary vehicle import permits are mandatory if taking your car to mainland Mexico. Vehicle permits are not required for the Baja peninsula or for Puerto Peñasco, but all other regions of Mexico require a permit.

If you do not obtain a temporary vehicle importation permit, your car will be impounded permanently and will not be returned to you. Ever.



Vehicle permits are \$48 and are valid for six months. The permits are good for multiple entry so may take your car in and out of Mexico as many times as you want during the six month period. You must also pay a deposit (amount depends on the value of the vehicle) which will be refunded after the six month period when you have returned your permit.

For more information: www.discoverbaja.com/go/crossing-border-mexico/#permits

Sonora No Longer a Free Zone for FMMs

The Mexican state of Sonora (where Puerto Peñasco is located) is no longer a "free zone" for FMM tourist permits. That means that everyone headed to the region will need to obtain an FMM tourist permit. FMMs for 7 days or less are still available for no cost, otherwise 180-day permits must be obtained. For more information on FMM tourist permits, please see:

www.discoverbaja.com/go/fmm-tourist-permits

Vehicle import exemptions for Sonora remain the same



Tecate Border Directions

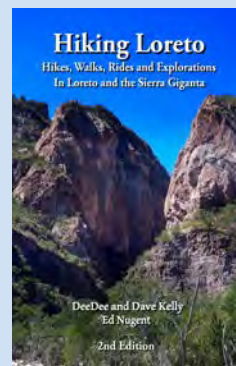
We've put together more driving directions for you! With summer approaching and longer border waits in store, you can save yourself time and hassle by crossing north back to the US through the Tecate border. See the link below for step-by-step directions.

We even have a PDF you can download to print and take with you!
www.discoverbaja.com/go/driving-directions/tecate-border-directions/

"Hiking Loreto" Book Now Available from DBTC!

You asked and we delivered. We had an overwhelming request to carry "Hiking Loreto" guidebook, as featured in our March newsletter.

We're pleased to announce that we now have the book for sale in the DBTC book shop.



This incredible guide is indispensable for anyone who wants to get out and explore the beautiful mountains, canyons, and landscapes in the Loreto region.

\$19.44 members, \$21.60 non-members
Call 800-727-2252 or purchase online:
www.squareup.com/store/discover-baja/item/hiking-loreto

We Say Goodbye to Two Baja Legends

The peninsula lost two beloved figures last month. We send our condolences to their friends, families, and loved ones.

Baja California will not be the same without them, but will always be better-off because of them.



Ana Grosso Peña, known as "Mama Espinoza," passed away at the age of 109. Her famous Mama Espinoza's restaurant in El Rosario has been a favorite of Baja travelers and locals since 1967.



Antonio Resendiz Sanchez Hidalgo, known as "Super Tony," resided in Bahía de Los Angeles where he was dedicated to work with the local marine life, especially the sea turtles of the region. He educated thousands of visitors who came to the area to learn about and experience the Sea of Cortez.



AeroMexico Now Flies Direct from Tijuana to Cabo

AeroMexico will now begin operating three weekly flights direct from Tijuana to Cabo. Flights will depart every Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. This is great news for San Diego residents who can now easily use the Cross Border Xpress airport pedestrian bridge to get to Tijuana's Rodriguez airport (more info on CBX at <http://bit.ly/1WaeUBB>)

Port of San Diego's

DAY AT THE DOCKS

It's Fun! It's Free!

SUNDAY APRIL 17th 2016
POINT LOMA 9am-5pm

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Fishing Tackle | Bay Boat Rides | Like Us On facebook For The Latest Updates |
| Cooking Demos | Entertainment | |
| Seminars | Great Prizes | |
| FREE Kids Fishing | Diving & Nature Trips | |

Sunday, April 17th, 2016 9 AM – 5 PM Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma

Come Visit DBTC at San Diego's Day at the Docks.

Discover Baja will again be at Day at the Docks on Sunday, April 17th from 9am-5pm at Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma, San Diego. The family-friendly event will feature bay boat rides, fishing tackle, seminars, free fishing for kids, live entertainment, prizes and more! DBTC members who stop to say hello at the Discover Baja booth will receive a free gift. For more information: www.facebook.com/DayAtTheDocks/

BAJA FISHING REPORT

with Gary Graham



White seabass caught near La Bocana

Welcome to *flippin'* April. Normally, this is the month that everyone looks to Baja Sur for a "fish fix" after a dismal winter in the north. However, this year sea temps along the West Coast of the Baja Peninsula have remained in the low 60s.

Retired Marine Biologist Steve Crooke commented recently on the large numbers of red crab that were still being seen by sport fishers. Long range sport fishers transiting the coast below the border have already found bluefin tuna as reported last month.

Supporting last month's discovery is the recent report that on Sat., Mar 26, 2016, 17 anglers on board Top Gun 80 had LIMITS OF BLUEFIN TUNA. Fish ranged from 15 to 25 pounds with some larger fish that were lost.

As storms ramble down the California and Baja coast, the conditions deteriorate briefly -- then return to better-than-normal

conditions for this early in the season, producing good if not great catches of yellowtail, white seabass and calico in addition to the seasonal bottom fishing expected this early in the year. These conditions exist from the Coronado Islands all the way down the coast.

Off Ensenada the story is the same for the few boats venturing out. Farther south near Colonet, the yellowtail action has also been good. Sportfishing boats from the San Diego Fleet have been loading up on yellowtail, ling cod and rockfish on weekend trips for several months.

At San Quintin, members of OC Spearos, Orange County's Premier Spearfishing and Freediving Club, found marginal diving conditions with poor visibility. However, they did spot lots of smaller white seabass along with a few up to 20-pounders in the cove at Isla San

Martin, an encouraging sign of things to come later this season.

La Bocana, on the Vizcaino Peninsula farther south, is also kicking out a few white seabass just outside the Boca (mouth), while the designated *release only* mangrove-lined Estero continues to yield a crowd-pleasing mixed bag of grouper and snapper along with a few smallish snook for visiting anglers.

According to Bob Hoyt, Mag Bay Outfitters, the sea temps in and around Magdalena Bay are also higher than normal, attracting schools of football-sized yellowfin tuna outside the Boca in the Pacific. Inside the Bay, corvina, cabrilla, grouper and an occasional snook are on the catch list.

Over on the Sea of Cortez: The North Wind continues to be disruptive. Every time it cranks up, both fish and anglers duck and cover. When the wind ceases, the action resumes.

Up near San Felipe, there were a few nice-sized cabrilla for a few lucky anglers.

Bahia de Los Angeles has been quiet recently. However as the winds begin to subside, expect the yellowtail to explode. Locals enjoying the advantage of waiting out the wind have had reasonable scores of yellowtail and rockfish.

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Below there, fishing out of San Lucas Cove, in addition to the yellowtail here and there, there was at least one amberjack in deep water for a persistent angler aboard *The Viking*.

At Loreto the reports were similar . . . when the wind blows the fish go down or boats don't go out, take your pick. On the good days (no wind) there are good catches of yellowtail, cabrilla, grouper and other bottom dwellers.

Sounds like Baja Sur is finally shrugging off a slow winter season that saw more rain and even an unexpected snowfall.

The Tailhunter, La Paz Fleet recently found small firecracker-sized dorado and pargo off Espiritu Santo Island -- a good omen for the upcoming month.

Around the corner at Las Arenas, a few smaller wahoo fell for darker Rapalas and Yo-Zuri lures -- another hint of the month to come. Plus the big red pargo liso are spawning near Cerralvo Island.

East Cape and San Jose, while both were plagued by the relentless wind, still had higher sea surface temperatures in the low 70s. Striped marlin and even odder sailfish have been hooked and released since the first of the year. Roosterfish, jacks and sierra have been a common catch during the same period.

"We finally had some pretty good fishing, as our fishing has generally been tough for most of February and March," lamented Renegade Mike Tumbeiro recently.

Northern Baja is enjoying spring-like conditions with unusual surface action enhanced by the early arrival of bluefin tuna, while Baja Sur seems to have finally begun to play catch-up. With less and less wind, the next month's fishing should be interesting for the entire peninsula.

Good Luck and Tight Lines...

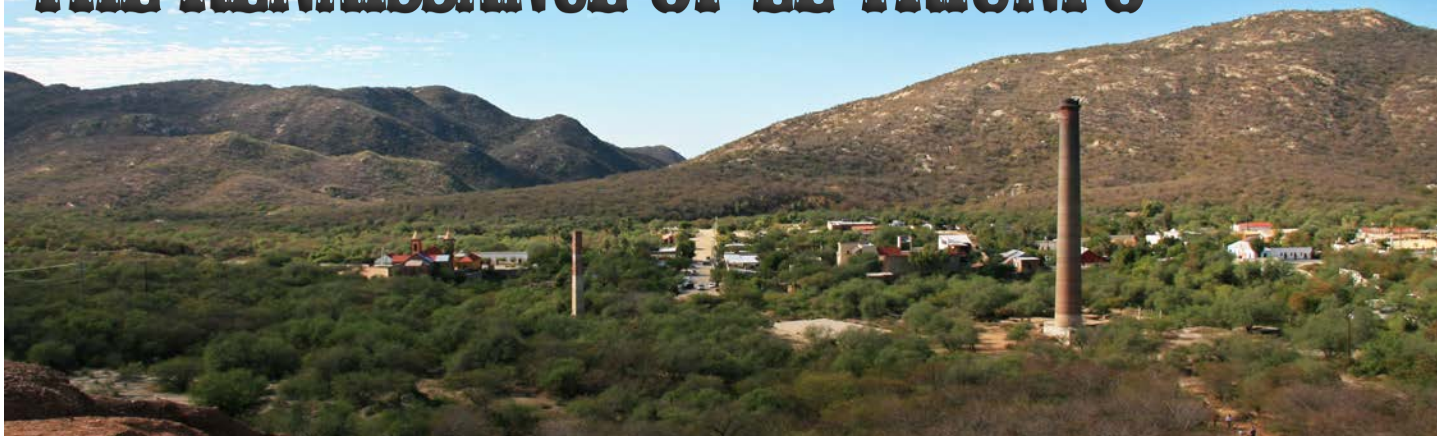
Questions or comments are welcome.
garyg@garycgraham.com



TOP: An amberjack caught in deep water by a persistent angler aboard *The Viking*. **ABOVE:** Fire-cracker-sized dorado and pargo caught on *The Tailhunter*, La Paz fleet off of Espiritu Santo Island. **LEFT:** Scotty McNeil and a super, sweet "early" beach roosterfish on the fly! **BELOW:** Fishing in the Los Cabos area.



THE RENAISSANCE OF EL TRIUNFO



By Jennifer Kramer

There's a change afoot in the small colonial town of El Triunfo in Baja Sur. The old mining town that time once seemed to have forgotten is now abuzz with hundreds of tourists each weekend. The old colonial buildings are being restored, chic cafes and restaurants are busy with visitors, and new projects are being infused into the once-sleepy town. All of the attention is leaving some people wondering—is El Triunfo the next Baja “it” spot?

The History

Gold and silver once came out of the mines in El Triunfo during the town's heyday. The first mine was

originally founded in the late 18th century by Manuel de Ocio. In 1878 the El Progreso mining company took over the mine and brought prosperity to El Triunfo. At one point, El Triunfo was the largest town in Baja California Sur, with a population of over 10,000 people. When the mines closed in 1926, most of the people left town in search of jobs elsewhere and the town eventually became a mere shadow of its glory days.

Where to Eat

The change in El Triunfo started slowly a few years ago when Marcus Spahr, who had previously run Caffé Todos Santos for 16 years, left the West Cape and opened **Caffé El Triunfo** (tel. 612

157 1625, 9am-5pm daily). There's a wood-burning oven where they bake fresh breads and make pizzas that are a favorite of all who pass through. There are a number of outdoor patios and areas for eating, drinking, and relaxing. The restaurant is also open for breakfast.

Caffé El Triunfo has recently been joined by the refreshingly chic **Bar El Minero** (Calle Progreso, tel. 0 1 1 - 5 2 - 6 1 2 - 1 7 6 - 3 9 3 9 , www.barelminero.com, 11am-6:30pm Wed.-Mon.). The building that houses the El Minero is over 120 years old and was once the laboratory for the mines. Today, the space is beautiful and inviting with upcycled bottle light fixtures, locally-crafted wood tables, and a long bar. The expansive outdoor space has plenty of seating, fire pits, and views of the old smokestacks. El Minero serves craft beer on tap, as well as house-made artisanal sausages, salads, and local cheeses. Chef Felipe studied culinary in San Diego and Tijuana and his sophisticated understanding of flavor profiles shines through in everything he makes. On Sundays there's a large paella fest that draws locals and visitors for a fun afternoon. Don't visit without dressing up to take your photo with the bronze sculpture of Sofia and Juan Matute in the courtyard.

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What to Do

A trip to El Triunfo isn't complete without a walk through the **old mining grounds**. Access to the area can be found on Calle Libertad (just head toward the tall smokestack). Here, visitors will find old mining equipment, brick ruins, and old smokestacks. The largest smokestack, "La Romana" is 35 meters tall and is rumored to be designed by Gustav Eiffel (of Eiffel tower fame). Follow the path lined by the white rocks to head up to the *mirador* lookout, where you'll get a beautiful view of the little town and the surrounding mountains. Halfway up the path to the *mirador* is a side jaunt to the walled-in *Panteon Ingles* cemetery with 13 white aboveground mausoleums of English citizens who once worked in the mines.

The planned **Museo de Plata** will be a mining museum opening to

the public by the end of 2016. The museum will tell the history of the mine and the region through interactive exhibits that will bring to life the rich history of the area. Stay tuned for more information.

During the prosperous years of El Triunfo, the town was a cultural center and for music and dance. The old **Museo de la Música** (no tel. 8am-2pm daily, 20 pesos entrance fee) music museum is still in town, housing pianos and other instruments that were shipped to El Triunfo from all over the world during its prime. Unfortunately, the curator of the museum, Nicolás Carrillo, (affectionately known as "The Liberace of Baja") passed away a few years ago, and the museum has not been well taken care of since then.

For those who love **shopping**, there are a few small shops and

galleries in town across from Caffé El Triunfo.

Just a few kilometers north of town is the **Santuario de los Cactus** (Km. 167 Mex 1, no tel., 9am-5pm daily, US\$4). This 50-hectare cactus sanctuary is an ecological reserve home to endemic cacti and plants found only in this part of the world. There are a few informational signs along the path that point out some of the unique flora and fauna found in the area.

Where to Stay

There are currently no accommodations in El Triunfo, but it's an easy drive (about 45 minutes) from both La Paz and Los Barriles. If you want to stay in the area, try **Rancho LaVenta** (www.rancholaventawines.com), located in between nearby San Antonio and San Bartolo.



HOW IT IS TO MOTORCYCLE BAJA: VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

BY CARLA KING

This month my motorcycling friends contribute to this column, providing perspective, advice, and favorite rides from their recent forays into "The Baja." I also suffered through a week of Semana Santa, Mexico's busiest holiday, a must-miss for road-trippers. And a little spill in a town called Jesus Maria. Oops! Got a Baja riding story? Email me at Carla@carlaking.com!

Three Wild & Crazy Guys

These three showed up on my doorstep last month to say hi before hitting the road again. Serious bikers and a little goofy, too. Always a good combination. I got Doug to contribute a few words on how he feels about motorcycling in Baja. (And hey, you might meet them in September 2016 at the [Horizons Unlimited Travelers Meeting in Mariposa, California](#).)

The Roster:

Doug McGinnis (61), Yamaha WR250X, retired Geologist/Computer Consultant. Carpinteria, California.

Burt Gunn (83), Suzuki DR650, retired Air Force, Korean, and Vietnam Veteran. Winters in Yuma, summers in, and operates Conkling Marina, Lake Coeur d'Alene, Worley, Idaho.

Ken Shifrar (60, the kid), KTM 690, retired. From Wyoming.



Doug McGinnis, Burt Gunn, and Ken Shifrar rode lots of dirt and enjoyed a few days chilling out at the [Hotel Oasis](#) in Loreto.

Baja is always an adventure. Away from the rat race, television, newspapers, computers, traffic, phones, bills, etc. We didn't bother with an itinerary, just made a general plan and adapted as we went. Our favorite part starts halfway down the peninsula in Baja Sur with whales, paintings, oasis, hot springs, nice dirt track. Choose from easy to challenging. Some unexpected experience will always come your way that will shape your memories of the trip. I guess my take on Baja would be the places, the people, and the peso (the dollar goes a long way down here). I couldn't believe how many people knew each other up and down the peninsula! The Mexican people are mild mannered, helpful, curious, and friendly, even to a bunch of crazy old gringos! I can say the same thing about the foreigners travelling in Baja, not the tourists you see at the megaresorts but the adventurous type. Take your time and visit with people, you will get some good intel (a second opinion on road conditions) on places to go and things to do. Dual-sport bikes are the best way to get around if you want to explore the backcountry. Bring extra tubes and a master link and plan for a couple extra days just in case things go a little haywire! Don't go to make miles. Slow down and enjoy. I go for the ride but come back with so much more of an experience. Been home one day and ready to return. --Doug McGinnis

Semana Santa: It's all over now

I realize now that in last month's column I ought to have warned you away from Baja during the week of March 20-27th. I'm sorry! It's all over, now. By the time you read this, Easter week will have passed, and it is safe once again for you to ride. Semana Santa is Mexico's biggest holiday week, a bigger travel week even than Christmas and New Year's. The roads are filled with vacationers hauling friends and families and trailers piled high with camping and boating gear, water toys, barbecues, food, beer, boats, jet skis and all the other necessities of life camped on a beach. Hotels raise their prices and make enough money during this week to survive for the rest of the year. Campgrounds are carpeted with Mexican families in tents and RVs four and five layers deep from the beach. Boom boxes, pop-rockets, and children screaming on floaty toys make for a, shall we say, lively, time. Mexican tourists bring their own food, so the vendors who usually bring tamales, fresh produce and seafood to your tent door don't bother. Driving is treacherous in the company of distracted and drunk drivers, in a hurry to get to their vacation, or to get back home on Sunday. Mark this week in 2017 as a time to avoid a Baja road trip next year.

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Jesus Maria, there's a gas station!

The tiny village of Jesus Maria is popular with motorists as the first gas stop after a long dry spell heading south. From here north you'll find people selling gas from their trucks at the turnoff to Bahia de Los Angeles and Cataviña, to tide you over to the next Pemex in El Rosario or, if you're headed to Highway 5, in Gonzaga Bay. There are three food vendors there, too, with the usual hot and fresh Mex fare, and a small air conditioned eatery, which is especially welcome if you're traveling in these warmer months.



I stopped to fill up and met Darlene Fong on her blue Honda CG 500 and Alan Hirst on his red Honda CBR 500. They recognized me from my photo in last month's newsletter and we chatted for a while. They left Northern California on a whim and rode down to see the gray whales in Guerrero Negro. They got the last room at the [Malarrimo](#) and went on one of their eco-tours. Said they saw Joe Berk and his crew on the [Zongshen RX3 250cc adventure touring motorcycles](#).

I asked them about their Hondas and they reported them as being more than up to the job. I know a lot of people who love their CBRs, so come on down!

After Darlene and Alan rode away I switched my bike on and... nada. Figured the battery cable was loose, but did I really want to unload my bike and remove the seat? Not really. Lucky for me a dozen guys on bikes arrived and helped me jumpstart it.

"Got it?," one guy asked. Well, yeah, duh, I thought... but what did I do but jam it into first, stall it and fall over. *Jesus Maria!*



Mulegé Mike: My Favorite Ride

Mike Colyar is out on the trails so often, he's become our unofficial trail scout here in the Mulegé area. Who better to ask for a favorite ride? If you're lucky, you may be here on a day there's a group ride; a mix of Jeeps, Land Cruisers, and bikes, often leaving from [Daniel Bukovecz's Automotive](#) and motorcycle shop at the north end of town on the highway. You can follow Mike (handle [Gulliver](#)) on the Baja Nomad forum.

The other day I found Mike hanging out at [Daniel Bukovecz's Automotive](#) and motorcycle shop on the highway at the very north end of Mulegé.

You can have a great time motorcycling Baja. Maybe renting a Harley with a support van. Maybe a hardcore off road week covering most of the peninsula without seeing much of the pavement. These extremes get a lot of attention but there is a middle ground of easy riding in beautiful places down lonely dirt roads.

Don't get me wrong. You can find yourself a few miles from help if you break down but it's safe and fun. Pick the right roads and the right riding buddies and there is no place in the world quite like it.

I live in Mulegé, about two thirds of the way down Baja. I throw a sack lunch in my backpack on sunny mornings (there is no other) and head into the hills. I ride a medium-sized 350 Suzuki that I can pick up if I make a mistake. Modern bikes are so reliable that breakdowns any more severe than a flat tire are almost unheard of. You are very seldom far from a rancho and it is rare to stop for more than a few minutes without hearing a goat.

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There is almost no single track riding in Baja Sur. With few exceptions the roads are used regularly by the ranchers. There is lots of loose rock. Some occasional sand. But more often it is just one beautiful scene after another. Bring your camera and start early to get the morning light on the Sierra.

My favorite ride is to the west from town. About twenty-five miles of mixed riding. Lots of places to stop, stretch your legs, and take pictures. The first ten miles are flat Sonoran desert with all sorts of confusing intersections. Take a wrong one and you will soon find yourself at some small rancho with a farm wife ready to set you on the right path.

As you ride across this flat country you see the mountains ahead. It looks impossible. Like some scene from a movie about a lost world. Enormous mesas with no obvious way through. But soon you are winding your way through one narrow canyon after another. Passing the occasional small goat or cattle ranch as the rock walls rise above you.

Finally you reach the narrow spot. The cliffs close in and there, at a shady turn in the road, is a ranch. How they survive the occasional flash flood is a marvel.

The road climbs steeply and within a couple of miles you are at the high point of the ride where the water begins to flow towards the Pacific Ocean miles to the West. There are several ponds worth stopping for and perhaps it is a good time for a snack and some hydration. In the mornings it is cool but the afternoons can be hot. There are fish in these pools and dragon flies. Always a buzzard or a hawk above. If you are very lucky you will see a rattlesnake crossing the road. Beautiful animals. I have seen rarer creatures like a Coatimundi.

From here to the turnaround is only a few miles. A winding road with the views opening up as the Raymundo Canyon tempts you to ride on and on. At the intersection you are invited to go to interesting places like Estanislau or La Ballena. We can go there another day on longer rides to the Pacific coast or further up other canyons.

Slow down. Meet the people and their animals. You will be back.

--Mike Colyar

The Right Gear

Please don't go out to play without head to toe protection. I've taken the extra precaution to replace all the armor in my pants and jacket with D3O pads: shoulder, elbow, back, hip, and knee. D3O is a flexible, comfortable, rubber-like material that hardens on impact and bounces back. You never know when you're going to need it. You could be exiting your driveway or flying out of an unexpected vado. Either way, you want to walk away. A great investment.



[Find D3O Replacement Pads on Revzilla](#)



Your Story? Your Favorite Ride?

Hey, do you have a motorcycle story or favorite ride in Baja to share in this newsletter? [Let me know!](#)

That's me on the KTM 350 EXC (a great little Baja enduro) thanking [Giant Loop Moto](#) for the luggage, which I've abused for six or seven years now. I still use it every trip! Ride safe!

[--Carla King](#)

Carla King is an adventure travel journalist, [author](#), and publisher specializing in [motorcycle misadventures](#). She lives in San Diego and Baja, on the Sea of Cortez near Mulegé. Read more of her writing at [CarlaKing.com](#).

From our Members . . .

We love hearing from you! Send your feedback or trip reports to ask@discoverbaja.com

Dear Discover Baja;

The last 10 days of March, a couple of members from JustRuns 4 Wheel Drive Club overcame our “fears” about visiting Baja and joined Discover Baja. After talking to Maythé at DB, we felt a lot more confident that our fears were unfounded or at least overblown.

We bought our insurance and FMMs and headed out on a 10-day 4-wheeling/camping trip. Our final goal was to make it to Conception Bay to kayak among the whales and dolphins. We each drove well-equipped Jeeps and towed off-road trailers that had rooftop tents. Our first Baja experience was at the border crossing at Tecate. There, our equipment and papers were checked by a very polite and nice young woman who directed us where to park our Jeeps and trailers while we had our FMMs stamped inside the office. We then headed south to Ensenada on MX-3 (The Wine Route) through the Guadalupe Valley and on to Ensenada. After fueling up in Ensenada, we took MEX-3 across the peninsula to MEX-5 toward San Felipe. We spent the first night at Mike's Sky Ranch then continued to San Felipe. We only spent a couple of hours in San Felipe before continuing south on a nice paved road to Puertecitos stopping at a Tano's camp south of Puertecitos. The road is paved for about 20 miles south of Puertecitos but turns to a graded dirt road as it turns inland toward MEX-1. In places the dirt road is pretty rough. They are working on building new bridges and paving the road all the way to MEX-1 but it will be a few years before it is done. About half way across the Peninsula we stopped in at the Famous “Coco's Corner” for refreshments. I had heard about Coco for years but had never met him or seen his small store/camp. Coco is in his mid-80s and has lost both legs to diabetes but he gets around his little place in a wheel chair and seems to make a living from travelers who stop in. Unfortunately, once the road is completed it will bypass Coco's a couple miles to the north. From Coco's we continued on MEX-5 to the intersection to MEX-1 then went south to the turnoff to Bahía de Los Angeles. There, we camped for the night at Gringa's Camp on the beach at the north end of the bay. There we saw lots of dolphins chasing schools of bait fish into the shallow water to make them easy to catch. From LA Bay we took a dirt road south about 70 miles to San Francisquito Bay where we camped on the Beach. We then headed back west to MEX-1 through El Arco then San Ignacio and on to Santa Rosalia, Mulegé, and on to Conception Bay.

Southbound, we were stopped at three Military Checkpoints. At each all they asked was if we had any firearms or ammunition, where we were going and where we had come from. All the soldiers were polite and none even asked to inspect our vehicles.

After camping at Conception Bay, we headed back north via Hwy 1 taking a detour to Bahia Asunción for the night then on to Scammon's Lagoon where we camped on the beach then hired a *panga* to take us out among the whales. What a great experience. We were “Up Close and Personal” to dozens of whales and saw dozens more in the bay. The whales seem to want to introduce their young to people. The mothers nudge the babies right up to the *panga* so that you can pet them. After the whale watching trip we again headed north through Guerrero Negro then taking a side trip to Santa Rosalillita and camped at El Marron on the beach. We then returned to MEX-1 and drove to San Quintín for another night on the beach. On our final day we drove back to Tecate and then home.

On our way north we were stopped two or three times at Military Checkpoints but again had no problems or complaints. In fact, at each of the Military Check Points there is a large sign that has a phone number at the Mexican Consulate in San Diego to call if you have any Complaints or Suggestions. Baja is really welcoming tourists.

We will go back soon!

Roger Mullins, JustRuns 4 Wheel Drive Club, www.justruns.com

“There are lots of horror stories about how dangerous it is to travel in Mexico, but I have not found that to be true. In fact, this is the third time that I have had law enforcement respond positively when they were needed most. Officer Cerón Sanchez went beyond the call in helping me with a very serious problem in a dangerous place”

– DBTC member Elden Carl.

Read his story about motorcycle riding in Baja at:

<http://topgunmotorcycles.com/new/2016/03/06/slime-failure/>

BAJA'S WILD SIDE!

Photography Adventure & Tour

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Join Scripps Institution of Oceanography conservation photographer Dr. Daniel Cartamil, and Mike Essary of Baja Custom Tours, for the **ULTIMATE** 6-day northern Baja California photography adventure! Ancient rock art, dazzling vistas, island photography boat tours, incredible wildlife and authentic Baja culture are waiting for you! We will guide you, in total comfort and safety, to some of Baja's most photogenic locations, including:

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Price: Only \$1495 with Early Registration (Deadline April 1)

Call Discover Baja at 800-727-2252 or email ask@discoverbaja.com to book or for more information



Help Us Build a Home for the Kids at Rancho de los Niños Orphanage!

Almost there!
Just a few more
donations needed to
help get this project
completed!

In the continuing partnership between Discover Baja and Corazón de Vida, we ask for your support as we help to build the children at Rancho de los Niños a new dorm to call home. Donate and learn more at: www.classy.org/rndndorm



In January of 2016, a Valle de Guadalupe orphanage that Corazon de Vida supported had to shut its doors. This was a home for teen girls, a tough age group since most orphanages don't take kids older than 12. Fearing that the girls would be sent to various orphanages and possibly even rehab centers, another Corazon de Vida orphanage, Rancho de los Niños, took in the 20 displaced girls, even though they didn't have the space for them. The girls are temporarily housed in the volunteer dorms, which are one step above a camping site. As difficult as this move has been for the girls, they are settling in, glad to be together and able to attend the same schools and be around their friends.

Rancho de los Niños has one empty dorm (an empty shell) that needs to be completely rebuilt to house the girls. The estimate to rebuild this dorm is \$25,000.

Rancho de los Niños (formerly Casa de Paz) is an orphanage located in the Valle de Guadalupe, about 90 minutes from the San Diego border. The home is located on several acres of open land. They now have 85 children in their care. Jorge and Ely Fonseca, who were both raised in the orphanage, now run the home as the directors.

You can donate and learn more about the project at the link below. Please join us in helping to support this project. Any amount will help! www.classy.org/rndndorm



corazón de vida

About Corazon de Vida:

Corazon de Vida (CDV) is a 20+ year U.S. 501c3 non-profit organization providing life-changing support for orphaned and abandoned children in Baja, Mexico by funding local orphanages, providing quality of life improvement services and investing in the children's future by funding higher education. Through their life-sustaining program they provide monthly funding for the orphanages under their care. These orphanages give abandoned children security, nutrition, shelter and access to a reliable education.

Stay at this Beautiful Beach Villa in La Salina and Help Change a Life!



Casa Corazón

Average nightly: \$214
4 bedroom, 4.5 bath, Sleeps 10
www.vrbo.com/682538

There are many places to enjoy in the beautiful Mexican Baja, but why not change a life while you enjoy your vacation? Staying at Casa Corazon is unique because every dollar spent at Casa Corazon is used to improve the lives of orphans in 12 different orphanages in the Baja. Casa Corazon was generously donated to **Corazon de Vida** (www.corazondevida.org), a non-profit foundation which has been supporting orphanages in Baja for twenty years. If you are interested in adding humanitarian service to your leisure and bringing food or assistance to an orphanage, we are more than happy to assist you. House rental includes daily cleaning services from 10 a.m. to noon.

Casa Corazon is located in the upscale marina community of La Salina just 45 minutes south of San Diego. At km 73, it offers the very best of BC located midway between Rosario and Ensenada. It's secure and 24 hour guard gated community provides a peace of mind while providing some of the most beautiful coastal vistas of Baja California. The Mexican Craftsman Villa is ideally set up for 2 families with 2 masters and 2 additional rooms with multiple beds for children or other guests. All bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms. Enjoy ocean views and panoramic ocean vista from the expansive rooftop terrace, perfect for dining and entertaining or quietly enjoying a majestic sunset. Each level of the home has a beautiful covered terrace complete with artisan Mexican tile floor and stunning ocean views. Enjoy cooking in the gourmet kitchen, or hire a local personal chef to delight your culinary desire. A welcome dinner is provided upon request by a local chef.

Enjoy the beautiful and serene private white sand beach just steps away from the villa. Soak in the sun, snorkel, rent a sailboat or fish just in your backyard. Just a 3 min. drive up the scenic highway, you can ride horses on the beach. A little further you can rent ATVs for a exhilarating experience with the dramatic backdrop of the Pacific Ocean. Try a famous lobster dinner at Puerto Nuevo, or go whale watching in Ensenada. Enjoy a tour of the nearby wine county in Valle de Guadalupe.



RIVERFRONT HOUSE IN NORTHERN BAJA \$10,000 USD

Located in the quiet confines of Rancho Mil, this 1900sq.ft. 2 bed, 2 bath, 2 story, adobe brick house is the perfect getaway "casa". Just a one hour drive from the US border, Rancho Mil extends for 1 km along the tranquil waters of the Rio Hardy and is surrounded by thousands of acres of open desert. Repairs are needed, and can be completed by on site experienced labor (your chance to personalize it!). Several other homes are available at similar prices. Contact Don, 949-466-2069us, D1000@sbcglobal.net, and Rancho Mil website: www.RanchoMil.com.



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This contemporary Mexican-style home in a gated community features a spacious interior with two bedrooms and two baths, and an expansive outdoor patio.

<http://www.vrbo.com/199458>

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Nine rooms & one suite with full bathrooms each, spacious Mexican kitchen and big living area with bar, big landscaped garden, office, laundry & two storage rooms, one secure parking space.

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Contact: www.elangelazul.com

