

February 2014 Newsletter



New Temporary Boat Importation Rules for Baja

The temporary boat importation laws have changed for Baja and now every boat over 4.5 meters (15 feet) that will be taken down to Baja needs to have a temporary boat import permit. To get your boat importation, you will need to stop at the border (Otay Mesa or Tecate – NOT San Ysidro) with your boat and paperwork. Go to Aduanas (customs) and they will direct you to Banjercito to get the permit and pay the fee.

The permit is valid for 10 years and is good for multiple entry. If your boat is already in Baja, you will need to go to Pichilingue in La Paz with your boat and paperwork to get the permit. You will need to have the original and 1 copy of each of the following:

- Passport or passport card
- Migratory paperwork (FMM, temporary or permanent resident visa)
- Boat title or registration
- Motor serial number
- If there is a lienholder on the boat, you will need to have a letter from the lienholder granting permission to take the vessel to Mexico
- \$52.20 U.S.D. (pesos, dollars, Visa or Mastercard)

For specifics on the paperwork you will need and more information about the new process, please see bit.ly/1fveNgC



From the DBTC Office

-The toll road from La Mision to Ensenada is still closed. The Baja government has said that they are putting a temporary patch on the highway and will re-open it within two months. A permanent road will take another 6-8 months to complete. The detour on the paved free road only adds about 10-15 minutes to your trip.

-The San Ysidro/El Chaparral border crossing has received \$226 million in federal funding which will go to re-routing the southbound 5 to connect directly with El Chaarral and pay to complete the 62 inspection booths for northbound drivers.

-Follow along with us on the DBTC blog and other social media outlets for the best of Baja. Links below.

Let's Baja!

Hugh, Carol, Jen, Maythé & Monica



Do you follow Discover Baja on Facebook? We have the latest Baja news, info and events. We're giving away free key chains to members who Like us on Facebook. Stop by the office to get yours today!
facebook.com/discoverbaja

PEMEX PRICES:

Magna: \$3.64/gal
Premium: \$3.71/gal
Diesel: \$3.76/gal

PESO EXCHANGE RATE:
\$13.36 to \$1 U.S. dollar

From our members...

We love to hear your feedback on things you'd like to read about, great places you've been to and comments on what we can do to better serve you.

Please email us at ask@discoverbaja.com

Love the newsletter. We are newcomers to the DBTC and have been spending our time in San Felipe. It is close enough that we can go down for a weekend. I would love to hear more about what is going on in San Felipe if that is possible. What is exciting, and a must do in San Felipe?

*Thank you for all that you do.
Sandy*

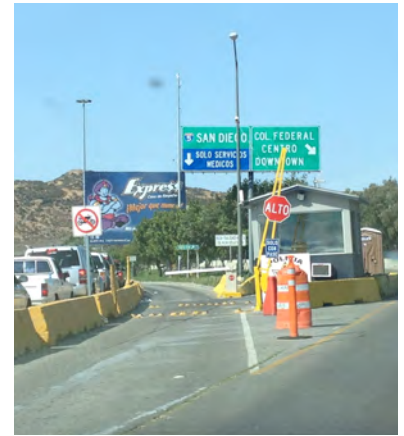
DBTC Note: Welcome to the club, Sandy! We've put together the article on page 7 in you honor – full of great insider information about San Felipe. Enjoy!

*It would be good to let folks know about which places to get fast passes at.
Gracias,
Kevin*

DBTC Note: We agree! Unfortunately, the Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, the authorities that run the program, will not release a list of establishments that have the Fast Pass available. We've put together our own list of places that currently have the fast pass available for patrons (to the best of our knowledge) but it's always a good idea to call ahead to the establishment to verify. Please see our article on this page for more information.

THE SCOOP ON THE FAST PASS LANE

While the Ayuntamiento de Tijuana (the authorities who run the Fast Pass program) keep a tight lip on things, we've tried to put together as much information as possible about the Fast Pass program, how it works, directions to the Fast Pass lane at the San Ysidro border, and a list of establishments that have the fast pass available for patrons. You can see all of the information at bit.ly/1gyoF9X



DBTC Archive Article: LA Bay, 1993

JENNY'S JAUNTS-A KID'S-EYE VIEW OF BAJA

ON TOP OF "RED MOUNTAIN"

BY JENNY KRAMER

Did you ever notice the big red mountain just south of the village of L.A. Bay? Well, I have and I've

that can be made within an hour. The first part is switch-backs, and it is rocky along much of the path. We



Jenny's family and friends on "Red Mountain"

made it to the top in forty-five minutes. Then we had a short snack near the grave of Señora Carmelita de Rodriguez Viedma, the lady who is buried on top.

Once up on top, there is a beautiful view of the bay and the islands, and Guardian Angel Island protecting them all.

always wanted to climb it.

Last New Year's Eve I had a chance. It was a beautiful day in L.A. Bay—not a cloud in the sky although there was a strong North wind.

The hike up is a fairly easy one

Then the wind started to pick up and we decided to start our trip down. It was an easier, and faster trip down, and we headed back to camp to rest and get ready for the big New Year's Eve celebration in the village. 🐻

DISCOVER BAJA —MARCH 1993 — PAGE 8

DBTC note: 21 years later, hiking Red Mountain is still a great activity for kids and adults of all ages and LA Bay is a wonderful place for the entire family to enjoy. Jen has graduated from writing Jenny's Jaunts to talking about adult activities to enjoy in Baja (www.theothercalifornia.wordpress.com), although she still thinks the views from the top of Red Mountain are pretty great.

ON OUR RADAR FOR FEBRUARY



Gray Whale Season

•It's already shaping up to be a great whale season. If you've never encountered the friendly gray whales up-close and personally, this is the year to do it! Call the office if you need recommendations or help with booking.



FEB 2

Día de la Candelaria

•It's tamale time! The lucky winner who found

the Baby Jesus figurine in their piece of Rosca on Día de los Reyes on Dec. 6th gets to host a tamale party for friends and family today. Combine it with a Super Bowl viewing party this year for double the fun!

FEB 3

Observation of Día de la Constitución



•This holiday celebrates the current Mexican constitution, promulgated in 1917.
•The actual holiday is February 5th, but Feb 3rd will be the day of observance when banks and some businesses may be closed.

FEB 7-23

Sochi Winter Olympics



•The Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia begin tonight with the Opening Ceremony.
•Whether you're an avid cyclist and kayaker or you consider drinking cervezas to be an athletic event, get out and participate in your own sport, Baja-style!

FEB 14

Valentine's Day



•There's no better way to show that Baja aficionado in your life that you love them than to treat them to a little bit of Baja. A book on Baja's Missions or a lifetime membership to DBTC perhaps?
discoverbaja.com/pdf/DB-gift-guide14.pdf

FEB 17

Presidents' Day

•Not that we needed another excuse to get down to Baja, but a three-day weekend is a pretty good one. Why not spend a weekend in Guadalupe Valley wine country or on the beach in Rosarito?



FEB 20-28

Todos Santos Film Festival

•www.todossantoscine.org
•Enjoy award-winning, internationally acclaimed films that offer the best of Mexican, Latin American and Spanish filmmaking.



FEB 27-MARCH 4

Carnaval in La Paz

•This large Carnaval celebration is complete with parades, music, dancing and ornate floats and costumes.
•Other Baja cities such as San Felipe and Ensenada have Carnaval celebrations as well.
•www.facebook.com/CarnavalLPZ

FEB 28-MARCH 2

Baja 250 in San Felipe



•score-international.com/2014-san-felipe-250
•The famed off-road loop race starts and finishes in San Felipe.
•Carnaval is going on at the same time so make sure to book your hotel early as there's going to be a lot of excitement around town!



BUEN PROVECHO: Beyond Tacos and Margaritas...

While just hearing the word Mexico may immediately conjure up images of tacos and margaritas, Baja has a far more sophisticated food and drink scene that's growing rapidly in credibility and popularity. The Baja Med cuisine movement (Mexican food infused with Mediterranean and Asian flavors and influences) is exploding in northern Baja. Baja craft beer breweries are popping up in record numbers and the Guadalupe Valley wine country is expanding by the minute.

While we find the term "foodie" to be slightly snobby and grossly overused, for lack of a better word, we're going to be using this column, "Buen Provecho" (that's "bon appetit" in Spanish), to bring you reviews of restaurants and bars to follow the "foodie" culture that's developing in Baja. We hope you'll find it all delicious. ¡Buen Provecho!



BUEN PROVECHO: Baja Craft Beers tasting room

San Diego is currently the capital of the craft beer industry and Baja is not too far behind. You may find this surprising coming from the country known for Corona and Tecate, but there are tons of small craft beer companies that have popped up in the past few years.

Part of the reason that you may not know much about these micro-breweries is that Mexican regulations make it difficult for many restaurants and bars to serve any beers other than those owned by the two Mexican beer giants – Grupo Modelo (Modelo, Corona, Pacifico) and FEMSA (Tecate, Dos Equis, Sol, Bohemia). This means that it's been an uphill challenge for the Baja microbreweries.

A few of the breweries have tasting

rooms and are open to the public, but one of the easiest ways to try a sampling of some of these Baja beers is to go to the Baja Craft Beers tasting room in Tijuana. It's a bar with 42 beers on tap and about 300 more available in bottles. Many of the beers are local craft beers from Baja and they have some from San Diego microbreweries as well.

Don't miss local beers from Baja breweries such as Cucapá, Ramuri, Insurgentes, Cerveza Tijuana or any of BCB's own brews. Prices start at about \$3 for a beer on tap. They also have a full kitchen if you get hungry. It's dark inside the bar, but the décor is nice. Up-cycled wood has been beautifully crafted into stools and long bar tables, and old metal kegs have been turned into light fixtures. It all makes sense for

this old warehouse that's been turned into a craft beer bar.

They don't have a phone number, and their website doesn't have much information, but they are open 7 days a week (Mon-Thurs 12:30pm to 12am and Fri-Sun 1:30pm to 1:30am). They accept credit cards and they have wifi available for customers.

www.bajacraftbeers.com. MAP LINK

If you're looking to make an afternoon/evening of a Tijuana trip, you could spend the afternoon at BCB tasting room, and then head across the street for dinner at the newly opened Verde & Crema restaurant (from Chef Jair Tellez who brought us Laja in Guadalupe Valley). Review to come soon. **www.verdeycrema.com**

RETURN TO MELING RANCH



By Carol Kramer

“It’s snowing in Baja!!!” What was to have been a beautiful drive to the observatory in the Sierra San Pedro Martir National Park with a view of the Sea of Cortez to the east and the sparkling Pacific Ocean to the west, instead turned into a snow storm in which we couldn’t see more than five feet ahead of us. That was nine years ago and Hugh’s and my first trip to the Meling Ranch. For years we had heard about the famed ranch and Aida Meling, the family’s ruling matriarch. We arrived just as David Lang and his wife Sandra Meling were taking over the

reins of the ranch from Aida’s children. There was work to be done and many renovations were planned.

We returned after Christmas this year and what a beautiful change. The rooms have been refurbished. Each has its own pot-bellied stove with a night’s supply of appropriately chopped wood outside the door. The pool has been redone and, on a warm day, would be very inviting. The landscaping is charming with flower beds and antique ranch equipment.

What hasn’t changed is the wonderful cooking. We feasted on a chicken dinner the night

we got in, and the chilaquiles for breakfast the next morning were the best I have ever eaten. Meals, served family style, always include people from many countries and lively discussions. Staff was friendly and very accommodating.

A few years ago, Sandra got sick. David promised that if she was cured, he would build a chapel on the ranch. Fortunately, Sandra is now better and, fulfilling his promise, David has almost finished the construction of the beautiful little chapel just inside the front entrance to the ranch.

continued on next page



The property, which is still a working cattle ranch, includes 10,000 acres of land on which the cattle graze. It lies at the foot of the Sierra San Pedro Martir National Park known for its pine trees and granite rock formations. This gorgeous park also includes the National Astronomical Observatory of Mexico, built in 1971, and home to Mexico's largest optical telescope, with a diameter of 2.12 meters, and a weight of 40 tons in total. The observatory is the second most important in Latin America. With the lack of light and atmospheric pollution, this site affords excellent viewing of the heavens.

On our recent trip, the sky was a vibrant blue and there were five or six inches of snow covering the ground. We drove up to the top of the mountain where the

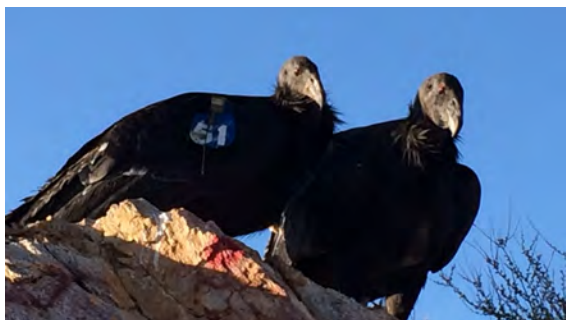
largest telescope is located. Across the valley is a spectacular view of Picacho del Diablo or Devil's Peak, the highest point in the park, as well as in Baja California, with its summit reaching 10,160 ft. It was a chilly 33 degrees. On the way back down the mountain, we were able to tour the new museum located in the park. The Museo de Cultura e Historia Natural opened in August of 2012. This beautiful building, full of light and color, contains exhibits about the history, geology and people of the area as well as the missionaries, soldiers, scientific expeditions, and the work being conducted at the Observatory and the California Condor Project.

Outside of the park on the way back to the Meling Ranch, we stopped at the condor lookout.

In 2002 the San Diego Zoo's California Condor Project began collaboration with Mexico to re-release condors bred in captivity back into the wild in the Sierra San Pedro Martir. Once down to 22 birds, the condors now number over 405. The Mexico program has been a success. It was thrilling to watch two condors at the top of the granite rocks at the lookout interacting with each other then swoop off their perch to soar over the valley.

In all, our trip back to Meling Ranch was a wonderful experience. You can be sure, we won't wait another nine years to return.

*Visit the Ranch's website at www.ranchomeling.com
Discover Baja members receive a 20% discount at Meling Ranch for weekday stays.*





ASK A LOCAL: *San Felipe*

The insider's scoop on the home of fish tacos and giant cactus!



OUR LOCAL: Lauren Cremascoli **TOWN:** San Felipe **HOW LONG:** over 20 years **ABOUT LAUREN:** My husband, Franco, and I started going to San Felipe and camping so we could vacation with our dogs! They love the freedom at our place and being able to really cut loose on the beach. It did not take long to make friends and find just the right "campo" at which to buy a house. Then we sold that one and bought four at the north end of our piece of Heaven (Rancho Percebu) and built them out and now rent out three and use one for ourselves. Franco is a retired painting contractor and has done most of the building, electrical (solar), plumbing, etc. by himself. He is down there most of the time Oct-June to take care of the guests. I am a Realtor® serving San Diego since 1987.

If you had to describe San Felipe in three words, what would they be?

Peaceful, unspoiled, full of friendly people!

What are some of the best activities to enjoy in San Felipe?

Fishing, swimming, shelling, exploring the desert and mountains near our place; watching the Baja off road races; walks on the beach with my dogs

What's the best street food? Fish and shrimp tacos! San Felipe is the HOME of the fish taco.

And your favorite sit-down restaurant? Rosita.

What are some of the best hotels in the area? El Cortez is a great option (Costa Azul is terrible).

What are the best beaches to visit?

The one at Laguna Percebu has the longest and cleanest stretch of nice sandy beach. Punta Estrella is also nice but not as big.

Any popular nightlife or entertainment?

Most people party within their own communities; There are several bars in town that are nice; the Miramar on the main street in

San Felipe has been there since the 40's and was where the Old Mission Beach Athletic Club guys used to hang out. They supposedly sat around drinking at the Miramar and came up with the idea of the 3-person baseball team leading to the Over the Line Tournament held yearly in San Diego.

Any good shopping? The little shops on the main street have the usual Mexican trinkets and there are street vendors who sell silver jewelry. The town now has a Calimax grocery store that has everything you could possibly need. Fresh tacos (corn and flour) can be bought from locals who make them in their homes. During shrimp season you can buy huge fresh shrimp for a lot less than we pay for small frozen ones here in our stores. The fresh fish is also a great buy from local fishermen – or catch your own like we do.

The best "local spot" in town? Club Miramar Bar

What's the best time of year to visit? October through June. The monsoon effect starts in July and

goes through September. This means that the temperatures can be well over 100° with humidity over 90%. The ocean water is like bathwater and not refreshing. AC barely cools a room with temperatures and humidity like this. We close up our houses during the summer as do many of the ex-pats living there.

Annual events that are worth making a trip to San Felipe? Off road racing events put on by SCORE; the Baja 250 which will be Feb. 28, Mar 1 & 2 this year. The Shrimp Festival in October is fun and there's a Blues Festival every spring.

Things people shouldn't visit San Felipe without seeing or doing? Visit the area where the giant cactus are – south of town. A very large one was shipped to Spain for the world's fair.

What's your best insider tip about visiting San Felipe? If you want night life and glitz, don't come here. If you want a place where you can relax, be yourself, party with friends, fish, sleep, read a book, ride your quad or dirt bike, San Felipe is the place for you.

By David Kier

The mission of San Ignacio de Kadakaamán was founded in 1728 by Padre Juan Bautista de Luyando as the 11th Spanish mission in California. San Ignacio was the northernmost mission for the next 23 years and today is the most northern Spanish mission in the state of Baja California Sur.

The site for San Ignacio was visited in 1716 by Jesuit Padre Francisco Maria Piccolo on an expedition from the mission at Mulegé. Piccolo had heard of a large settlement of Cochimí Indians and much fresh water at their home, called Kadakaamán. Once there, Piccolo found hundreds of natives awaiting conversion. Padre Piccolo named this place 'San Vicente', and that later would be changed with the founding of the mission. Padre Luyando and two soldiers first built a chapel and a house of sticks and reeds. Later those were replaced by larger rooms made of adobe and stone. Corn, wheat, olives, figs, sugar cane, pomegranate, cotton, Arabian date palms, and 500 grapevines were soon planted at San Ignacio. During Luyando's final year at San Ignacio his grape vines produced the mission's first vintage, 1733.

Many expeditions were launched out from San Ignacio in search of new mission sites. The most famous was in 1746 and led by Padre Fernando Consag to the Colorado River delta. This expedition finally put an end to the idea that California was an island. The next mission beyond San Ignacio was not founded until 1752. For many years it had existed on paper under the name 'Dolores del Norte' with hundreds of baptisms for it performed by Padre Consag. When a location, funds, and a Jesuit priest finally became available, the mission's name was changed to Santa Gertrudis by request of the benefactor Don José de la Puente, the Marqués de Villapiente.

THE SPANISH MISSIONS ON THE CALIFORNIA PENINSULA: #11, San Ignacio de Kadakaamán (1728-1840)



San Ignacio mission in 2001. Photo by Jack Swords.

Flash floods were frequently responsible for agricultural losses, so the Jesuits had massive dikes built. The largest was called a 'muralla' and was three miles long, twelve feet high and up to forty feet wide. Protective dikes had been destroyed twice before this final one was completed, in 1762. Remains of the muralla are located just east of San Ignacio.

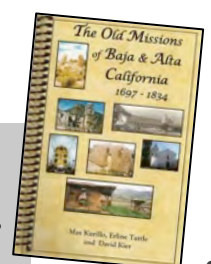
In 1765, Padre José Rotea discovered a skeleton he believed was of an 11 foot tall man at the mission visita of San Joaquín. This firmed up the legends he heard of 'giants' that lived on the peninsula before the Cochimí Indians. 'Giants' were the Cochimí explanation for how the high ceiling cave art sites near San Ignacio were painted.

All 16 of the Jesuits in California were removed from their stations and left the peninsula in February, 1768. The Franciscan Order was chosen to replace the Jesuits and arrived to take on their duties in April, 1768. Within a year, the

Spanish government gave Franciscan President Junípero Serra the task to occupy 'Nueva California', the 'new' land to the north of the peninsula. Spain was concerned that Russia or England would advance upon it. After only five years on the peninsula (now called 'Antigua California'), the Franciscans handed over mission duties to the Dominican Order of Preaching Friars, in 1773.

The beautiful cut stone church of San Ignacio, whose construction was started by the Jesuits, was completed in 1786 by the Dominican, Padre Juan Gómez. San Ignacio proved to be a very successful mission and remained open until 1840. The building continued on serving as a parish church for the new Mexican population. Today, the grand stone church is the center of the town of San Ignacio and faces the plaza.

David Kier is co-author of 'The Old Missions of Baja & Alta California, 1697-1834'. The book is available for purchase at the DBTC offices (call 800-727-2252). You can follow along with the series to learn about the history of all of the Baja California missions on the DBTC blog and in future newsletters.



DIRECTIONS TO THE SAN YSIDRO SENTRI LANE

We've put together a PDF with photos and directions to the elusive SENTRI lane entrance at San Ysidro. Go to bit.ly/1a7V5oK to download and print for your reference. Good luck!



Photo submitted by Edie Munk, taken by friend Jody LcLeod of her son Ryan at sunset time in Punta Banda on Edie's porch.

Why We Baja: Member Travel Photos

Why do you Baja? Is it for the taco stand you can't get enough of? The father/son fishing trips? The encounters with nature and wildlife that you can't get at home? Or the peaceful moments before the sun goes down when the whole world is aglow? Email us your "Why We Baja" photo moment and we may publish it in the next newsletter. Or, if you Instagram, follow us @discoverbaja and tag your photo with #whywebaja

CASITA IN TRIPUI - Beautiful, completely-furnished, turn-key house available in Tripui, south of Loreto. Space A-19, with parking and patio in front and cactus garden in the back. Living area has two-ton air conditioner and four ceiling fans. Includes TV-VCR, Telmex telephone, landline with internet connection.

Bedroom has walk-in closet, and full bathroom with tub. Lots of storage, drawers, bookcase, leather sofa with end tables. Kitchen area has two refrigerators, chest freezer and gas stove top. Dining area has tile table with six chairs. Mexican dishes and pots and pans included. Detached brick bodega with hot water heater, washer and dryer, sink, toilet and plenty of storage space. Just \$69,000 USD. Local phone 133-0504, or US phone 619 467-5958.



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2014**

JOURNEY DOWN BAJA 2014 CALENDAR!

The Baja Calendar is back and it is a treasure! The Baja Jims, Jim Hendricks and Jim Cline, have teamed up again to bring you a gorgeous, visual journey down the peninsula. Featuring twelve full page photographs and more inset photos, the calendar begins in Tecate and takes you all the way down the Baja peninsula to Land's End in Cabo. When you can't be traveling in Baja, this calendar will remind you of what you're missing. Perfect for your home or office and an absolute winner as a gift. *Softcover, 14" X 11", \$16.95- \$8.50*
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