

Tondelayo's Voyage

A week in La Paz, adventures in Agua Verde and north to Loreto

Apr 27 - May 29, 2002

	See Map - press your browser <i>back</i> button when finished.
April 27 to May 2	Checking out La Paz . Pretty nice city, not too big, and not too touristy. Lots of stuff here on Baja comes from the states. Several brands of cheddar cheese. :) Prices are a bit higher than the mainland. Tons of marine services, several marinas, and yards, and chandleries. Lots of helpful people around. Borrowed a bike one day and rode all over the place. Saw Tony and Linda around, and dropped by for excellent fried chicken one night. They both used to work in a chicken processing plant, so I got to learn all about that. Very interesting, did you know there is a machine that takes in whole chickens (cleaned, etc, this is way down the line) and cuts them into pieces, all automatically. Amazing, I thought. One guy's job is to cut off the head of any chicken that the machine misses. About 1 in a hundred, and they are going by at 70 per minute. That means he cuts off the heads of about 350 chickens per day. If we had more jobs like this, I think we would have less serial killers. On another note, checking in and out is difficult here since everything is so far apart. Lots of walking involved. Paradise Found is a good bar to hang out in. They actually have free pool, DARTs, and Internet. All this, and 10 peso beers, and you can get Indio! Great place. The waitress has really nice...
May 3	Saturday, went to pick up laundry, ice, and get out of here. Sailed, then motored, then sailed, then motored to Isle Partida. About 25ish miles. Arrived near dusk, and got everything put away by dark, and had a nice cigar as I watched the stars. Cooked a couple of chicken breasts for dinner.
May 4 and or 5	I'm not sure, but I do not think I did anything. May have read a book all day. Ate leftover chicken all day. The time was just floating by. Good to be out of the city.
May 6	Got up early, and went for a nice hike on the island. Left the dingy anchored in about 18 inches of water on a very slowly sloping beach. Very quiet, nothing but the wind whispering in your ears, and the occasional cry from above as the birds of prey hovered on thermals. Kinda Spooky. Have never found myself in the shadow of a big buzzard that many times. Too bad I had to disappoint them. Anyway, hiked over to the top of the ridge and tried to hail Panache, but they must not have been there, or were not on the radio. So the hike back in the heat, was, well, hot. The island is totally desert, big cactus, creosote plants, and rocks. Lots and lots of rocks, with no trails, so it is kinda rugged. Saw several kinds of lizard, and some chipmunk sized rodents. Not much else around. The dingy was barely floating, about 10 feet from land, so I dragged another few hundred yards to deeper water and headed back to the boat. Got back and went spearfishing, picked up a parrotfish, and some other fish, once I finally found a reef. My sinuses were killing me, so I started taking Keflex and went to bed.
May 7	Did not want to dive with the sinusitis, so laid around all day again, read a crummy book. Blech.
May 8	Went trolling in the morning to try to catch some fish without diving. No Luck. Fixed an annoying slow leak on the dingy, and a few other odds and ends around the boat. Then went spearfishing in the afternoon. Spent most of the day stalking some nice Pargo (unsuccessfully) and eventually just shot a Loosetooth Parrotfish, (kinda like the Parrotfish Missing Link) and then a really BIG lobster. Turned the parrotfish in to ceviche for tomorrow, of course. Decided to have a gourmet feast with the lobster. Had to use the machete to whack the lobster apart (I told you it was big). Chilled down a bottle of Gainey Sauvignon Blanc '96, and got ready to actually cook. Have not cooked much really good food in a while. Ended up with Lobster in Garlic Burre Blanc Sauce, Saffron Rice (sorry, but had to use Spanish Saffron, no Khashmir on hand, but I played Khashmir (Zepplin) while I cooked) and Seared Asparagus. Not too bad for roughing it.
May 9	Swimming with the seals. Took the boat up to Los Islotes, at the north end of the island, where the sea lions have colonized a couple small islets. You can swim around and they will approach close and zip right by. Some of the Bulls are really big, and kinda frightening when they head straight at you and turn at the last second. Lots of fish around. I took some pics with one of those disposable underwater cameras. Then headed up to Isla San Francisco, for more fun. Arrived just in time to get invited to a Pot Luck dinner for Archie's (Sea-tacean) 60th birthday. About 25 people showed up, including Bruce on Tecumseh, another fellow single hander. We are planning to meet up up the road. He likes to collect shellfish (clams today) and spearfish a bit also. We had carrot cake and chocolate cake for dessert, and a bonfire on the beach.

May 10	Hanging out with Seahorse, a Tayana 37, Lisa and Pat aboard. We went snorkeling, (I shot a triggerfish), hiking and then ate the triggerfish (tacos), mmmm, good. I think triggerfish is called cochi in Spanish?
May 11	Sailed 10 miles north to a small bay called San Evaristo, with a small village - about 36 families in the area. No running water, electricity, etc. One very small tienda (store) in the front room of one house. Fiona , a 24 ton, 90 year old yacht was along side at anchor.
May 12	Norther started blowing just before sunrise, a bunch of boats ended moving around. An a few more came in for shelter. 15 boats now. Went to shore for some fruit which just came in from 85 miles away. Then went, what else, spearfishing, and shot a nice Hogfish (Mexican version of a Sheepshead) for dinner. The Leopard Grouper continues to elude me, as does the Pargo (tastes like Red Snapper). Arrgh!!! I will kill them!!! Sauted Hogfish with Onion Coulis and Pasta that Bruce brought over for dinner. Life is beginning to revolve around, reading and finding food, with a little boat maintenance thrown in. Chasing food is a great way to get exercise.
May 13	Norther abated quickly around 3 am. A few boats left this morning on a light south wind, but I'm waiting one more day. Went spearfishing with Bruce, and poked a Cabrilla, and finally a Leopard Grouper. I shot him right through the head, a detail I'm sure you needed. They made an excellent stir fry (Thanks again Dave) and Bruce brought a whole bowl full of really good butter clams. What a feast!!! Man, I can not wait to get up north to some of the prime clamming beaches. Learned a new term, "clammed out" which means being in a state of having eaten so many clams that you just could not think of another way to make them, or even want to eat them. Kinda like turkey after Thanksgiving. Anyway, I plan to meet Bruce at Ensenada Blanca (not on the map) to "clam out."
May 14	Sailing up to Los Gatos (the Cats) named for a couple of puma that no longer live here. Anyway, sailed the whole way. Seahorse popped out of an anchorage after a few miles, and I took a couple pics of them flying the 'chute. A little later the wind was getting light, and it was getting hot, so they sailed over and dropped off a couple of ice cold beers. Ahhh!!!
May 15	Went hiking, and found some neat quartz crystals, and some chunks of geodes, etc. Nothing really worth keeping, though. Had a nice long snorkel trying to shoot the world's most skittish fish. Too many places to hide. Ended up grabbing a bunch of shellfish, and making sushi for the pot luck that night on Seahorse. The swell came around into the anchorage and was rolling pretty bad so I got up and deployed the floppper stopper and a stern anchor. Finally got to sleep after that.
May 16	A 15 mile sail up to Agua Verde. Light wind for most of the morning, and then I started to motor, and the wind instantly came up. Sailing up to 6 knots, but did not hook anything on the trolling line. Anchored in 2 fathoms over sand next to... Overheated! They said that Finnestaire (they crossed the Pacific as crew) is back so I will have to get details on that. Went spearfishing pretty close to the boat, everyone said "Oh, it is not too good around here." Pretty funny when I came back with a couple of lobsters and some grouper. Dinner for 4. Bruce, Pat, Lisa and myself.
May 17	The cruisers hired a guide to take us on some trails above the anchorage and up to the hill around there. Then Bruce and I went spearfishing and I got a couple nice parrotfish, and he used my crowbar to collect a bunch of "Hubcaps" a kind of shellfish. (Purple lipped oysters) They stick to rocks and you can pry them off if you can get the end of the crowbar in fast enough. (Purple lipped oysters) They have a piece of meat about the same size and flavor as large sea scallops. I decided to compile a list of all the stuff from the sea I have harvested and eaten.
May 18	Went into town, got a few fresh veggies, and some tortillas. Did some light boat maintenance, and then went over to Quaesta, and Janine sewed all my curtains on her sewing machine. Awesome, one more project knocked off the list. Also experimented with an awning, and it is working pretty good just hanging over the mizzen. Got invited to Sea-teacean for dinner with Bruce. Bev and Archie were quite the hosts, good food, drink and a movie after dinner. Pretty neat.
May 19	Got up and went snorkeling with a bit of a hangover, and could not hit any fish but managed a few lobsters. Dropped two nice big ones off at Quaesta for Jim and Janine as a thanks for all the sewing. Then went back to Tondelayo and slept for a while. Bruce wanted to get some fish so we went out to a pinnacle called La Solitaria about 1/2 mile away. Great snorkeling, I shot 2 nice hogfish, and gave one to John and Monica on Vigare. Then went to a happy hour on the beach with everyone, and had the usual bonfire. Had a nice dinner late with the other hogfish.
May 20	Going to Loreto to get a new tourist visa. Got a ride arranged to go into town with a local ranchero. Pat on Seahorse went along to help translate and to run errands, too. It took about 2 hours each way in the back of a pickup truck. It was 25mi on dirt, and 40mi on paved. So, I walked in to immigration, and said: "I need tourist card." and they gave me one. Beats the heck out of travelling all the way back to States and getting

	one at the border, which is what you are really supposed to do. Also went to the store and bought several cases of beer, and hit a Internet cafe for a quick email check.
May 21-22	Everyone moved over to the other side of the anchorage since a cold front came through and was blowing a little north wind. I went looking for lobsters both mornings, but found nothing. Got some fish for dinner in the afternoons. Bruce got a few scallops. I have now been snorkeling in every nook and cranny of Agua Verde.
May 23	Ran Robert from Corrie Doon over to shore to visit the store since he was having dingy problems. Then, sailed over to Isla Monserrat. Lots of fluky light wind, but I got here without motoring. Anchored in the north anchorage with a few other boats. Went over to Spirit of Joy with Bruce and Robert from Corrie Doon for a drink with an ice cube.
May 24-26	Hanging around Monserrat. The usual things: Hiking, Spearfishing, and Boat stuff. Diving was pretty good, nice clear water, and lots around to see.
May 27	Sailed to Ensenada Blanca, about 9 miles away on the Baja. Left late morning, and then ended up waiting for wind for a few hours in the middle of the channel. It did finally come up and I ended up sailing the whole way. Anchored in 3 fathoms. Went snorkeling, saw a few Lobbies, and shot one small one. Made great lobster avocado dip. Shot a really nice Grouper also.
May 28	Woke up early the next day in hopes of trying to get a few bugs, but had no luck. Ended up back at the boat and decided to go clamming, and spent about an hour and ended up with so many chocolate clams, that I could not carry the gunny sack that I was stuffing them in. Never found a way to eat that many. Great clams, though. Can you get these in the US? Anyway, came back to the boat and got ready to head for Puerto Escondido. Discovered that the windlass (winch for the anchor) was malfunctioning. Completely disassembled the windlass and found a set screw that had fallen out. While reassembling, broke the set screw. So I went over to Corie Doon to borrow an "easy out" that was too big anyway. Ended up getting out the set screw with some Vice-Grips, and reassembling the windlass. Now I know how it works. It has 2 bicycle derailuers inside. So, hoisted anchor around 3pm and sailed 6 miles to Puerto Escondido. Anchored next to Peggy Ann, and went ashore with Greg. (He was one of the winners on the Tres Palapas Race we won on Sabrosa.) Greg has been around the area since Loreto Fest, and showed me the basics. Found Seahorse (Pat and Lisa) and Compania (John and Susan) playing an intense game of "Cranium" next to the pool. I offered to help the male team and guessed the final question. Kinda controversial. Oh, well, I got invited.
May 29	Went on a hike with Pat, Compania, and Magic Mist (Richard and Dana). Went up the "Steinbeck Canyon" that John Stienbeck hiked up and talked about in "Log for the Sea of Cortez." Nice long hike, at the end I went up some rock that required really good grip, or a rope that had been left by others. I don't trust others. Anyway, quite a neat hike. At some points the canyon goes down to about 75 feet wide but is hundreds of feet straight up on either side. Then went to to the store to get Ice, and provisions. Once completed, motored to an anchorage called Puerto Ballandra, where everyone has been talking about the bug problem. (Numerous Lobsters).