FromBogotaToBuenosAires

Description

Iâ??m doing a motorcycle trip from Bogota to Buenos Aires spending a couple of months travelling through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. Exciting!

The post was getting really big so I started a new post covering the trip from Pisco onwards.

Pisco to Buenos Aires

Day 1 June 5, 2018

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I arrived in Bogota last night with a direct flight from Houston. I had organized someone to pick me up and drive me to the hotel and this worked well so I was in bed a couple of hours after I landed. Bogota is at an altitude of 2640m so the air is â??thinnerâ?• and one of the consequences is that it is difficult to sleep, and I didnâ??t sleep well. I had plans to tour Bogota today but I have no energy so Iâ??ve been relaxing all day. I read it takes 4 days for the body to adjust to the altitude so I donâ??t feel too bad about relaxing all day.

Day 2

Today the bike was supposed to arrive but no bike:-(Iâ??m not that surprised since the shipping company Iâ??m using donâ??t seem to have their act together. I had a bit more energy than yesterday so decided to do some sightseeing. The center of town is 10kms from the hotel so I got an Uber to get there. Traffic is really quite bad but I was warned about that so no surprise. I canâ??t say that Bogota is a beautiful city even though the government buildings and the area theyâ??re in isnâ??t so bad. Itâ??s nice theyâ??ve decided to make that area a pedestrian zone with lots of coffee houses and restaurents. I went to the museo de oro and when I was about to buy the ticket I was asked for my age and after replying I was told it was free! So there are some benefits to being a pensioner!



The Bolivar square in Bogota. Lotâ??s of people and doves.



More doves and people.



Some demonstration. On the way from the hotel there were people marching along the main road. Not sure what theyâ??re demonstrating about or against?



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Statue of Simon Bolivar.

Day 3

I was hoping the bike would arrive today â?? but no. I hope for tomorrow, otherwise I will need to spend the weekend here in Bogota and Monday is a holiday so it would delay my departure from here by close to a week from my original plan. But there is no reason to get upset about it, I think I will need to be ready for things like this. These things are sent to try us, as my mother used to say.

Today I went to Monserrate, a hill on the eastern edge of Bogota that rises close to 600m above the city. I took the funicular up and although I could have walked I didnâ??t fancy doing that before Iâ??m more used to the high altitude. There is a church on the top as well as restaurants, souvenir shops and other touristy stuff. Walking up to the peak from the funicular station at 3200m was really hard work and I was puffed by the time I got up. The views of the city were nice once the clouds cleared.



Funicular to Monserrate. Reminds me of the one in Are, Sweden, where I used to take one of these several times a day when I was actively skiing.



In the clouds! Looks like a small version of â??Christ the redeemerâ?• in Rio.



Bogota is a large sprawling city â?? population 8 million, slightly less than all of Sweden.



Cool restaurant at the top of Monserrate.

Go to the top

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Day 4

As I suspected the bike did not arrive today. The company Iâ??m using for the shipping must be categorized as incompetent:-(

I did something really stupid this morning when I was inserting my lens, instead of saline solution I put the cleansing solution Peroxide on the lens instead. Ouch! The burning sensation was incredible and Iâ??ve been suffering all day with severe pain in the eye. I went out to find an eye bath and saline solution and in the four pharmacies I tried they had none. I guess people are not wearing contact-lenses much in Colombia? I finally talked to the hotel owner and with the help of online translation I could describe what was wrong and she immediately offered to take me to an ophthalmic doctor. Once there and after calling another lady to do the translation over the phone I bought the required drops and eye bath. Then she mothered me and told me exactly what to do and even administered the first application of the eye drops. Wow! Iâ??m amazed at the friendliness and helpfulness of this lady! Perhaps this is a general trait of people here?

Day 5

After enduring the pain in my eye all day yesterday I was totally exhausted and went to bed at 2000 and slept for 10 hours! The eye is a lot better today, at least there is no pain but itâ??s not good enough to put my lens in which means I only see with one eye. I took a long walk to the shopping mall to withdraw some money and taste empanï¿¼adas for the first time â?? really yummy. The mall is nice and clean and would not have been out of place in the states or Europeâ?¦



Mall eating area. Very nice and clean and choice of foods.

On the way i walked past some kids being coached to learn to skate on inlines and there are plenty of open spaces and play-grounds for kids to roam. Skating is close to my heart having learnt at a very early age on the ice of lake Storsjon in my hometown Ostersund. Iâ??m going to make sure that our toddler will learn early too.



Nice to see kids learning to skate on inlines wearing protective gear.

Day 6 -7

Looking back at the past couple of days I canâ??t say Iâ??ve done much. Iâ??ve walked around the area where Iâ??m staying where there are lots of restaurants and cafes in walking distance. There are also a lot of barbers and I was brave enough to have a hair cut yesterday, I wasnâ??t sure whether the barber would leave 1 cm or cut 1 cm but it worked out fine and she was very quick finishing the cut. I had some stitches in my neck that I needed to have removed and it was very difficult for me to see them even in a mirror so I asked the lady at the hotel if she could help and she agreed and removed the stitches without any problems. Amazing! The climate in Bogota is almost perfect, around 20 C in the daytime and 10-15 C at night. So no need for A/C or heating.

So I am ready to start my trip and keeping my fingers crossed the bike arrives tomorrow.



Beautiful sky at dusk.



Nice flower arrangement



Fruit at the grocery store looks colorful and delicious

Day 9 â?? June 14

On Monday, the sacred heart holiday, I was bored so I decided to go to Monserrate again. There were a lot more people than last time and I had to queue for some time before getting up. After lunch I walked around a bit and it started to rain quite heavily and since all my gear is on the bike I had no rain coat so I got a bit wet and cold. Yesterday, I could feel the beginning of a cold and today I feel pretty lousy. Not good, Iâ??m just hoping for a speedy recovery but I know it will take some time before Iâ??m well. So itâ??s just as well the motorcycle hasnâ??t arrived, I donâ??t think Iâ??m well enough to ride today anyway. Oh yes, the motorcycle, itâ??s looking like Friday now.

Today a gentleman my age checked into the hotel. Turns out he is from Switzerland and he is on his way home after having completed the route Iâ??m planning to do but going the other way starting in BA and ending up in Bogota. He used three months on the trip so maybe Iâ??ll be a bit rushed planning to do it in 8 weeks. I was planning to go to coffee growing region in Colombia for a few days but because of the late arrival of the motorcycle Iâ??m thinking of skipping that.

Day 11

The cold I got turned nasty and I spent the last few days in bed. The hotel owner was really concerned and she asked me questions about my symptoms, called a pharmacy and discussed what I needed to get better. After half an hour the pharmacy delivered a cough mixture to the hotel. It pretty much immediately stopped my cough and runny nose, however, it made me groggy and I couldnâ??t sleep so the next day I slept all day. But now I feel much better.

The arrival of the motorcycle became of secondary importance during the last few days but, of course, it has not arrived. The latest predictionï¿¼ï¿¼ is now Monday. Itâ??s frustrating because the shipping company is not keeping me informed of why itâ??s not arriving. US customs has approved the documents so there should be nothing holding the shipment up now.

The hotel is located in a residential area and itâ??s basically a converted home with 6 bedrooms. Security is tight in that the gate to the street is always locked and I must ask for it to be opened when I venture outside. There are no parked cars in the streets, they are parked behind the security gates of every house so security is definitively a priority even in this, seemingly, affluent area.

Yesterday, school kids were marching past the hotel so I took some pics from my window.

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Schoolkids marching in the hotel street.

At lunch time an Austrian gentleman on a BMW GSA arrived at the hotel. He is a true adventure biker and is spending 7 years going around the world. He does 3 months travel and then returns to Vienna for three months. Heâ??s put 100,000 kms on the bike in the last 3 years spending most of that time in South America. He reckons Bolivia and the northern part of Argentina are the most worthy places to visit.

Day 15 â?? June 19

Not much has happened in the last 4 days so I did not update the blog. Needless to say, the motorcycle did not arrive:-(Itâ??s still stuck in Miami. This is getting more and more difficult to accept and sometimes I have ideas of aborting the trip because Iâ??m now down to seven weeks for the trip. And still Aries, the company dealing with shipment canâ??t get their act together. Yesterday afternoon they told me everything was cleared and the bike would be arriving last night. Of course, this morning when Veronica, the lady helping me in Bogota, tried to figure out if the bike had arrived the result was negative.

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In the meantime Iâ??m chatting with my new friend Toni, the Austrian biker, reading books and watching the world cup on TV. Unfortunately, they only show matches where Central and South American teams are involved so the match between Sweden and South Korea was not shown. Sweden won 1-0 without the support of me watching so Iâ??m happy anyway!

Day 18 â?? June 22

I finally have some good news! The motorcycle arrived last night and today I was picked up at 0900 and taken to the airport where two guys from Cargorider helped me clear the bike. There was a lot of paperwork and back and forth but by 1400 I had the bike in my hands! 4.5 hours â?? pretty good compared to 13 days in Miami. So today I rode the bike for the first time on Colombian roads.



The crate-box of the motorcycle looked huge.



Sides are coming off to reveal the Tiger.

Day 19

Todayâ??s the first day on the road, it feels nice to finally get going. It took me close to two hours to get out of Bogota, the traffic there is murderous, I also took a couple of wrong turns so it turned out to be a long day. Colombia 40 is very twisty, first coming down from Bogota at 2600 m and a temperature of 10 C down to 300m and 35 C, then up to 3300m before coming down to 1000 m where I am now. And this road is the main road from Bogota to Cali and further south so the traffic and number of trucks in both directions was incredible.



Getting out of Bogota took itâ??s sweet time.



Beautiful scenery.

At the first town after crossing this part of the Andes I stopped for a rest and liquid intake being pretty exhausted. There were a whole bunch of guys hanging around and one of them spoke really good English and we started talking and he suggested a hotel I could stay at. So this guy, Diego, got his friend on a moped to drive ahead of me and lead me to the hotel. I was a bit worried they were leading me to a remote area where they would rob me, but I neednâ??t have worried, the hotel is OK and I was too tired to find another hotel anyway.



My local fixer, Diego, is checking for available rooms.

Dinner was served cafeteria style but it was actually very good â?? or I was ravenous and didnâ??t care about the taste. It seems there was a meeting of the Panama hats distributor because half the people were wearing hats and the next morning they were selling hats from the back of a car.



Colourfull Panama hat.



Another Panama hat?



Outside of the Cafeteria building. Kids were playing soccer and basketball.!

Day 19 â?? June 24 â?? Popayan

I got up around 0600 and since there were lots of noise around it seems like most people got up early. I had a few tiny cups of very sweet coffee and looked up how far I would go. I decided to go to a town called Popayan around 300 kms further south. I also booked a hotel room there and got the GPS set up â?? wow, I felt really organized. It was raining in the morning and I found the â??paintedâ?• parts of the road dangerously slippery. After passing one of the frequent painted speed bumps, opening up the throttle a tiny bit the rear wheel stepped out, I should have set the traction control to â??rainâ?• to prevent that happening.

I arrived Popayan around 1300 and found the hotel easily. Itâ??s right by the main square of town and itâ??s very beautiful. I got my room and could hear the people across the street screaming excitedly, at first I couldnâ??t figure it out but then I saw Colombia was playing Poland in the worldcup and they went hysteric when Colombia scored. C!olombia won 3-0 so there was a lot of screaming!



Crusifixion display in the stairway of the hotel



Slumming it!



The buildings of the square and the surrounding streets where painted white, very beautiful.



A lot of doves flying by the cupola..



Doves and dogs.



Balloons for sale.



Daddy and daughter having a good time.



Young ladies enjoying themselves.

Day 20

I started around 0730 and was planning to reach the Ecuadorian border by afternoon. At first it was wet and Iâ??m still not that comfortable riding in the wet so I was riding pretty slowly â?? better safe than sorry. I stopped around 0900 for a coffee and when setting off again the sun had come out and the road was drying up quickly. For several hours the weather was beautiful and so was the road with many fast sweepers and nice road conditions. I got to Pasto around 1300 and had lunch, After that it it was raining on and off all the way.


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It was a long day and I was wet and exhausted by the time I got to the hotel. Somehow, I managed to get into Ecuador without going through passport control. It was a weird system and I was waved through, not sure how it happened. Somehow I need to get back to Colombia and go through the proper procedure, hopefully, they will not put me in jail for not entering the country the proper wayâ?¦

Day 21 â?? June 26 â?? In to Ecuador

I was worried about getting through the border, first back to Colombia and then through the proper border proceduresâ?¦ It turns out you can enter Ecuador and back to Colombia without showing your passport as much as you want â?? there is no check. There are a lot of Venezuelans escaping their country going through Colombia to countries further south and the border controls are not dimensioned to handle this flood of people so it takes time. First through passport control to dimensionedexit Colombia, then customs to export the bike, then passport control into Ecuador and lastly import the bike to Ecuadorâ?¦ What a palaver! Some Argentinian bikers I met at the hotel managed to do it an hour quicker than me although we left the hotel at the same time.



Passport control.



Waiting for the bike to be cleared out of Colombia. Lots of bikers put stickers on the window so you canâ??t see the person dealing with you. Itâ??s at 3000m elevation so pretty cold.



So after three hours clearing the border I set off for Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The roads in Ecuador are better than Colombia and the road from the border to Quito is really good with long stretches of dual carriageway in the mountainous parts so that slow trucks do not hinder the traffic flow. My phone LTE worked fine along the route as well so it seems Ecuador is keen to improve their infrastructure. So I was surprised to see that the average income in Ecuador is close to half of that in Colombia.

Iâ??m staying in a quirky but nice place run by two Germans recommended by Anton called Zentrum hostel.



Breakfast is served in the garden. North Carolina anthropology students having been to the Amazonas part of Ecuador to observe staying at the hostel.



Progress so far.

Day 24 â?? June 27 â?? Quito

I just learned that Sweden beat Mexico by 3-0 and Germany finished last in the group after loosing 0-2 to South Korea. I canâ??t be too gloating since Iâ??m staying at a German hostelâ?¦

I now booked flights and hotels to and at Galapagos so Iâ??m leaving early tomorrow for the airport. Iâ??m leaving the bike here at the hostel, it will be nice to be off the bike for a few days. My body is pretty sore so a few days rest should do me well.

I got some washing of clothes done and some other stuff and walked around Quito. Itâ??s a pretty grimy kind of city but nice tall hills surrounding it. Itâ??s the 2nd hdimensionedighest capital city in the world after La Paz so at night it got pretty cold and lots of exhaust fumes along the streets. Definitively not good for my asthma thatâ??s not been good since the cold I caught in Bogota.

June 28 â?? Galapagos

After an early wakeup at 0430 the taxi picked me up at 0500 â?? oh so early! On the way to the airport the car got a puncture, however, the driver was quick to change to the spare tire and we were on our way again. Itâ??s strange but on the way from home to the airport in Houston the Uber got a puncture as well, whatâ??s the chance of that happening twice on the same trip?
I landed at San Cristobal, one of the islands of Galapagos, around noon, found the hostel and walked around the island. Lotâ??s of tame seals around as well as a few pelicans and an iguana. Of course a display with Darwin and the HMS Beagle.

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Whereâ??s my beer?



Angenamt.



My asthma is clearly better at sea level and temperatures around 25C and I allowed myself the first beer on the trip, a local beer brewed at Galapagos. Otherwise alcohol in any form seems to make my cough worse ð??•





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June 29 â?? Galapagos

This morning at breakfast I had a chat with the girl serving. Turns out sheâ??s Australian and she used to work in Stavanger running a nightclub while after traveling around South America she met her to be husband whoâ??s from Galapagos. So we had a chat about Stavanger where I worked long time ago and the horizontal rain and dark wintersâ?¦ Itâ??s a small world.

After breakfast I went on the â??highland tourâ?• which takes in an extinguished volcano with a lake in the crater, unfortunately, it was in the clouds so couldnâ??t see much at all. We then went to a giant turtle sanctuary where they breed them from egg to huge turtle. There once was 100,000 turtles on the island but now there are very few left in the wild. The turtles on each of the Galapagos islands are unique and to prevent them from dying out they need to breed them. These guys are really huge! Must weigh several hundred kgs.



These guys are huge.





Lastly I was taken to a beach and nothing really special about it apart from the ever present sea lions.



Lovely flower on the way to the beach



Ever present seals. They are very tame and are not scared by humans. Their bleating noise is heard all ov
the place.



Very tame pelican.

Day 27 June 30 â?? Galapagos

I had to get up early to go on the boat from San Cristobal to Santa Cruz island which left at 0700. I had in my mind a big ferry boat but it turned out to be a smallish boat with room for 30 passengers. Although there was not much wind the sea was choppy and it turned out to be a very bumpy and uncomfortable two hour ride.



Speedboat to Santa Cruz â?? a very bumpy and uncomfortable ride



The White house.

Santa Cruz island is where most of the Galapagos population lives and it seems more like a â??normalâ?• town and not as touristy as San Christobal.

Arriving I had breakfast in a sports bar where they were showing the Argentina vs France game and with France winning I think there were a lot of unhappy people there. It was a good game with 7 goals and some spectacular goalsâ?¦

Iâ??m staying in the White House Galapagos hostel, itâ??s nice and clean with comfortable beds â?? what more could you want?



Nice meal.

Day 28 â?? July 1 â?? Santa Cruz

I woke up very early like 0500 and did some reading before getting up. After breakfast I went to see Russia beating Spain on penalties in the world cup. Itâ??s a shame Russia won â?? Spain clearly plays the more attacking and watchable game but the Russian defense was impressive.

Itâ??s a long walk to Tortuga bay where you can see Iguanas. I made it there and got several pictures of these, you have to say, ugly creatures before walking back. I felt pretty proud, all in all I walked more than 10kmsâ?¦



On the beach


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Day 29 â?? July 2 â?? Santa Cruz

Today Iâ??m going back to Quito but before that I went looking for postcards and stamps. Clearly, no one is sending these anymore, I had to walk for a couple of kms before finding postcards and then I ask the sales lady for stamps and she looks like me as if I come from a different planet and â?? no she doesnâ??t have any. I ask where I can find them and she clearly doesnâ??t have a clue and says â??try a supermarketâ?•. On the way back I ask in at least 5 stores but no one has anyâ?¦ I guess Iâ??ll have to write the cards when Iâ??m back in Houstonâ?¦.

The taxi is waiting so Iâ??d better stop here for the time beingâ?¦.

The airport is on a small island just north of Santa Cruz and not having looked into this Iâ??m surprised when the Taxi lets me off and explains I need to take a boat and then a bus to get to the airport. Iâ??m getting worried I wonâ??t reach my flight and the minutes tick past as I first wait for the boat and then the bus with less than one hour to go before the flight departsâ?¦ Of course, when I finally get to the airport they tell me the flight is delayed by 2.5 hours! Oh well, worrying for nothingâ?¦ Watched intermittent the Belgium vs Japan game while waiting, exciting game with 5 goals and the deciding goal came in the last minute.

Now Iâ??m back in the same Quito hostel where I parked my bike and everything is fine. Tomorrow Iâ??m going towards Cuenca which is 450kms further south and I hope to make it in one day.

Day 30 â?? Quito to Cuenca

Today I spent 9 hours in the saddle and Iâ??m really sore and tired now! The scenery along the road from Quito to Cuenca is beautiful and in places breathtaking and riding up to the passes and down to the valleys is a lot of fun on a motorcycle but doing it for nine hours is really hard workâ?¦ I made it to the hotel just as it was getting dark and I felt like I was going to fall off the bikeâ?¦ So itâ??s an early

night for me â?? hope to post some pictures later on.

When checking in last night to the suites/hotel I chatted to the lady proprietor, who when she saw my Swedish passport revealed she was married to a Danish man and had lived in Copenhagen for 10 or so years. They decided to move to Cuenca, where she was from originally, when they realized they hardly got to spend time with each other or their children in Copenhagen with long working hours so now they own and run the hotel I was staying at. You meet so many people with interesting stories on a trip like this!



Stopped for some nice pieces of bread and this lady in local attire showed up. I saw lots of women dresse up similarly while working in the fields.



Breathtaking views. Itâ??s a shame a photo can not give it justice.



Day 31 â?? Cuenca and Loja

When I woke up and had the left over dinner from last night for breakfast I didnâ??t really feel like riding today â?? body still aching and no energyâ?¦ I walked around Cuenca for a while and while having coffee figured out Iâ??d better make an effort. So I decided to go to Loja some 220 kms south of Cuenca. Before leaving I got some photos of Cuenca which is a nice town with an old central area with narrow streets and nice buildings.


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The ride to Loja was relatively easy with long stretches riding above 3000 m elevation on fairly fast roads.


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Donkey on the road.



Dramatic landscape and sky

July 4 â?? Day 31 â?? Loja to San Ignacious in Peru

I knew today was going to be a long day even though it was only 250 km from Loja to San Ignacious so I started around 0730. The first 150kms were easy with nice roads although there were some patches of dirt road and even crossing of streams. However the last 60kms before the border with Peru was on a badly rutted dirt road with very slow going, probably on average no more than 20km/h. Iâ??ve never done much dirt riding so it was good to see I can manage pretty well and the bike held up very well with no problems and, as far as I know, no bits came off:-)

Getting through the border to Peru was easy and quick, the Ecuadorean side took 10 mins while on the Peru side it took somewhat longer since the customs guy did not seem to have done a temporary import of a vehicle before and was very slow entering stuff on the computer. In the end the whole process took one hour which is not bad. There were no other people entering Peru at the entry point while I was there, I donâ??t think many people could stand the dirt road for so many kms.



Many of these steel plate bridges. Iâ??d hate to cross them in the wet.



Some small rutts.


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Reflecting on the day once I sorted the hotel out I must say it was a great day. Beautiful sights and challenging roads â?? what more do you need to make an adventurous day?

Day 31 â?? July 5 San Ignacios to Bague Grande

When I got the temporary import papers for the bike I signed a declaration that I would get third party insurance which is obligatory in Peru. I found the place in San Ignacios and waited until they opened at 0900 and after waiting for a while the lady handling my case told me they donâ??t do motorcycle insuranceâ?¦ So I wasted an hour and a half being told this so set off for the next town, Jaen, where I hoped I could get the insurance. So around noon I found an insurance company that would do it, mapfre, and paid my Sol 240 â?? around USD 75 for a single month. Itâ??s crazy, motorcycle insurance costs close to 3 times the amount of car insurance!



Road obstructions â?? you never know whatâ??s around the corner!

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The 4 legged type of obstruction.

So mid afternoon I arrived this place called Bagua Grande which seems like a pretty nice small town. I found a hotel using the iOverlander app but had to park the bike in a garage round the corner. The name of the hotel? Singapoura! As I arrived Brazil was playing Belgium and I felt the mood was pretty somber but when Brazil scored there were the usual loud cheers. In the end it was not enough and there are no South American teams left in the competition.



Nice geology.



Lubricating the chain.

In the main square there was a dance competition for various age-groups and there was some adult dance coaching going on in a different part of the square as well. Lotâ??s of people milling about by the square at night â?? nice to see.



Younger competitors.



A bit older age group..



Day 32 â?? July 7 â?? Bague Grande to nueve Tingo

Today was a glorious day with blue skies and nice temperatures. I was planning to get an early start but, of course, thereâ??s always a butâ?¦ I could not get to the bike until 0800 so didnâ??t get on the road until half an hour later. But the road was great and scenic going through narrow valleys steadily gaining elevation. After a few hours I stopped for a break and soon a BMW GSA stopped and we started chatting â?? turns out it was a German couple who were on their 2nd year in South America, they asked if Iâ??d been to the Inka ruins just up the road, I hadnâ??t and they told me this was a site worth visiting and Peru had recently installed a lift to take people to the ruins which start at an elevation of 3000 m. So I went back and then up to the base station and bought a ticket to be taken to Kuelap, as itâ??s called. Some facts about these ruins:

*The fortress of **Kuelap**, associated with the Chachapoyas culture, consists of massive exterior stone walls containing more than four hundred buildings near Chachapoyas city in Amazonas.*

The structure, situated on a ridge overlooking the Utcubamba Valley in northern Peru, is roughly 600 meters in length and 110 meters in width. It was likely built to defend against the Huari or other hostile

peoples. Radiocarbon dating samples show that the structures construction started in the 6th century AD and occupied until the Early Colonial period (1532-1570).

So I spent the entire afternoon hiking in my motorcycle gear, looking and photographing the views. Iâ??m pretty chuffed that I managed to hike for 5kms at 3000 meters elevation and climbing an additional 200m to the ruins from the top of the lift and not feeling exhausted! In fact, I felt really good!

I didnâ??t get back until after 1630 and rather than go an hour to the nearest town I found a hotel close to the lift which is very nice.






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Day 33 â?? Nueve Tingi to Celedin

The route for the day is the continuation of Peru N8B, a narrow, windy and pretty rutted mountainous road. No guardrails and drops of 100s of meters but, oh, the views are out of this world. Nothing Iâ??ve experienced comes near! Anton recommended this section, Leimebamba to Cajamarka and Iâ??m glad I took him up on it.


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View from my balcony before setting off



At the top of the pass at 3600 m elevation




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Amazing views.



Dodgy fuel?

There were some scary moments meeting cars coming at some speed against you and me having to back up and get closer to the edge to let the car by, but in the end everything was fine. I didnâ??t look much at the fuel level so I was surprised when the low fuel light came on but by pure luck I stopped at a place where they did sell fuel which was delivered in a bucket and filtered with a piece of cloth on top of a funnel â?? it worked fine with no problemsâ?¦ It was afternoon and I was hungry so I asked if they had lunch and, yes, they did. They took me to the kitchen to show what they had and I chose a piece of pork with potatoes and rice and it was delicious!

It was getting to 1600 hours so at the next town, Celedin, I stopped for the day. Cajamarka, which was my goal for the day, was 2 hours further away and there was no way I could comfortably make it so I called it a day.



Walking around the market on a Sunday afternoon in Celendin



Town square with the obligatory twin towered church

Day 34 â?? Celedin to Huanchako

Riding in the mountains is absolutely fantastic, great fun to ride and a feast for the eyes, however, itâ??s difficult to make any distance. A full dayâ??s riding only gets you 150 â?? 200kms in a long day and I feel the need to cover a greater distance to be back in Houston by mid August. So I decided to go to the coast where roads make it possible to easily cover 400 kms in a day. The goal for the day was Huanchaco with the first 150kms in the mountains but then on to the coastal plains. Once there I soon realize that the landscape is really ugly, looking like a moon landscape and with very bad haze. It was also getting much cooler, the pacific at this time of year must be cold (someone told me the water is only 16C).

I got to Huanchaco by 1700 and was lucky to find a very nice hostel close to the beachâ?¦ I was looking for a different hotel but when coming up the street from the coast I happened to see two bikes and their riders standing by this hostel and I asked if they had a room, and, yes, they did. The hostel is owned and run by a lady from Lima who speaks very good English, there is coffee and tea available all through the day and the room and bed are very nice. Itâ??s a surfers place with lots of surfboards in the front yard and several surfers staying here as well.



After having ridden 6 long days without a break I decided to stop here for two nights giving me a chance to catch up on the blog as well as get some clothes washed and relax.

Walking around Huanchaco I snapped a few photos..



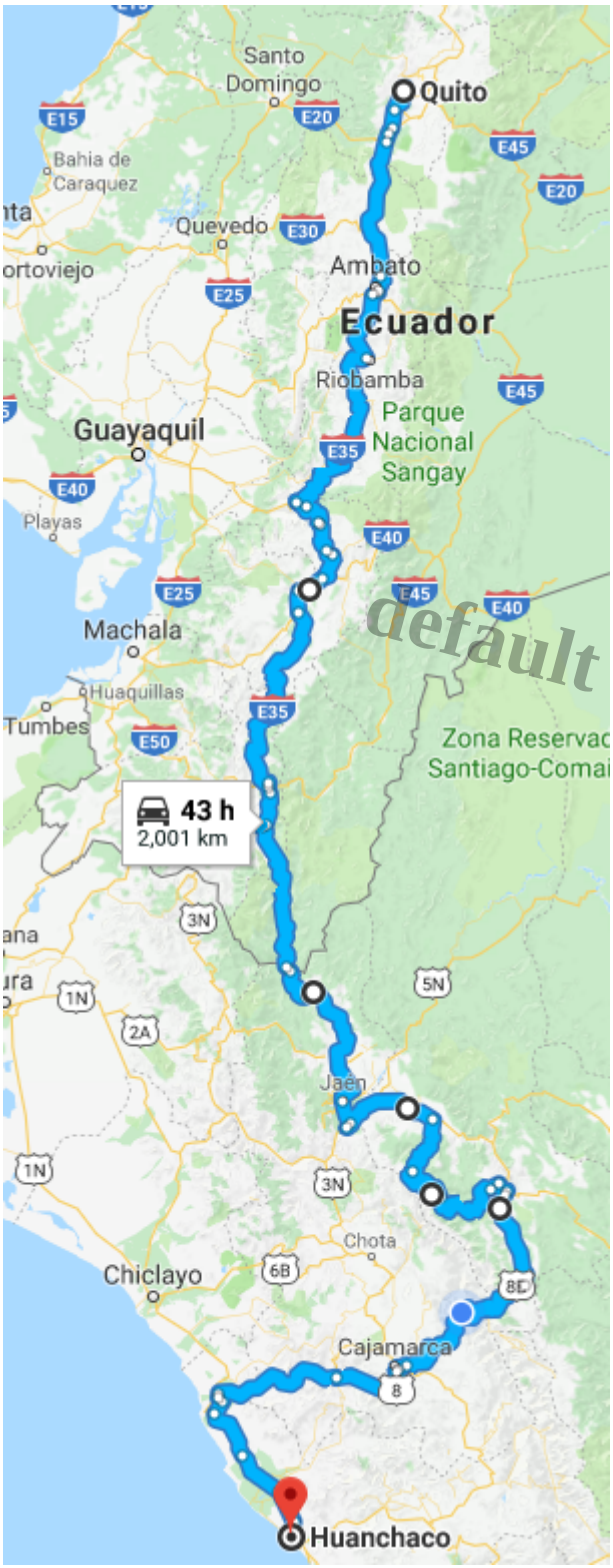
Discussing the dayâ??s surfing action?



Colourful murals



Surfers waiting for the right wave.



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Progress Quito to Huanchaco. It took me six days to cover the 2000km.

Day 36 â?? Huanchaco to Huacho

After a day of rest in Huanchaco and the Punta hostel it was time to leave to go further south with the goal being 400 kms south to a town called Huacho. It was sad to leave the friendly and comfortable hostel but I had to get on. The road south was a mixture of Autopista outside of the towns and not so good roads and lots of traffic in the towns. The Autopista is very nice going through a desert like landscape with rocks and sand and little green but actually quite beautiful when you get used to it. When getting close to the hotel I found a place where they washed the bike and it now looks like new again!



Clean bike again. It was terribly dirty after the dirt-roads.

The hostel is close to the beach and the sound of the waves can be well heard â?? should make for good sleep. The hostel itself looks nice and clean but venture outside and itâ??s a different story. Behind it, the slope to the beach is used as a dump and looks awful and the street leading to it doesnâ??t look so nice either.



Kids play on their smartphones â?? itâ??s the same all over the worldâ?¦ The phone network mostly works well with 4G available almost everywhere.



Dogs everywhere in Peru. When I left next morning several dogs were sleeping in the street and couldnâ? be bothered to move when I drove past them. And painted walls are also everywhere in Peru, seems to be lot of election related murals but also ads.



The view towards the Huacho town from the hostel. Doesnâ??t look all that nice or?

Day 37 â?? July 12 â?? Huacho to Pisco â?? 370km

I got up early and was on my way 0715. Mind you, it took some time to get out of the town, the GPS led me down the wrong roads several times and it felt like I was going round in circles for a while. After half an hour I finally found the N1 road leading to Lima. After a couple of hours I approached Lima and I knew I had quite an arduous time ahead of me getting past the mega city of more than 10 million people. There were a couple of accidents meaning very slow progress for a while and stuck between big lorries who insists on leaving very little space between me and them didnâ??t feel so great. At one time the GPS led me to a toll road veering off the road I was going on, however, I was stopped by an official who said motorcycles were not allowed on this road and he told me to turn around and go against the traffic to the road I came from. This was not easy to maneuver the bike around the 300 degrees sharp edge of the â??Vâ?• with a steady stream of cars who had no intention of stopping to help me. Luckily some bikers came and stopped their bikes allowing me to go back and forth a few time before I could continue on the road again. Not a fun moment! After that the traffic eased off and I made rapid progress.



Views from the road south.



Desert surroundings.



Hazy and dusty air,

I arrived in Pisco around 1400 and this place, the Tambo Colorado, is well used to bikers. The receptionist came out in the street as I was getting ready to get off the bike and asked if she should open the gate so I could park it in the secure yard.

For the 2nd part of the blog click here!

Category

1. Colombia
2. Motorcycle travel
3. South America
4. Triumph Tiger
5. Uncategorized

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