

# THE "JAMIE BRUNNING" NEWSLETTER

24<sup>th</sup> November – 28<sup>th</sup> December 2014



After nearly two months of running my Baja adventure, has come to an end. As I write this instalment of my newsletter I am sitting on the Andante, an amazingly beautiful motor boat, and we are making our way to Puerto Vallarta on the mainland of Mexico. I have absolutely loved my time on the Baja and the experiences I have had here will never be forgotten. The great thing about the Baja is that everything contributes to why it is such a great place – the scenery, the food and most importantly the people. Before I left the USA everyone seemed to have such negative views of Mexico. Everyone I met warned me that it was dangerous and everyone would be out to con me or worse. For me the experience could not have been any more different. When things went wrong there was always someone there to help, when you least expected it someone was there to offer encouragement and whenever you needed a smiley face there were no shortages of people to oblige.

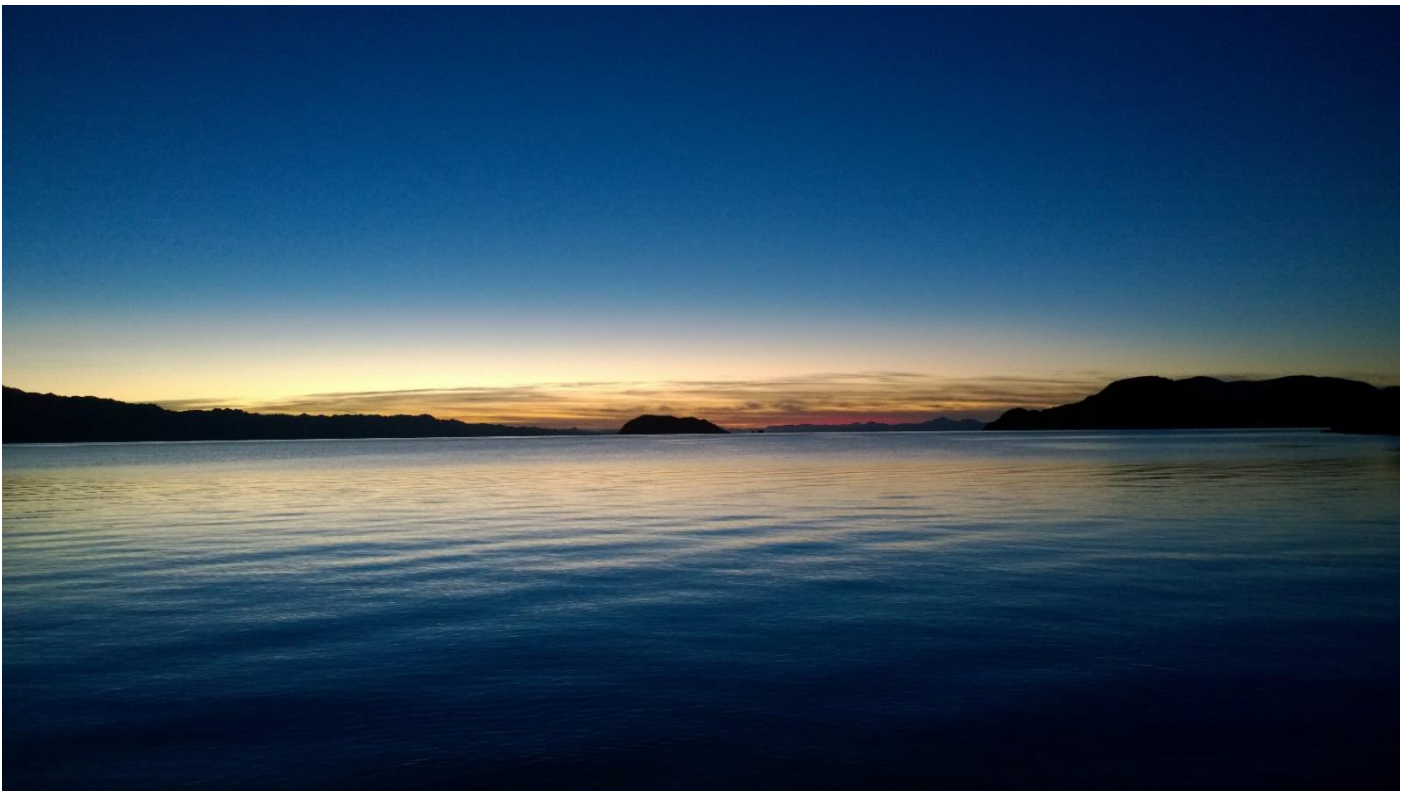
Running through the Baja has been every different from the USA. From Guerrero Negro onwards long straights became more frequent, the landscape was more desert-like and people became fewer. This of course added some new challenges, especially water and as a result the weight I was pushing was increasing. But despite all of these factors the running continued to be about as challenging. My daily running average has remained pretty steady throughout the course of my expedition and I am hoping to continue at this pace as I continue south through Mexico.

Positive thinking has been a huge part of this stage of the expedition. There have been a number of occasions when I could have given up on something and outcomes would have been very different. But by persevering and obeying my inner instincts everything has worked out so perfectly and in some cases better than I had previously intended - sitting where I am at this moment is testament to that. I am hoping that I can learn from these experiences and use them to help me approach life in a more positive way going forward. Old Jamie would have fussed, stressed and probably got frustrated and angry (achieving nothing), time for that to stop...



Las Tres Virgenes

Chance meetings have also been a big part of this stage. I have bumped into friends I have made earlier in my expedition, I have met friends of friends back home and I have met people who have been able to give me assistance due to their own circumstances. All these moments are further reminders that we are not alone in our endeavours and should we ever need help then there are always people around who are able and interestingly want to help, we just need to learn to ask for help. It should also teach us to offer to help. A lot of the people who have helped me have asked for nothing in return more than a promise to return the favour to someone else in need in the future.



Sunrise on Playa Los Cocos – Bay of Concepcion



## The Route:

This part of the expedition had me start in Guerro Negro and finish in Chacala, mainland Mexico. The total distance run was about 770km running (and a few hundred miles motoring in a boat) and took me through San Ignacio, Mulege, the Bay of Concepcion, Loreto, Constitucion, La Paz and the Sea of Cortez. The reason that this month seems a little shorter in distance is that I took a week rest in La Paz and then boarded a motor boat called Andante for safe passage to the mainland – there is more on this below.

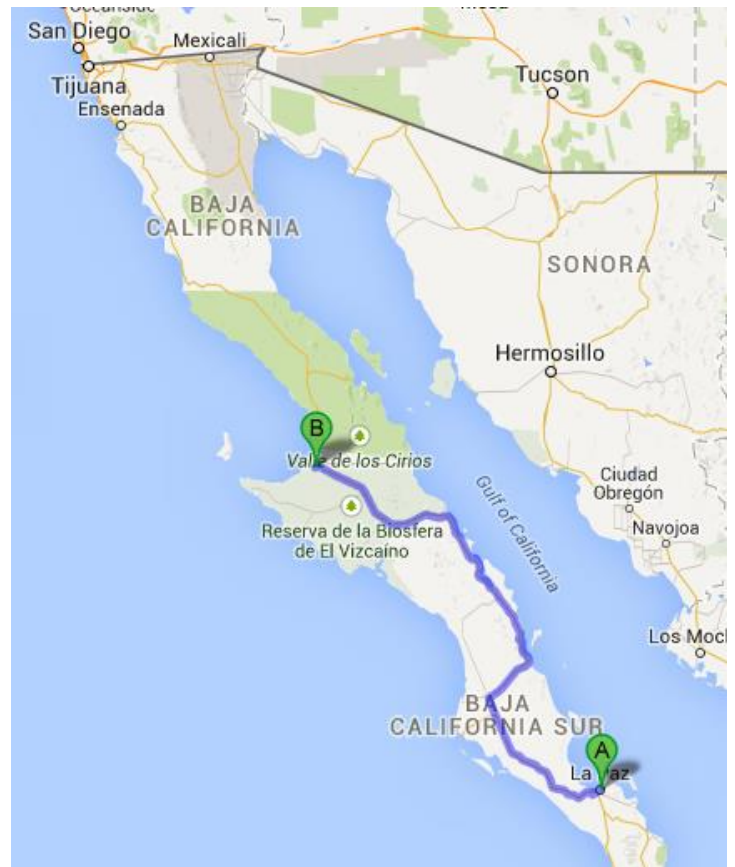
## A Few Stats:

- Distance run in this 31 day period instalment: 770km
- Total distance covered in 130 day period: 4350km
- Longest day: 70km
- Daily average: 43.5km (excluding days off)
- Total days off: Too many...
- New addiction – Fizzy water but also trying to resurrect my M&M addiction

## A few events from along the route

As always there are literally too many different events and scenarios that qualify for inclusion but I have to be selective and pick just a few, so here goes:

**Event 1: Motoring the sea of Cortez:** When I arrived in Mexico I made an adjustment to my expedition. Instead of travelling to Mexicali and then south down the mainland I took advice and decided to run down the Baja Peninsula. While a truly amazing episode in my adventure it did create one big obstacle - I needed to get from the peninsula to the mainland. There were a few options including swimming (not practical), flying (too boring), the ferry (fully booked till the 30th) and lastly hitch hiking on a private boat. As you can imagine the decision wasn't too difficult...



Having never hitch-hiked before I wasn't 100% sure how to tackle this dilemma but I decided to tackle it when I got to La Paz and not worry too much about it before I got there. Luckily that turned out to be the right decision. When I arrived in La Paz I visited a dive centre and the girl on reception said she would spread word for me. That evening I received an email from a chap called Brett who outlined how best to find a lift. The first advice was to visit the Marina de La Paz at 8am on a weekday morning. The reason for this was to be included in the morning yachters public radio broadcast. Each morning the local club host a public radio broadcast where yachters can advertise parts for sail, offer to carry post or give rides to random punters like me. At the appropriate time I had to go on the radio and make my plea. On the first morning I gave a little introduction to myself and asked for a ride – sadly I didn't hear anything back. On the second morning I popped down to repeat the process and just after I did it I met Kevin. Kevin was going to be my saviour and how amazing it was to have met him. One of the things I had been warned about was being stuck with someone really boring or just not nice and then having to spend 5 days on a boat with them... Luckily that was not the case here at all. Kevin was sailing with his 24 year old son Zac and once I had met them both properly it was evident that we were going to get along just fine. The deal was done and we were going to motor to the mainland.

After analysing the weather and all the options it was decided that we would leave La Paz on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December and aim to spend a couple of days on the coast before setting off for our destination of Puerto Vallarta. After everything was loaded on board we left the marina. Our boat was called Andante and it is a beautiful motor boat and one of only 9 ever made – you can see a picture above. The advantage of going on a motor boat was the space. This particular boat had so much room and only three of us on board – this was going to be super luxury!



On the first day we set off for a small cove a little down the coast but due to swell and wind etc we had to opt for a cove before. One thing I was going to learn was that the weather changes very quickly and it pretty much determines everything we do. One of the many great things about Kevin (and Zac) was that they would include me and teach me about every decision made. If anything needed to be discussed we would all get together and make a committee decision, if we were going to use any tools or instruments then I would be taught how to and it would be explained why. While this was fantastic for me it was also very important that I learnt quickly as when we were on our big push to the mainland I would be looking after a four hour watch alone!!!

In order to keep my newsletter short I am going to skip a few bits out of my narrative. I am not going to dwell on the amazing time we spent snorkelling or how I managed to get a very rusty fish hook stuck in my arm....

Back to the main story. On Wednesday we tried to move bays but after poking our nose out into the bay it quickly became apparent that the swell was not going to make that possible. We popped back into where we had stayed and waited for the sea to calm. At about 6 we decided to give it another go but once again our attempt was thwarted. We came back to another bay to see out the night. At this point we thought we might have missed the window of opportunity and would have to return to La Paz. It was Christmas Eve and it was looking increasingly likely that we would be spending Christmas on Baja. We all went to bed with mixed emotions.

At 5.30 on Christmas morning we all gathered round and discussed our options. Some new weather info was in and the wind had died... there was a window and after a little discussion we decided to give it one more go. A few moments later we were under way. The sea was indeed calmer and the wind had died. This time we set our course for Mazatlán. I would love to give you some thrilling tales from the sea but in reality there is not much to tell. With

the boat on auto pilot and everything in order we set out amusing ourselves as the km passed us by. We enjoyed a very quiet and uneventful Christmas day and after a few tutorials from Kevin, I took the first watch from 8 till midnight. [the Sea of Cortez crossing story will continue in next month's instalment of my newsletter)

**Event 2: Phone drama in Mulege:** Anyone who reads my blog or follows me by my various social media feeds will know that my Nokia Lumia 1020 and I were temporarily split up. While looking for someone to fix the ball bearings on my tyre my phone had fallen out of my pocket and landed somewhere on the dirt road I had been traveling. My first instinct was to freak out – in fact if you had been there you would have heard some pretty filthy language! The first thing I did was go to the Microsoft website and start the "find my phone" app but unfortunately my phone was out of signal. I started retracing all my steps but with no luck. It got to 4.30pm and I was no closer to finding my phone and I had to make a decision – carry on searching or hit the road and find a replacement. Something inside told me to keep searching and returned to Mulege. My first point of call was the bar in search of a much needed stiff drink. I randomly checked my email and to my surprise and delight I had an email from Microsoft "we have found your phone". I immediately started looking for help and that is when I met Tom. Tom was an American (or Canadian) who lived just outside Mulege. After just a couple of words we were in his car and on our way to the spot on the map. Everyone recognised the address and there were mixed reviews about the chap in question however that didn't matter as he was not to be found. We postponed our search till the next morning and Tom very kindly agreed to return and give me another a lift. At 8am the next day we were back at the house and talking with the gentleman in questions father. He had seen my phone but informed us that his son was at work. I returned to Mulege and waited, fingers tightly crossed, hoping that my phone would be returned. At three o'clock the bar tender, who knew the chap who had my phone, gave him a call and miraculously my phone was returned to me within the hour. It just goes to show that a little positive thinking and never giving up does sometime pay off. The whole episode cost me two days but during that time I met great people, ate delicious food and got to sleep in a real bed!!!

**Event 3: Hammerheads, whale sharks and humpbacks:** When I arrived in La Paz the first thing I did was seek out a dive school. A lot of people had told me the diving was fantastic and there was a chance to dive with some big fish like hammerheads and whale sharks. The first place I went was the Carey dive centre in Marina de La Paz and they informed me that they had a hammerhead trip planned for two days later. After a quick search on the internet and reading a few reviews I was back in the centre and booking my place on the boat. It was also possible to add a whale snorkelling trip and create a combo so that is what I did.

On the Thursday morning we were picked up from the backpackers and driven to the dive boat. Once equipment was fitted and loaded on the immaculate dive boat we were bouncing along the sea to our first destination. This was going to be my first time diving with the possibility of waves and I was understandably excited, praying that we would spot something. We descended to about 20 minutes and not more than 5 minutes later there they were, a pair of hammerheads slinking along the bottom of the sea. Sadly our presence scared them off and we had to make do with "normal" fish!! The second dive was even more successful and we were lucky enough to see three hammerheads swimming along at an equal depth to us. A fantastic experience.

Our next destination supposed to be swimming with whale sharks but there was to be a short detour. While motoring along our captain spotted a humpback whale breaching in the distance. We quickly changed direction and soon found ourselves mere metres away from the chap you see below. We were lucky enough to spend about 20 minutes watching the whale continuously launch itself out of the water and splash back down.

We continued on to the whale sharks and were fortunate enough to find about five whale sharks all feeding together. We suited up and dived in. I knew they would be big but I had not prepared myself for just how big they were and how close we were able to get to them. I was literally swimming within inches of a 10m whale shark and could actually look into its mouth as it sucked in all the little particles it was feeding on. In all my diving and snorkelling nothing has ever been as special as this.





A humpback whale breaching in The Sea of Cortez

**Event 4: Food, glorious food:** Food is always a very important part of my days. Each running day I need to consume about 5000 – 6000 calories and sometimes the options can be a little monotonous – lots of porridge, pasta and rice. But on the Baja and especially in the southern part the food has been amazing and it's fish that has been prevalent... I have been eating shrimps cooked in garlic, homemade ceviche, clams baked with garlic and cheese and delicious grilled fish. There has been such an abundance of seafood that I have been munching my way through plates and plates of it.

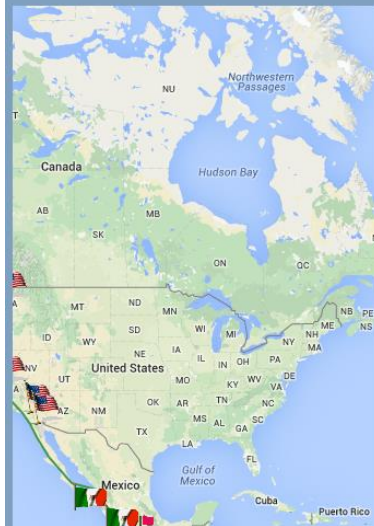


Baked clams in Loreto

### **Updates to my dad's website:**

It's not just me who has been busy over the last month, dad have been beavering away and has rejigged his website that monitors my progress and collates all the blogs, videos, photos etc. Please take a look and check out all the new features. Click [HERE](#)

## Jamie is running



You can contribute to Jamie's supported charities on his web site



How's he going?

Days so far:- **138** Running days:- **99**

Kilometres run:- **4310**

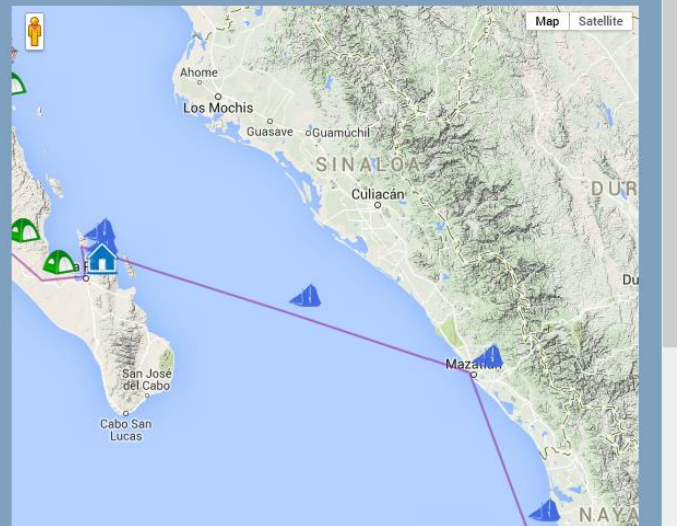
Kms per running day:- **43.5**

Jamie's monthly newsletters

Editors pick of the pics

The Beard

Picture of the day



## Acts of kindness:

The thing that has been the most amazing part of this trip is the number of people who have gone out of their way to make my life that little bit easier. These include, and this is by no means definitive:

- Deano and Jackie – These guys have been absolutely amazing and we have become firm friends. We first met on Los Cocos beach on the Bay of Concepcion. On my first night they cooked me dinner and then proceeded to look after me all the way to La Paz. Their generosity included cooking meals on the beach, lending me snorkelling equipment, stopping and refuelling me at the side of the road, giving my advice of places to stay and generally being a huge provider of support and enthusiasm. They are an awesome couple and I am so glad I met them.
- Kevin and Zac – These guys have shown me the most amazing generosity and kindness. When I arrived in La Paz I needed to find a way to get across to the mainland. These guys heard what I was doing and offered to help in any way they could. They have gone above and beyond what could ever have been hoped for. The above story about the crossing to mainland Mexico touches on our adventure and will continue in next month's instalment.
- Chris – When the ball bearings went on my stroller I needed to find a solution. After getting into a conversation with Chris he offered to taxi me around Mulege in search of an appropriate mechanic without a second thought.
- Tom – This was the incredibly kind chap who came to my rescue when I lost my phone in Mulege. He dropped everything and drove me everywhere I needed to go, bought me drinks and kept me amused with lots of fascinating stories.
- Brett Henderson – We never actually met but Brett provided me with the information I needed to find a lift to the Mexico mainland. If it hadn't been for him I would be in La Paz right now and not sitting on a luxury motor boat cruising across the Sea of Cortez
- The Flying Kiwis – I was given a backup stove while on the road but didn't have any fuel and was finding it hard to locate. When these guys found out they immediately offered me their fuel. Very kind and am very grateful.
- Dave (hope that is right) was staying in the RV park I stayed at in Loreto and very kindly paid for my night stay there.





Ceviche prepared by Deano on Playa Los Cocos

### Monthly focus on a sponsor:



At the end of this newsletter there is a list of all the sponsors that have helped make this expedition a reality. Without them I would not have been able to afford this trip and would certainly not have had the necessary equipment to ensure everything was safe, dry, communicated or documented. Each month I am going to focus on a different sponsor and give a quick review of the products I am using. This month I am going to talk about Thule and the fantastic Chariot Cheetah 1 stroller I have been using to haul all my belongings around.

I think it goes without saying that before this trip my knowledge of baby strollers was limited, actually zero! When I first started planning this trip I knew that I was going to need something to carry all my equipment and after a bit of research it became apparent that baby strollers were the preferred method of runners from around the world. The Chariot Cheetah 1 was the most mentioned brand and when I did a bit of research it became clear why.

The Cheetah 1 has fantastic build quality, is relatively simple (less to go wrong) and is incredibly lightweight. It is also incredibly comfortable to run with and even when it is fully loaded with all my equipment and water (up to about 40kg) is still easy to push. The Cheetah 1 can be fitted with a number of different attachments to make it appropriate for a number of different terrains and situations. I have chosen the 16" fixed jogging wheel. It is easy to push, durable and most importantly easy to manoeuvre.





The sheer quality of the Cheetah 1 is why there has not been one occasion for repairs excluding the obvious wear and tear on ball bearings, inner tubes and tyres.

One question I get a lot is have I made any modifications to the Cheetah 1 and the simple answer is no, unless you include some Velcro for my speakers, and the reason is that it doesn't need any. It is perfect just the way it is. I am confident that when I have completed the 18,000km of this expedition my little stroller will be shipped home and once cleaned will be ready to transport any sprogs I may have in the future...



## Charities:

There is obviously a serious aspect to this trip and that is to raise money and awareness for the charities I have chosen. So far we have together raised about \$10,000 for all the charities. While this may not all show up on the Justgiving page it is sitting in a paypal account. As stated on my website a small proportion of monies may be used to help fund the cost of the expedition. I am pleased to say that at this time it is looking increasingly likely that none of the monies will be used for this and will all go to charity. Thank you for all your donations so far. Hopefully by the end of the expedition we will have got closer to the £20,000 I would like to raise.

Click on the logos for a reminder of the charities:



**To donate please click [here](#)**

## Thank you to my sponsors:

I'd also like to thank all those who are making my trip possible by providing equipment and support. Thank you for your patience in dealing with my requests. Your involvement is key to me getting through each day.

[Rollei](#) – For the amazing video cameras that help me capture this expedition.

[Powertraveller](#) – For providing me with all the power I could possibly use through my [SolarGorilla](#), [PowerGorilla](#) and [SpiderMonkey](#)

[OverBoard](#) – For keeping everything I have dry all the time.

Microsoft/Nokia – For my [Lumia 1020](#). All my photos have been taken with this phone...

[Force Ten](#) – I love my [tent](#) and my [sleeping bag](#). I spend so much time in both that to have the best is very important. I want one of their new [rucksacks](#) that are released next year. They look awesome!!!

[Trangia](#) – We all lovingly remember the [Trangia stove](#) and no matter what new cooking set ups come along nothing beats one of these!

[Rudy Project Sunglasses](#) – I think this was the first bit of kit I received and despite being an idiot and scratching them on day one I still wear them every day – even when it's raining (but as a hairband!)

## Where you can follow:

- I am trying to update my blog as often as possible: [www.jamieisrunning.com](http://www.jamieisrunning.com)
- Photos can be found [here](#)
- Video can be found at [www.youtube.com/jamieisrunning](http://www.youtube.com/jamieisrunning)
- GPS tracking can be found [here](#)
- I am on [Twitter](#), Instagram and [Facebook](#) with the name jamieisrunning



## A Quick Beard Update:

As many of you know I am trying not to cut my beard while on this expedition. Here is the latest on its progress:





**Some photos from the road:**



One of my stops on the way to San Ignacio



The oasis at San Ignacio





La Mision at San Ignacio

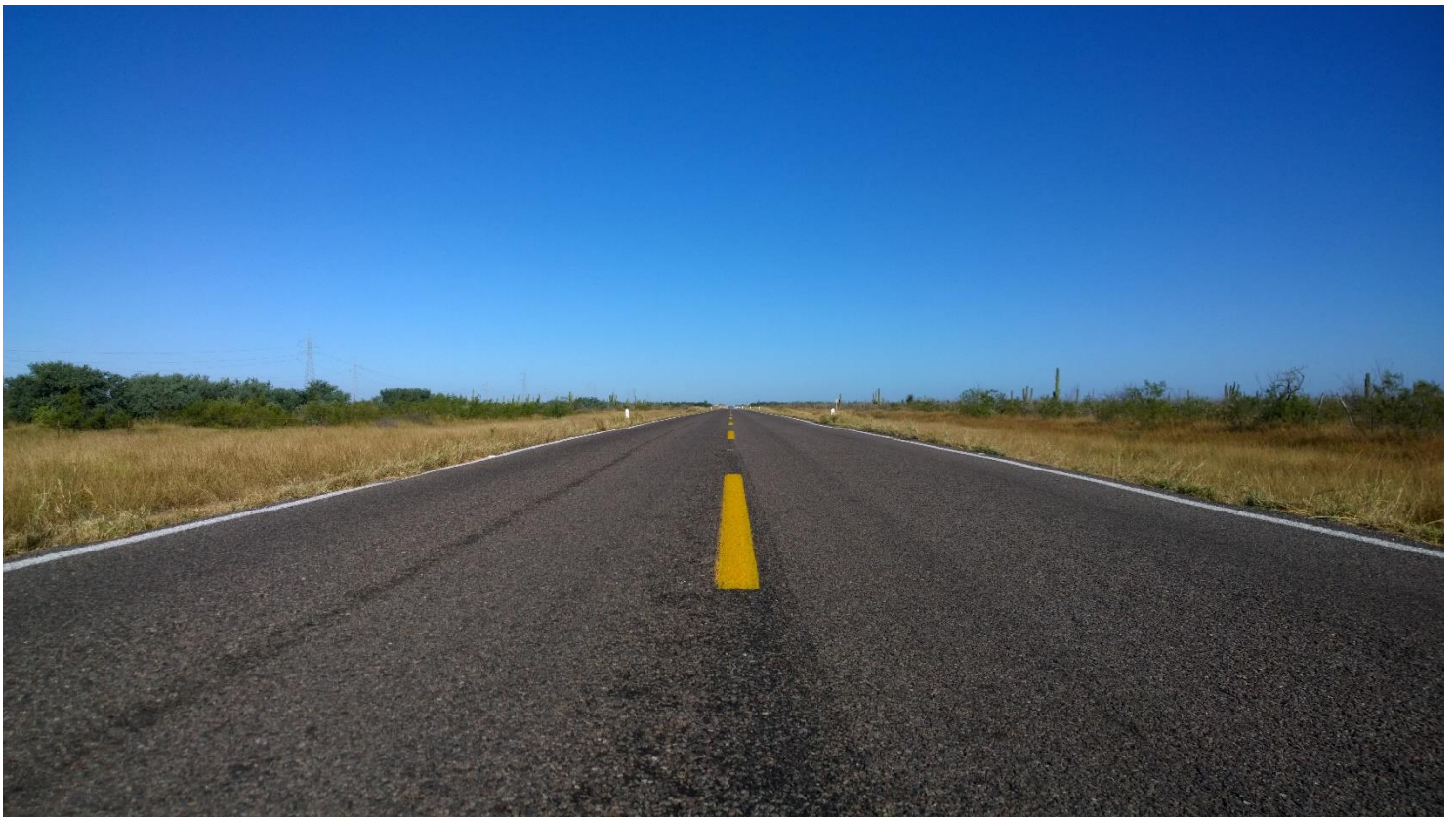


The view from my hammock on Los Cocos





Not Loretto where I went to school but same colours!



The long straight desert road out of Constitution





Mazatlán Marina



Parking on Mazatlán





Jamie is err...cruising!



Margaritas with Kevin, Zac and Roy





Mazatlán at sunset

To see more visit my Microsoft OneDrive photo page by clicking [here](#)

**THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT**

**And sorry for typos and grammatical errors – I am always very tired when I write this and my blog!**