

Peter Baja – Part 1

The Journey

The Journey starts at the home of my very good friend Ted Eynon, in Pine Colorado in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. I have spent a very happy week preparing the bike and assembling all the things I think I may need on the trip.

The main stopping points identified so far are:

- Pine to Las Vegas (which just happens to coincide with Halloween!)
- on to Los Angeles
- down to San Diego
- across the border into Mexico, or at least California Baja.
- Once in the Baja, the plan is to try and ride most of it on dirt roads, all the way down to Cabo San Lucas.
- Taking in some surf beaches along the way where possible.

What happens after Cabo is undecided as yet. There is a ferry from La Paz over to mainland Mexico, if I've mastered enough Spanish by then, who knows...

The plan was to leave on Monday 28-October 2013.

The Bike



It is a KTM 990 Adventure "Baja Special"

It took a long time to decide which bike to use for the trip. For a long while I favoured the Ducati MultiStrada 1200 S, mainly because it has every gadget you can imagine.



I would have liked the new KTM-1190, but sadly they are not yet available in the USA, so I went for the KTM 990 and when I discovered that they had made a limited "Baja" special edition, that was it.

Day 1

Time to go!

Pine, Colorado to Green River, Utah



Distance – 362 miles.

Quite a long haul for the first section, especially as the weather was changing fast. After less than 20 miles I was riding in freezing fog, visor steaming up and visibility only 10-20 yards. The first hour was subzero and awful. Once I got past Evergreen and joined Interstate 70, the visibility improved, but then it started snowing. It was not settling so I pressed on and eventually got through it. By the time I hit Breckenridge and Vail, the weather improved greatly and sun made an appearance.



I arrived late in Green River, the last hour or so was in darkness, but the ride from Vail was fabulous, the most dramatic scenery...

1 comment

1. pmeester said: October 29, 2013 8:34 am



Hi Peter,
That's a nice BIG bike. Enjoy the ride!
Paul

Arrived Safely

I arrived safely at a lovely Motel 6, in Green River, Utah. I have decided to adopt Motel 6 as my motel of choice for this long journey.



There is one bar in Green River, Ray's and I enjoyed a beer and watched the Red Sox take a 3-2 lead in the World Series. They just need one more win, when the contest resumes in Boston. My prediction is that it will go to the final game, which is on Halloween, which Boston will win.



Tomorrow – Las Vegas, Nevada...

3 comments

1. Ivor said: October 29, 2013 6:09 pm

Since when have you become such an expert on American sport, Peter? Enjoy your adventure though :)

2. Colin said: October 29, 2013 10:14 pm

Hi Pete, sound like a great trip. Have fun! Cheers, Col

PS> please fix up the date on your camera ;-)

Day 2

A cold wet start in Green River.



Don't worry, I will fix the camera date! (Thanks Colin)

The first section to Selina was very, very cold. But incredible scenery, I didn't take many pictures, but I captured much with my GoPro. I will upload it when I have the bandwidth. I rode through 3 ground level, freezing cold clouds, it was quite an experience, I captured one with the GoPro.

I had to stop in Salina after about 100 miles to thaw out! Denny's is a truly awful restaurant, but lovely and warm!

I cannot describe how amazing the ride is from Salina through the Fishlake National Forest. You'll just have to see the videos when I can post them.

Happily, the weather got slowly warmer as I made it through to St. George.



The second part of the journey got flatter and straighter, with very little traffic. So a good opportunity to find out how fast the KTM will go. It's 999cc and can push out about 120 BHP, but this model is really meant for dirt and has an extra 5 teeth on the rear sprocket, so not so good for high speed. It will cruise very nicely at between 90-100 mph and it has a

manual throttle control, which is great for such long distance. There was one long empty road disappearing into the horizon so I opened it up, but I found that speeds beyond 125 mph are not much fun, like most dirt bikes they are not aerodynamic and the bike starts to weave in a very unpleasant fashion. So I've decided to be sensible and only cruise up to 100 mph. The limit on the long straight roads is a very generous 80 mph, but as you have the road to yourself most of the time, you can pretty much set your own limit.

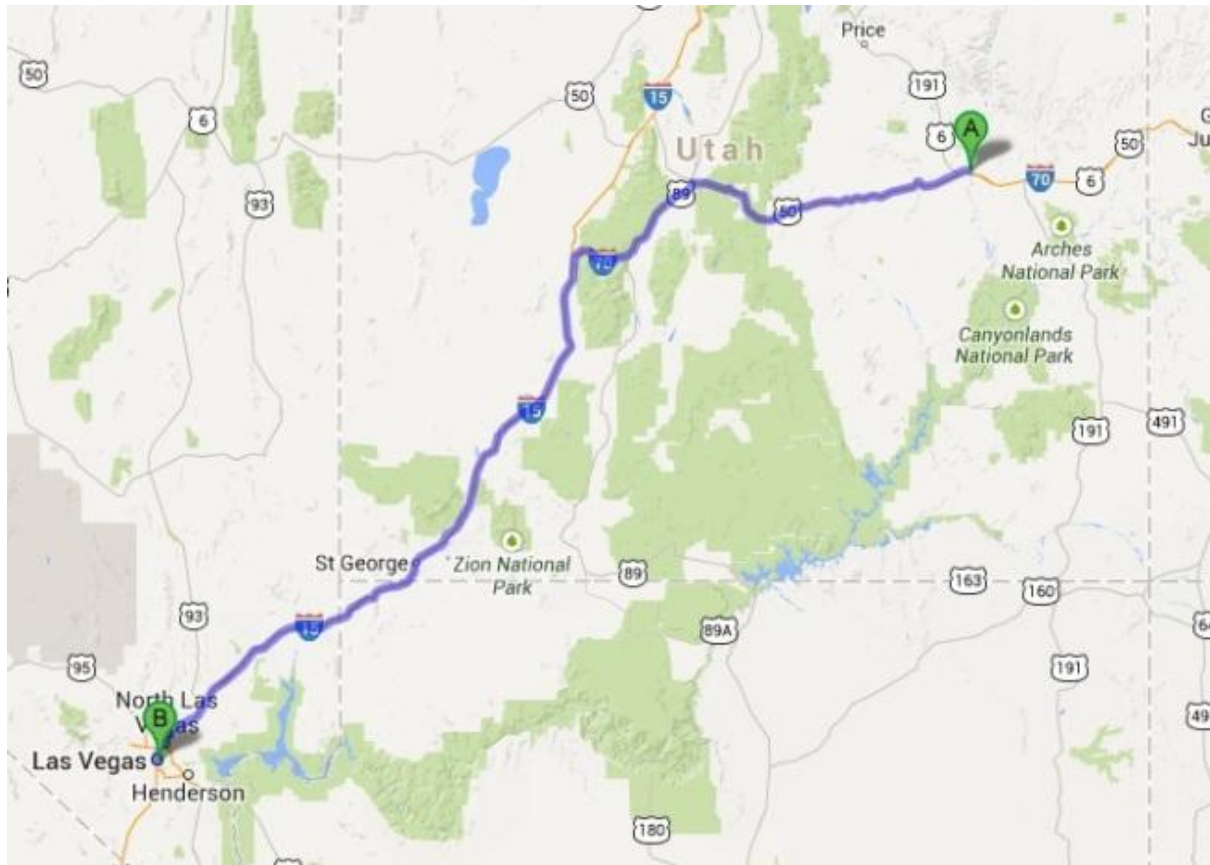


I arrived safely at the Excalibur Hotel, in Las Vegas.



I got a hotel.com special for \$29/night, which includes a \$20 food voucher and free parking! Sweet!!

I was lucky to have my bags delivered by Ish, a dirt biker with 20+ years of experience (unlike my 20+ days!) and he has told me of some great dirt roads to explore around Vegas. Tomorrow I plan to try Lovell Canyon! It will be the KTM's first taste of dirt! And mine too probably! :)



2 comments

1. [ivorjcwj](#) said:October 30, 20135:15 pm
invigorating day again, Peter .. feel as though I am riding with you .. but wonder how awful that warm cafe was though :)
2. [middleof9](#) said:October 30, 20138:48 pm
So glad you're sharing this with us...

Day 3

Miles today – 0

Total mileage – 808

After the long haul from Denver (and a late night!) I decided to declare a rest day.



At least I fixed the date on my camera, so I got something done.
I explored Vegas a bit, went bowling at the Gold Coast:



70 lanes!

Then later I watched the Red Sox win game 6 and take the World Series 4-2. Congratulations to Ted and all Boston fans.

Tomorrow I plan to ride the dirt roads out at Lovell Canyon...

3 comments

1. Ted Eynon said:October 31, 20138:01 pm
Yep, Sox are World Series champs! Giddyup!
2. [ivorjcw](#) said:November 1, 201312:52 pm
Wise to rest occasionally :)
3. Ashley McGarvey said:November 1, 20132:52 pm
I am loving your blog idea! It will prevent Ted from being hounded on details of your adventure.
In the interest of accurate reporting, and in fairness to your readers, I feel the Vegas content may be a bit lite thus far, no? Bowling?? Come on!
Seriously, glad to see you got a little dirty and your new machine is serving you well. I will be chomping at the bit to hear more! Safe travels, Ashley

Day 4

Still in Vegas

Miles – 92

Total – 894

Another beautiful day – about 20C and sunny. Today was the day to take the KTM into its natural setting, the dirt.



About 25 miles from Vegas is Lovell Canyon Road. Which is tarmac for about 10 miles and then it becomes a dirt road, quite rocky and quite steep in places



The riding was quite tough for me, but I managed to keep it upright. Nice to get the feel of the bike off road. It has so much power, it will go up almost anything.

The scenery was as breath-taking as usual:





The bike got rather hot going up the hill, so I had to stop and give a rest and eat my banana.

The tyres are perfect for this surface:



I did record the ride up with my Gopro, but the files are 500+ mb and hard to upload using the very slow free hotel wifi.

I made it safely down again:



...and back to Vegas.

I'm going to get something for my eye tomorrow as I have some kind of scratch which is very annoying, so I'll try and get something for it before I move on.

Tonight is Halloween of course – I am expecting it to be quite lively in Las Vegas tonight...

1 comment

1. [ivorjcw](#) said: November 1, 2013 12:50 pm

I am impressed, Peter, with your exuberance and pluck. Do get your eye sorted though ... not into Halloween here though so we ignore it :)