

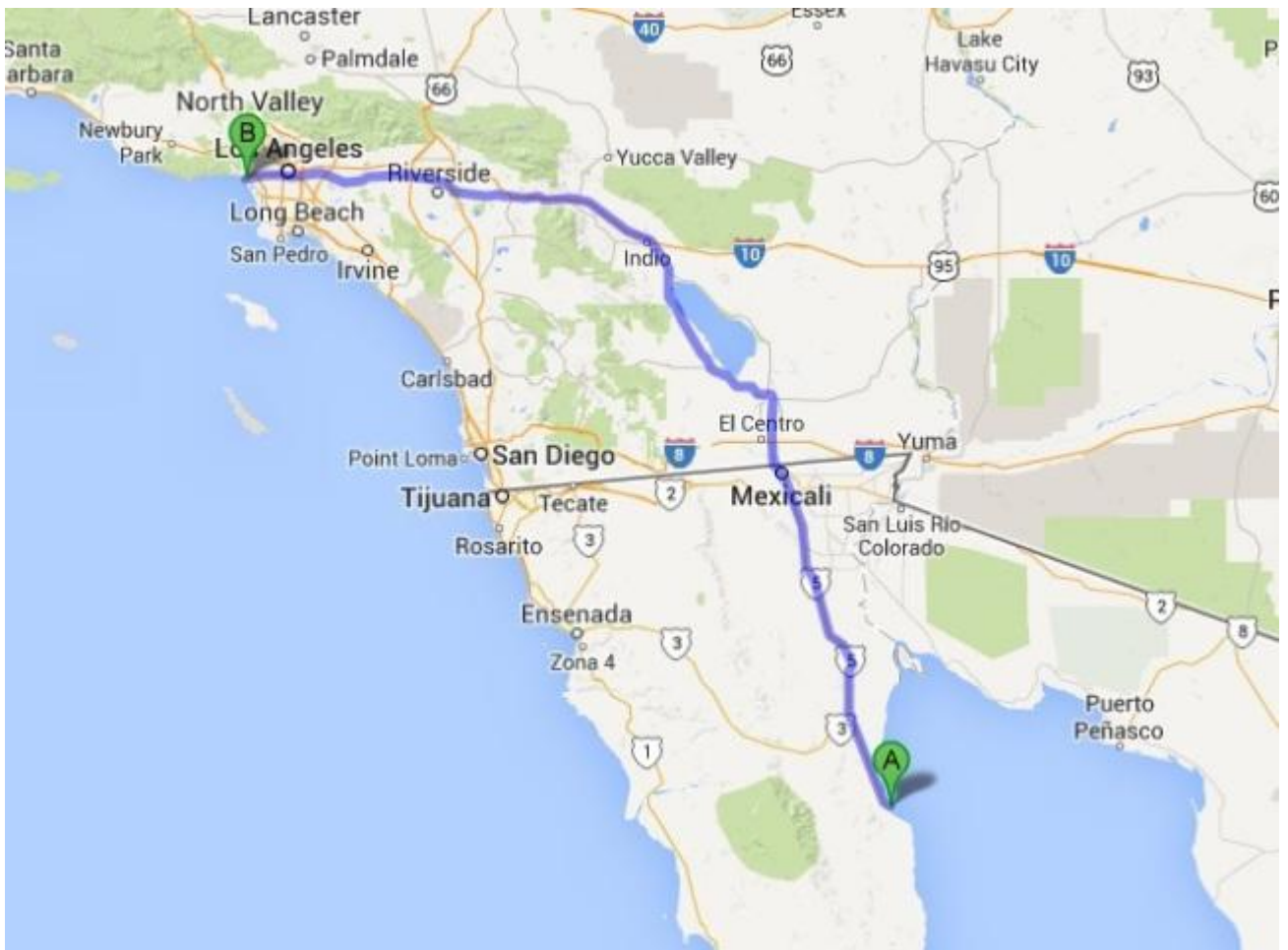
Part 6 – California, New Mexico and Home

Mexico Day 15

San Felipe to Santa Monica

Miles – 400

Total – 4,105



I had an interesting night in San Felipe, I found myself in bar Miramar, playing pool with James from New Mexico, who had ridden his Harley to San Felipe. James' ambition is to ride his Harley on the world's most dangerous road in Bolivia! Maybe a trip for another day...

Back at the hotel I had noticed an ageing 750 Africa Twin with German plates. In the morning I met the owner, Jean Luc and his girlfriend, who had been on the road for 6 months, 38k Km, riding all the way down from Canada! You can check his blog at <http://www.jeannoir.jimdo.com> – he has some great pictures.



The road to Mexicali is pretty uneventful, apart from the desert and salt flats to the east.



The road was long and straight and empty, so I amused myself by taking a movie whilst cruising at 80 mph...

I made the border in good time, but was disappointed to find 2 lines of traffic about 3/4 mile queuing for the border crossing. I'd been baking with the cars in the hot sun for about 5 mins when a Mexican police cyclist, called over to tell me that motorcycles are allowed to cruise up to the front and pull in! I managed to turn the bike around and annoying scores of car drivers by making them part and let me through! Nice!



The road from Mexicali to LA was very interesting – firstly it was a long, straight, easy road where I recorded my longest hands free stretch of 10.7 miles. Then Highway 78 and 86 snakes around a huge lake called Salton Sea, and up over mountains to 4000+ feet. This is preceded by a road sign that warns of very high winds for the next 63 miles!! And the sign is not joking, not a fun ride and also very cold above 3000 feet.

I was heading to meet up and stay with my cousin Adam and his girlfriend Lauren, who live in Laurel Canyon, in the Hollywood Hills.

I had to battle through the LA traffic to complete the 400 mile ride in about 8 hours! Phew!

1 comment

1. [ivorjcw](#) said: November 22, 2013 9:08 pm

Lucky guy queue jumping :)

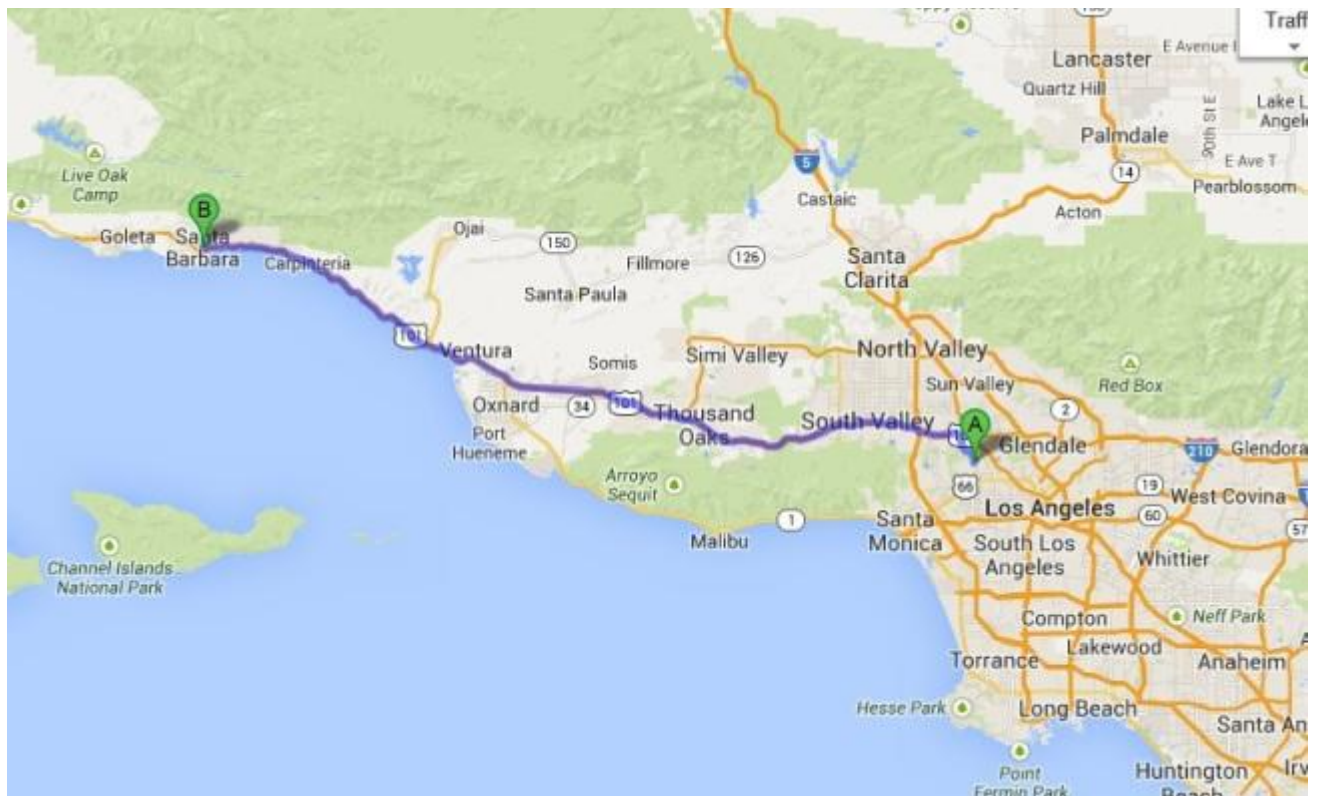
See Video: Look Mum...

...no hands!

Hollywood to Santa Barbara

Miles – 108

Total – 4,105



It was great to have the chance to visit my cousin Adam and his girlfriend Lauren -



who have a great house up in Laurel Canyon, among the Hollywood Hills. I think it is fair to say that we had a great night out on Sunset Boulevard



The plan was to spend the day with Adam and Lauren and see the sights of Hollywood, Beverly Hills and more. But we somehow lost the morning and we also nearly lost Milly, when Adam was showing me the pool. The naughty dog escaped, but was rescued by a neighbour!



We eventually started the tour, exploring Hollywood Boulevard, Santa Monica Blvd, Sunset Blvd, Beverly Hills and of course Hollywood!



My next destination was to meet up with a girlfriend in Santa Barbara and thinking it to be a short journey, I didn't get away until about 4:30 pm. This was a big mistake because very quickly I found myself on a 10 lane highway, in the dark, then it started to rain! The traffic was awful (LA traffic never seems to be anything but heavy) and slowed to a crawl, which of course means that your visor steams up! Great! after about 30 miles the GPS offered me an alternative route, so thinking it couldn't be worse than the one I was on, I took it. Big mistake number 2! I now found myself winding down a narrow mountain side road, with no street lights, heavy rain and on knobbly tyres! I crept down carefully and then found some red flares lighting up the side of the road as 2 cars had piled into each other head on! Nightmare. It was only an 88 mile journey, but turned out to be the most dangerous and miserable journey so far. It took hours and the rain grew steadily heavier :(

I was very, very happy to finally reach the hotel and get out of the rain.

Santa Barbara to Barstow

Miles – 211

Total – 4,424



The long road back to Denver begins and the weather was not very nice. Hearing the news of 5 inches of snow in Denver and a temperature of -8C! I was inspired to visit REI and procure the warmest fleece I could find.

The Denver scene this morning:



There was a little sunshine in Santa Barbara before I left



but the forecast for the route was rain and lots of it.



My plan for the journey back is to head east stopping at Flagstaff, Albuquerque and then head north up to Denver, avoiding the Rockies.



I managed 125 miles through very dark, angry, LA rain clouds and then a monsoon opened up on me and I was totally drenched! I sheltered for a while and then rode on through wind and rain. I ended up 90 miles short of my target in Barstow, California, happy to seek refuge in the first Motel I could find. The challenge will be to dry everything, before it all starts again in the morning...

1 comment

1. [ivorjcw](#) said: November 22, 2013 9:14 pm

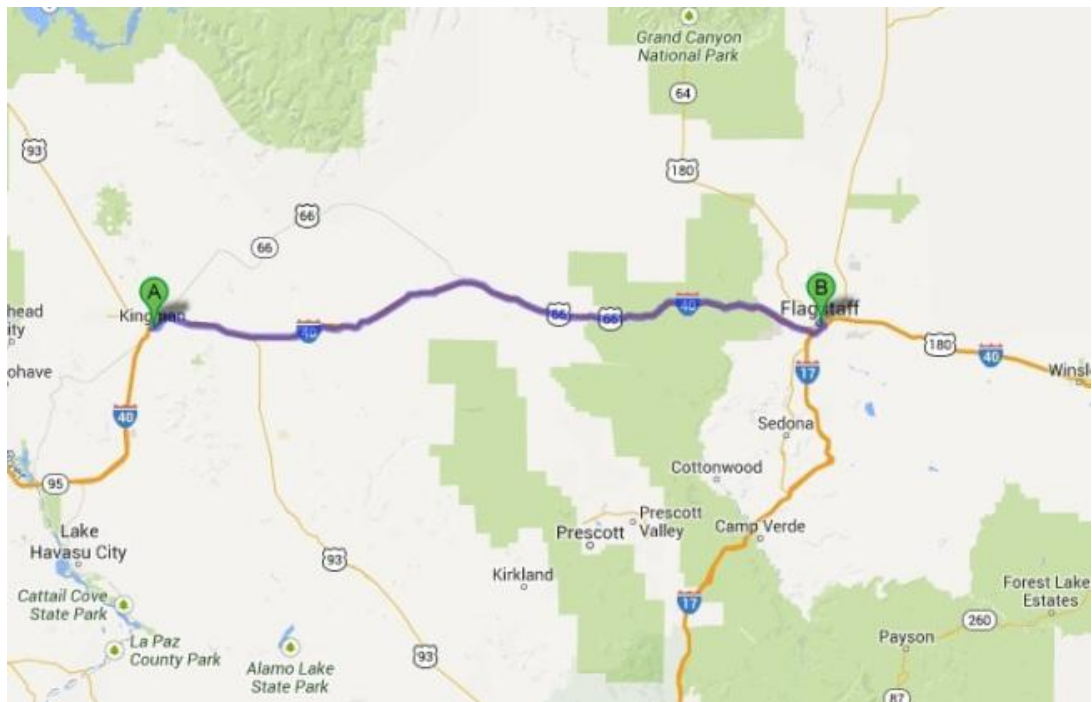
Oh dear, winter is hitting you early, Peter ..mind there was snow in Wainstalls Sunday night/Monday morning
BUT NOT 5 inches

Arizona Day 2

Kingman to Flagstaff, Arizona

Miles – 173

Total – 4808



Another cold wet morning. My objective was to get as far as I could towards Albuquerque, which was about 470 miles away.



It rained for the first 1/2 hour and it cold colder (37F) as the altitude increased to 5000+ feet. So after 75 miles I stopped to warm up a little. My waitress gave me the unhappy news that Flagstaff had 2-3 inches of snow last night and more is forecast.



Sadly, she was correct.



As I got closer to Flag, it got colder and colder, around 31F, just above freezing.



I checked into the Canyon Inn Motel



and put the heat up high.



Sadly more snow is forecast tonight and it is expected to snow from Flagstaff all the way to Albuquerque :(

So I'll be in Grannies Closet to experience Saturday night in snowy Flagstaff, Arizona.

Arizona Day 3

Flagstaff

Miles = 0

The forecast was snow from Flagstaff to Albuquerque, so I kept warm in Granny's Closet and watched Green Bay come back from 7-23 down to tie with the Vikings and then the Patriots came back from 0-24 to beat Denver.

I shall continue the cold ride back to Denver today...

1 comment

1. [ivorjcw](#) said: November 25, 2013 7:58 pm

You getting cowardly-custard or wise, Peter? I hope the latter :)

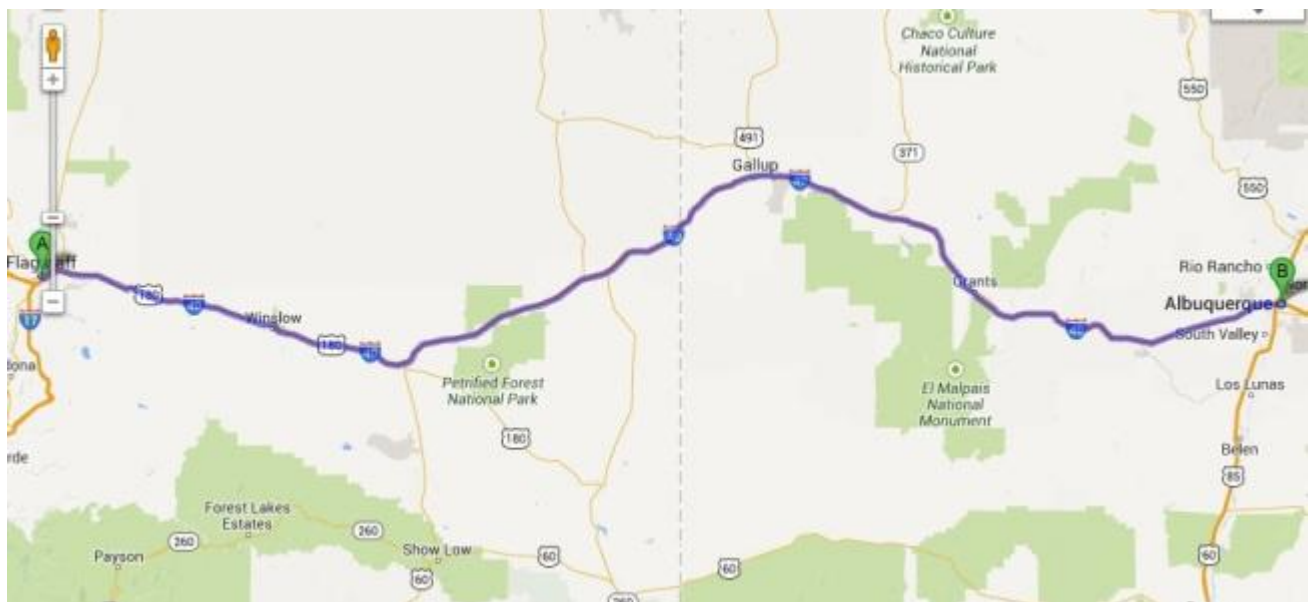
Wise move, I think .. hope the weather is more amenable tomorrow allowing you to continue.

New Mexico

Flagstaff to Albuquerque, New Mexico

Miles – 339

Total – 5,147



Motorcycles are very dangerous things!

It was a bright, sunny and very cold morning, 29F/0C. It had snowed a little yesterday



and I had to de-ice my bike with warm water before I could leave. I got away early, just after 9, which was not really a great idea and the smaller roads were still very icy! I lost traction 2 or 3 times on black ice, it was not a nice feeling. But I was soon on Highway 40, which is part of the famous Route 66, and the road was just about OK. It remained cold, generally 30F to 40F (1C to 6C) and most of the route is very high 6000+ feet. I rode 100 miles in good time to Holbrook and stopped for some breakfast and to warm up. Then I rode another 100 miles, crossing the State border into New Mexico, and stopped in Gallup for another break.

The weather was fine, nice and sunny, getting a little warmer and I was making really good progress, I would ride for 5 minutes sitting on one hand to warm it up, and then swap to warm up the other hand. I'd made my 3rd century of miles and it was still only around 2:40 pm, so I was considering pressing on past Albuquerque and making for Santa Fe.

Then 20 miles west of Albuquerque, I was speeding along at 90 miles per hour, as I had done for most of the day, when my front tyre blew out!

I lost all control and the handle bars were veering one way then the other. I was all over the road and luckily the highway was pretty much empty. I have no idea how I kept the thing upright, I was expecting to go down at any point. Gradually I managed to reduce speed and it was still as hard to control at 30 as it was at 90. But somehow I got it onto the hard shoulder and to a standstill. Phew! I was very, very lucky.



You can ride for 20 or 30 miles before you find an exit on this road, but luckily again, I was 1 mile short of an exit and I could see a gas station very close by. I had to remove the luggage to get the bike on to the centre stand, then put them back on to lift the front wheel. I had a can of stuff which will partially inflate the tyre and some clever gunk is supposed to find the puncture and temporarily close it up. So I squirted the stuff in and then managed to ride very slowly to the exit and made it to the gas station.



I had a spare heavy duty inner tube, which will work on the front or the back and I had a mini compressor to inflate the tyre and I had the tools to get the wheel off, but I was running out of day light and I was given the number of a local mobile mechanic, so I figured I would use whatever help I could get.



Soon, my new best friend Audie and I had the front wheel off and we set about changing the inner tube. He had some lovely big spanners!



It took us just over an hour



And we had it fixed and re-inflated the front tyre.



I cautiously rode the final 20 miles to Albuquerque and checked into a Motel and breathed a very big sigh of relief.

The bike could have been totalled and so could I, the only damage was to the toe of my boot as I tried to keep it upright!



Tomorrow I will finally head north to Colorado...

1 comment

1. [ivorjcw](#) said: December 4, 2013 7:01 pm

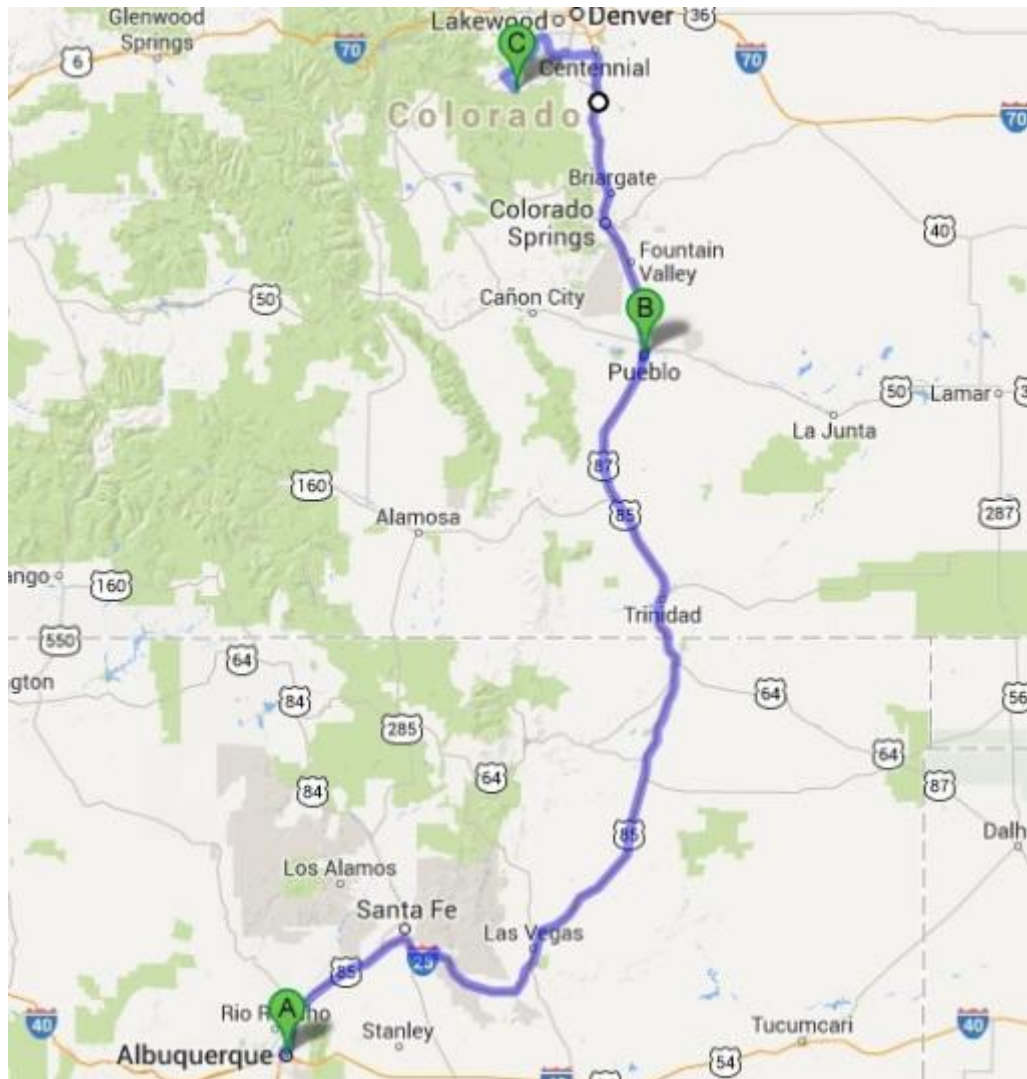
My word, Peter .. that was what I call "a very narrow escape" indeed .. phew, I was sweating just reading about it

HOME SAFE

Albuquerque to Pueblo then back to Pine, Colorado

Miles – 441

Total Mileage – 5,588



I made an early start from Albuquerque and hit the highway. I was very cautious after the front tyre blow out. The tyre was definitely damaged and now has a very strange profile.



I made Sante Fe for breakfast and then on to Las Vegas, New Mexico. I intended to get gas in Las Vegas, but the last exit stated that it had no fuel. I was kicking myself for not stopping earlier as the fuel light was on and I had no idea if there was any gas in the next 50 miles.

And it was cold!



There were 2 exits, Valmora after 20 miles had nothing. So it was all on Wagon Mound and with 4 miles left, I found a gas station.



It was bright and sunny all the way, but very cold 27F to 37F.



I stopped again in Trinidad, for gas and a warm coffee and then pressed on to Pueblo, where I decided to stop for the night.

Today was sunny and even warmer, as high as 60F in Denver. So the final few hours was a simple ride up Interstate 25, and then out on Highway 285 to Pine.

...and my good friends Ted and Kevin were waiting to greet me.



Home safe. The bike is truly awesome, 5 and half thousand miles and it never missed a beat. I love it.

Some stats from the trip:

- Total Mileage – 5,588
- Number of days on the road – 32
- Estimated petrol used – 140 gallons
- Number of tyre blow outs – 1
- Number of times I feel off – 20
- Number of times I dropped the bike in a gas station – 2
- Number of cars that overtook/passed me in Mexico – 2
- Motel 6 guest status – VIP! :)

It was great trip. It was everything I expected and much, much more. Thank you for following the blog and for all the lovely comments and likes.

Now Maverick is going to borrow the bike for his adventure...



2 comments

1. Gordon said: November 28, 2013 6:29 am

Congrats Peter...well done. Thanks for the blog it has been amazing . The KTM has to find a permanent parking space in your garage!!

2. [ivorjcw](#) said: December 4, 2013 7:04 pm

Yes, very well done indeed, and thanks for sharing your adventure with us all .. safe journey back now to UK?