

Baja Voyage Day 26



San Francisquito, inner cove

Alice and I both were ready for a fresh water shower, and since there was another boat from New Zealand close by, we left the small bay and motored out to the larger one. We anchored off a deserted beach planning on doing some snorkeling before taking the freshwater shower. Like her 1st swim in the Sea of Cortez, poor Alice ran into a jellyfish and was stung several times. She beat a hasty retreat, while I was determined to press on, even after I was stung once. The jellyfish was most unusual. It was a collection of small BB-sized brown pods connected in series with fine stinging filaments, hence its name, String of Pearls jellyfish.

Snorkeling was nice with lots of fish, but somewhat spoiled by having to constantly be on the lookout for the jellyfish. Once I saw one, the rest were fairly easy to spot and avoid. I returned to find Alice just finishing up her luxurious freshwater shower looking refreshed, but with several angry welts on her arms and legs. She always reacts strongly to stings and allergens.

Next morning we awoke, had breakfast and a swim. Being who I am, I decided I had to go exploring and rowed out to the entrance and climbed around on some massive boulders to take a few pictures. By now the sun was intense, and I headed back to the boat. I tied up the dingy, handed Alice the camera and then dropped into the relatively (86° F) cool water. It felt sooo good, I just lay there floating and dozing off.



My Billy Bud impression, or just hanging out

We were making this a leisurely morning since we only had 20 nm to go to our next anchorage. A short time later, the pirate-flagged ship from Mulegé showed up and dropped anchor. They dinghied by, and I mentioned there was a New Zealand ketch inside the small bay. The “pirate” said he owed them some rum and returned to get some from his boat and went buzzing in to make the delivery. Who said pirates, or rum drinkers for that matter, don’t pay their debts? We left in late morning headed for the “mythical” island of Salsipuedes. Mythical because for the first week of the cruise we tried but could never get there.



At anchor, north bight Salsipuedes Island

Light winds compelled us to motor along the island of San Lorenzo and Las Animas. The first was a very steep, long island, with no place to anchor. The cliffs and rock formations of both were interesting and the islands blocked the swell coming from the east, so it was a peaceful cruise. By late afternoon we had seen several small pods of dolphins and two finback whales. The wind shifted to the south as we approached the island of Salsipuedes and a short swell was developing. The swell determined the north anchorage to be the better choice.

You can see that the island is almost cut in two with the two parts joined by a small isthmus of sand and gravel. This means you have two fjord-like anchorages giving excellent protection from either the north or the south but not both. We sailed around the southern part of Salsipuedes, sailed into the north slot and anchored in 20 feet of water with a sand bottom.

Now, this was a cool island. There were piles of volcanic slag and multi-colored rocks, many of which were capped with bright white guano. Organ-pipe and saguaro cactus sprinkled over the rugged terrain gave this place a truly exotic appearance. After setting out two anchors and with the sun low enough in the west to lose some of its intensity, I left Alice



At the top of the Island looking north

reading a book and I rowed ashore to the island.



From the top of Salsipuedes looking southeast

of Las Animas and San Lorenzo. To the east was the big island of Tibrion, once inhabited by Indians and now depopulated. To the north was the string of small familiar islands of Raza, Partida and Estanque, all dominated by Isla Angel De La Guarda. Finally to the west, squinting into the sun, I could see the rugged mountains of the Baja. The oblique rays of the sun served to accentuate the convoluted nature of the land and turned the blue sea into liquid silver. All I could hear was wind, birds and distant surf. I smelled the unique musk of sun-heated rocks and parched vegetation, and felt the now diminishing heat of the desert sun on my face. I sat there at the top for a long time, just sensing this special place.

There was a path that twisted its way through pointed piles of slag and jutting chunks of lava. The surface reminded me of the time Alice and I went to Hawaii and hiked around the crater of Kilauea. It seemed to me that very little weathering had taken place on this island. I slowly worked my way up the steep trail taking pictures and occasionally pausing at small, level, miniature meadows of sand and cactus. Eventually I made my way to the top of the island for a truly grand view just as the sun began setting. To the southeast, I could see the islands



Sunset on Salsipuedes (it means “leave if you can island”) It was very difficult to do so!

Alice was worried by the time I got down low enough to shout to her, It would have been nice to have a handheld VHF or even those little walkie-talkies at a time like this. A quick row to the boat and we settled in as the almost full moon rose over the island. We were both touched by the beauty of this place and it didn't seem right to play music. We just listened to the sounds that the island and the sea created together in the moonlight.

