

## Central Amerika/ Mexico

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 Letter 5, Central America, May 2, 2006  
I am now in Guatemala, close to Mexico. Central America is really beautiful. Crystalline rivers and paradise beaches all the way.  
To get to Panama I had to take a so called smuggling boat with 400 hp. It wasn't a pleasant trip at all. The boat raced at 100 knots over the waves. My back still hurts me one week later. On the coast we've been checked out very closely because they thought we were cocaine smugglers from Colombia. Afterwards I had to take a short flight to Panama City because they don't like tourists in the surrounding areas.  
Now I have two travelling companions, one from Japan and the other from Canada. I just feel fine after I have been traveling 3 months alone. They are tough bikers and I call them hippy bikers. We exchange experiences all the way. But our daily trips hardly reached 100 km on even roads.  
Except for biking we spent a lot of time on rivers and beaches taking rest and swimming. As I said it's really a paradise here. We always sleep close to beaches and rivers and start out early in the morning with coffee and eggs. Once we slept near a Vulcano which was active and spat smog and lava all night. It was nice to see how the red lava ran down the mountain sides. Luck was with me 3 times.  
1. A dog jumped ahead of me and I fell. I hurt my arm and my camera was damaged.  
2. To avoid colliding with an elderly lady I collided with a tree in the middle of the road. She didn't even bother to apologise or anything, simply carried on her way without as much as a "How are you?"  
3. The last time, I didn't realize that my legs were much stronger than I thought and I was able to cycle straight up a hill without going from one side to the other.  
I found the people in the south much friendlier than in the north, where they shouted "GRINGO!" a lot which basically means "Americans go home!" That is to say that USA is not so popular down here.  
The countries are left-wing orientated because they hate USA.  
There is a lot of corruption on the borders and we must pay every time to cross.  
On the border of Honduras we didn't pay which resulted in a load of screaming and arguing.  
But we didn't give up (we got to know the culture) we tried to find out the officers' identity and wanted to report him for corruption in the capital.  
Because we didn't get his identity we took a photo of him. He almost flipped out, nearly exploded and he called the police. He took our passports and threatened with one thing or another, but it ended up with us having to pay to continue our trip.  
We laughed a lot afterwards about this episode.  
From my sponsors I received some money from one of the greatest contributors in The Bolivian family. He's been there from the beginning and worked active to hold the whole works together. Hans Olav Medland sponsors me as a private person, very kind of him.  
Rune