

Mexico

Pick the port of entry and go



Loreto

We were advised the entry point of Loreto is an easy and smooth customs and immigration clearance. Good past experience from other Cirrus Life friends proved to be, as usual, the best tips and the advice didn't disappoint. We were met at the aircraft by CBP, asked to remove all the contents of the plane- for us that is A LOT!, passports and a quick look inside a few bags then we were good to go- 15 mins tops.

The FBO is Loreto aviation services who are performing services just like the USA with full assistance, completing the general declaration and providing good rates on hotel accommodations and transportation. We stayed at the (La Mision Hotel which was well situated to the small quaint town and opposite the Gulf of California.

The Baja 1000 race had just completed and the town was full with off road vehicles adding to the normal traffic of tourists enjoying the activities of boating, fishing expeditions, water sports and desert adventures.

Next stop was Puerto Vallarta, positioned on the mainland southern Pacific Ocean side of Mexico. A short flight along the length of the Baja. For Cirrus owners the FBO; Aerotron is also a dealership so guess who gets special treatment when you go there? Yes the Cirrus Life club. The FBO has full customs and immigration facilities and is crazy busy, with big private Jets. They operate a fleet of drivers to take you to your accommodation; you might just think you're in the USA.

We are avid Hilton members and choose this chain all over the world mainly as we know exactly what to expect and we get bonus upgrades as available. There are 3 Hilton hotels here but only 2 are worth looking at. We stayed at both; in Punta Mita just north of the main city on a private peninsula there are the most luxurious hotels in the province with long stretches of beach. A very tropical feel with mangroves, alligators and relatively flat landscape, the weather is different than the bay area of the City with dryer sunny days. The new Conrad Hilton is the top of the Hilton luxury hotels. Spacious apartment type rooms, separate lounging, personal plunge pools and big bathrooms. Several large heated pools and spas for Adults and singles only and family/children pools and a beach that you can safely walk or swim for miles.

The other only choice is newly renovated Hilton Riviera all inclusive on the bay of the city which has very different weather due to being surrounded by jungle covered mountains, honestly the beach



here is like being in lagoon heaven, protected, calm azure blue water, full of swarms of fish and feasting, dive bombing pelicans! All inclusive resort shenanigans all day, however the music is a live band playing really good music for just a few hours so

you're not overwhelmed with loud music, just enough good entertainment and plenty of a-la cart restaurant options to choose every type of cuisine you desire. We had an amazing room, more like

a small apartment with personal jacuzzi, ocean views and personal butler.

The City is very safe to walk around and gives a small glimpse of being in Mexico, mixing with culture and this is a great place to do this in a safe environment.

Departure out of Puerto Vallarta is over the bay , gain some altitude then turn left to the 10,000 feet Sierra Madre mountain range climb to FL200 at point of Volat. We are going to Mexico City and landing at MMTO, Toluca a smaller airport on the SW of the city and flying over the 2nd biggest city of Guadalajara. Entry to RWY 15 flies an interesting route through mountains to final following a long valley to land in an altitude of 8466 feet! It was a bit of a shock to see the airport



set up here. A small city of private hangars full of high end jets and FBO services to match. We needed directions from ground to navigate the taxiways lined with huge hangars to find EOLO FBO. Generally FBOs here are very expensive, EOLO hangared, cleaned and fueled at a very reasonable rate and the service is first class.

Mexico City: at an altitude 7250 feet was a must see for us, as there is a lot of history and cultural significance here. We took things slowly due to the altitude sickness, which is strange given we fly so much and those flights are usually in a cabin pressure of around 8000 feet.



The Theotihuacan Pyramids named by the Aztecs is just one hour drive out of the city. The area of San Juan was the largest city of the Mesoamerican (pre-Columbian Americas dating 1st to 7th AD). The complex has the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon and are laid out on geometric and symbolic principles.



Paintings and sculpture show the significance to religion and cultural life, linked by an avenue of the Dead. The complex is different from the Mayan sites in the south of Mexico.

We must have a compass for protests and political rallies as we keep getting caught in huge gatherings of people and our attempt to walk the historical side of the City of Mexico was hindered by the Presidente giving a speech in the main square, all day there were 100s of thousands of people all grouped in their supporting political party

banners and chants being led into the main square- it was the largest masses of people we have ever seen causing a complete city gridlock, hundreds of busses delivered the masses and it was most concerning that there was very poor crowd safety measures, corralling people through small entrances and blocking streets providing little access is a recipe for disaster if there would be an incident. We escaped to a local restaurant and watched at a safe distance.

We stayed at the luxurious St Regis (Marriott) in Mexico City, in a



very safe area, walking distance to good restaurants, shopping and the historical district.

On our international departure the flight plans needed to be lodged in the tower manually through the FBO services. There is only one FBO in Toluca with CBP facilities all other FBO need to taxi to the CBP and clear before departure and on arrival, it is very quick and easy with full assistance by the EOLO FBO.

Filled up on a good belly of cheap fuel we depart on a very long RWY 15 due to the high altitude, luckily we had cold temperatures that helped us achieve good rate of climb, Amir has found that the Vision Jet best performance is achieved on a steady 140 speed climb, which

provides sufficient rate of climb as required by the SID's 24,000 feet minimum height clearances one of the highest SID way points in the world.

A slight zig zag through the mountain range on our way to Brownsville TX - KBRO who greet us warmly on our returning to the good ole USA.

Our trip to Mexico was really short and we didn't get a real feel for the culture as we missed visiting a lot of small towns and villages. It was a great experience in regards to the flying and the FBO services which were actually better than the US and that is saying something!

Mexico is safe if you stay away from the latest hot spot - how do you know what that hot spot is? You don't know as it changes constantly and areas that have production, farming and industry can be rivaling hotspots at any time. Tourist spots are usually left alone, the general comment we heard was if you stay out of their business they stay out of yours.

Is Mexico safe?

(Just for our records)Darn right scary if you just listen to a few stories, firstly there is the portrayal through film and documentaries of the cartel and brutal force in territory disputes which is prevalent in your mind but how bad can it be? Surely that is just sensational hype until we get briefed on the latest struggle happening in popular areas, some tourists being accidentally caught in the cross fire. Some places that are safe today may not be safe tomorrow, situational awareness is recommended as in many countries all over the world.

Not all cartels are in illicit business they can be in legitimate business and protecting just their interests and investments perhaps an interesting way to look at it is the business model is transient so draw as much as you can for as long as you can - make hay while the sunshines. Big industry here is tequila, of course, the Smokey tequila Mescal, Avocado, Banana, Berries, Pineapple other Agriculture. They have so many industries and products it is an amazing Country and very under valued and under respected. We certainly were surprised and will definitely go back for more.