

Cartagena and across to Panama

Friday, 31 October 2008

We spend 2 nights in Cartagena before our friends arrive We go and fetch them from the airport with the beetle and head stright to the hotel where we'll spend a full week. Cartagena is avery pretty fortified colonial town. The kerbs are clean and shops can be seen on every street. The biggest inconvenience is to be a highly turistic destination hence on-street sellers' insistance. There are also rogues and I find myself to eb the vistim of one of them: Roberto takes the big notes out of the pack during the transaction. A true magician's trick! The fraud costs me 100USD but I keep admiring the genius behind it...

{em_slideshow 30}

We spend 2 nights in Cartagena before our friends arrive We go and fetch them from the airport with the beetle and head stright to the hotel where we'll spend a full week. Cartagena is avery pretty fortified colonial town. The kerbs are clean and shops can be seen on every street. The biggest inconvenience is to be a highly turistic destination hence on-street sellers' insistance. There are also rogues and I find myself to eb the vistim of one of them: Roberto takes the big notes out of the pack during the transaction. A true magician's trick! The fraud costs me 100USD but I keep admiring the genius behind it...

The week in Cartagena isn't just about spending some good time under the sun and discover the best restaurants in town but also to work: we have to organise the crossing to Panama for us and the car. We go and meet many skippers and sailing boats but we are not impressed by what we see so we decide to take the plane all the way to Panama, a 50-minute flight.

As to the cars, it's another story: we meet many customs intermediary agents but the facts aren't the same every time. It seems there isn't anybody specialised in the crossing of private vehicles. Adrienne and Betr, the German couple taveeling in a Vw combi that we met when entering Colombia are doing some investigations on their side. We finally choose to put both vehicles in the same container to lower the costs for each of us.

Whilst in Cartagena, we make the most of it to visit Playa Blanca, Isla el encanto, el castillo San Felipe, las bovedas and a few museums including the monastery of San Pedro de Claver, a monk who helped slaves during the XVIIth century.

Our friends go back on Friday adn so we decide to leave at the same time. My new credit card (that I had to cacel de to fraudulent activity on my account) still hasn't arrived. I swear before witnesses that I'll go to a new bank as soon as I get back to Europe: Barclays has been one of the worst experiences of the trip...

We fly to Panama city and find a hostel for the night. Unfortunately we learn that Monday is a bank holiday because of independance day. It means that we won't be able to get the container out of the port before Thursday due to additional bank holidays offered to banks... We go to another hotel and try to spend the time in Panama city by going to the cinema, obviously visiting the canal or working on the website. I also make the decision of building a second website only about the engine conversion as the news I receive from Germany or California are not so good as to the result of the H2 Project. I am still confident and I will prove that the modification is still an easy and accessible process to whoever is interested in protecting the environment.