

Sonoran sojourn



LUKE OVGARD
CAUGHT OVGARD

Full from some roadside adobada sopes I'd purchased in a tiny town and eaten outdoors in the 115-degree heat, the meat sweats hit me. Soon after, I was pounding cold drinks left and right as I headed east into the desert.

I had been warned about police corruption in Sonora. As I slowed for the turn that would put me onto the final leg of a remote desert highway between Guadalupe Victoria and my destination, Puerto Peñasco, the flashing lights in the distance made me a bit apprehensive.

Isolated hardly felt adequate to describe the barely maintained desert roads that were mostly paved but rarely signed and never painted between the Calexico/Mexicali border crossing and my destination atop the Sea of Cortez.

The stopped vehicle looked sketchy enough in the flickering wash of the spasming red and blue lights from the police cruiser. Seeing my cautious approach, the officer moved slowly into the intersection and motioned for me to stop. A bit apprehensive, I rolled down my passenger window and attempted to discuss my plans en roto Español.

"¿A dónde vas?" he said. "Perdóname," I bleated, "mi Español es no bueno." He nodded.

I had carefully rehearsed the phrase over and over as I moved towards the flashing lights, and now I delivered my line as if on cue: "Voy a pescar con mis amigos en Puerto Peñasco por tres días."

Onward

My headlights peeled away the consummate blackness of the worn pavement as I made my way to the Airbnb I'd booked in Puerto Peñasco with my friends, the Moores.

Chris and his boys, Carson and Braeden, were frequent visitors to this little town dubbed "Arizona's Beach," and I was venturing into Mexico for the first time to fish with them for a long weekend, hoping they'd share some of the secrets to their pioneered success in the area.

It was too late to wet a line that night, but we were up first thing the next morning for a boat we'd rented, and I could scarcely contain my excitement. Our guide spoke very little English which was perfect because we spoke very little Spanish. Regardless, we managed to get out and face the high winds to catch some fish. Chris and Braeden took seasick early, and after fighting through it for hours, Chris decided to head back to shore — a few pounds lighter.

The boys and I managed to add dozens of fish, representing several new species, which made the queasiness that much more acceptable to me, but Braeden continued to chum the waters in between catches.

Our trip ended, and we were pleased to find solid footing again. We continued fishing in the harbor, and it was late afternoon when I had another run-in with the policia.

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Luke Ovgard/Contributed Photo

The striped mullet is one of the world's most common fishes, found in fresh and saltwater environments worldwide in warm climates. The author caught a few in the Puerto Peñasco Harbor.

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Crap. Should've been para, not por.

Regardless, he got it and shined a light through my open window into the cab. I had a stack of fishing rods, a cooler and enough corroborating evidence that he nodded. He asked for my insurance. I'd purchased Mexican auto insurance to cover my days-long venture into the country, and I handed it to the officer. He nodded again and let me go. No tickets, no bribes. I was pleasantly surprised.



Luke Ovgard/Contributed Photo

The Americanized name for Puerto Peñasco is Rocky Point, so named for this rocky peninsula where the author fished.



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

Here are the Clamtainer Ammo Buddy boxes that I've started using. Notice how the 9 mm box is already getting torn after one trip.

Tips for flying with firearms



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

Can you fly with a gun? Yes, but there are rules and regulations that you must follow. Some set by the government and some by each individual airline. We'll cover some of the regulations but first, if you're new to the gun world you may ask the question why would you want to fly with a gun?

I see three reasons right off:

- You're flying somewhere to hunt.
- You're a competitive shooter and flying to a match.
- We live in a dangerous world and you want to have a gun for self-protection.

It doesn't matter what the reason, the rules are the same. When you get to the ticket counter you have to declare that you have a firearm. They will ask you if it is unloaded and locked in a hard container. They will then have you sign and date an orange Declaration card which is later taped to the gun box. In Boise you will then be directed to go down to the left to the have TSA check it out.

The firearm must be locked in a hard-sided container. Many pistols come with a traveling case. For rifles you will have to buy one. Forty-some ears ago Frontier Airlines would rent you a case for \$20. The first time I flew with a rifle I was headed to Texas for a deer hunt. The ticket lady told me that if I didn't bring it back that they'd keep my \$20. She said if I wanted to keep it, she'd get me a new one in a box.

Now, there are a plethora of guns cases to choose from. Most are lined with foam to protect your scoped rifles. These types of gun cases work fine but all that you can fit into them is your guns and maybe a knife or two. So you're paying the airline for one bag that has only your guns in it.

Seven years ago I discovered a gun case made by Explorer that had no inner foam. They utilize a canvas carrying case. At first, I didn't like it. I thought, that's stupid, it won't protect my scope. But I used it on a trip to Alaska for a brown bear and duck hunt and fell in love with it. Here's why:

When you go on a hunt, you have to take a ton of gear. Clothing —

pants, shirts, base layers, coats, gloves etc. etc. Then your guns, ammo, optics, knives, camera, maybe waders and the list goes on and on. With my foamless case I could lay shirts/pants on the bottom, lay the canvas case on top with the guns in it and then lay more clothes on top. Wow. This was almost like having an extra bag of clothes. Plus, I could put my binoculars in the case and they'd be padded.

I fell in love with this concept of luggage. It is the only one like it that I've seen on the market. But what if you already own an expensive gun case and can't (or don't want to) buy another one? It just hit me while I'm sitting here typing but I guess you could remove the foam from your existing case and be set. That's better than flying a luggage half full of foam around the country!

So, if you go the above route, I'd recommend getting a canvas gun case to put your gun in to stick in the case. Plus, you can carry your gun around in the canvas case when hunting. For a pistol you can lock it in a smaller case and put in your unlocked suit case.

Some gun cases have holes for two locks. My Explorer case has holes for six locks which is a pain because Delta requires you to have a lock in every hole. You don't want a real long-necked lock because a thief may be able to pop open the closures on the gun case and be able to stick his hand into your case and pull something out (Plus TSA will ding you).

On the other hand, I like longer-necked locks to ensure that they can be locked. To alleviate any problems with TSA I carry a baggie of washers. I put a few on the backside of the neck of the lock and then lock the lock in place. Then, even if a thief opens the clasps on the case, he cannot pry open the top. I started doing this years ago.

I always carry one or two extra locks in case one malfunctions, which would be a disaster. I've never had a problem until the other day. TSA wanted to open my case to inspect it upon arriving at their booth and for some reason the key wouldn't work. No biggie. I let them cut the lock since I had an extra one.

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