

Title:

Costa Rica - VW Vans and Crawling Things

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605

Summary:

For better or worse, man has tamed Mother Nature in many countries. My general impression is this isn't the case in Costa Rica.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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San Jose to Carrillo

Roughly ten of us had decided to head to Costa Rica for a week to stay at a friend's place just outside the beach town of Carrillo on the west coast. We flew into San Jose and were supposed to be met by a rental company representative that had two new VW vans for us.

As often happens in such situations, we weren't met by anyone much less a person with vans. Calls were made but not answered. Lunch was had. Calls were made again and finally answered. After a bit of "intense" conversation, we were told the vans would be at the airport in 15 minutes. Roughly two hours later, two VW vans apparently stolen from Woodstock rolled into parking lot. The trip had certainly started on a sour note, but we decided to cut our losses and take the vans.

As we rolled out of San Jose, it was starting to get dark. Unaware that a new highway had been opened, we followed the old route which wound through the mountains and added two hours to the trip. Two hours that would haunt us for days.

As the hours passed, we laughed away the time reliving the past. I was sitting in the back of the van with Stuart, a nurse in San Diego, and Picasso, a graphic designer for surf clothing companies. We were all in shorts and flip flops,

which was appropriate for the heat and humidity. How I wished I had worn pants and boots.

As we drove along, we happened to come upon a little village. Little cafes and stores passed us as we drove down the road. So did street lights. Bright street lights. Street lights that lit up the inside of the van.

And the things in it.

Cockroaches. Big cockroaches. They were climbing on the walls of the van and across the floors. A few even took off and flew from one wall to the other.

This is the part in the movie where the men, Picasso and I, take action to protect our female companion, Stuart. Of course, who believes what they see in the movies? In our case, Picasso screamed like a little girl and started stomping on the floor and kicking the walls. I, in turn, did the ultimate crunch, which is to say I whipped my legs off the ground with such speed as to make a drill sergeant weep with joy. I then jumped off the bench just to make sure there weren't any of the little buggers in my shorts. Stuart, on the other hand, just laughed at us.

Our driver whipped over to the side of the road to find out what the heck was going on. The other van pulled over as well and discovered they had a cockroach problem as well. We were apparently driving the hive around the country.

After obtaining a little liquid courage at one of the cafes in the village, we came up with a solution for keeping the creepy crawlies at bay. More liquid courage, drivers excepted. Much more.

New bravery in hand, we reclaimed the vans and hauled it to Carrillo as fast as possible. Picasso danced the cockroach crunch throughout the remainder of the trip, which made for a messy van and the need for new flip flops. I hoped I was imagining things crawling on my legs. Stuart just kept laughing.

Nature is beautiful, except when it ain't!