

Moto Aventura

Gilles Robert

gillesleorobert.wordpress.com



THE AMERICAS



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Other Legend

- Road
- Major road
- Canal
- River or stream
- Port of interest
- Island
- Natural resource
- Built-up area
- Urban area
- Forest
- Physical feature
- Climate
- Time zone

Map of the Americas
SCALE 1:10,000,000
1 CENTIMETER REPRESENTS 100 KILOMETERS
1 INCH REPRESENTS 2500 MILES



MY DREAM TRIP

GILLES ROBERT



My name is Gilles Robert from Grenville, Quebec, Canada. This is one of my goals that I wanted to achieve in my lifetime, after having spent much time climbing mountains in Asia, Indian Kashmir, Nepal, Tibet and in South America: Bolivia and Argentina. Helicopter skiing in Western Canada for the past 25 years, I decided to follow a dream that I have had for a long time to travel across North America, Mexico, Central America and South America by motorcycle. I ended my trip in Rio de Janeiro and I plan to return in August 2015.

Here is my story...

I want to thank my family and dear friends who have supported me before and throughout this trip.





I want to thank Chantal and Jean for their technical and logistic help.



Mr. Charles Greffe, President of Moto Internationale Montréal.



And also thank Claude Gagné for my BMW off-road courses.



2014 - 2015

I dedicated this trip to Jo-Ann, loving friend, who passed away during my trip.



I left Canada in September 2014, riding my BMW GSA from Canada, crossing the US border and on September 13th, I reached Dallas, Texas where my son André joined me. His wife Tori was there to wish us a good adventure.



Then we made our first stop in El Paso, Texas.



The next day, we moved on to Tombstone, Arizona where the temperature was 43 degrees Celsius at 6:00 p.m.



That's when I decided to wear my cooling vest.



Had to cross to New Mexico and traveled to Pine Valley, California.



Ended up on the beach in San Diego, California.



On September 16th, we crossed the border and had tacos in Ensenada, Baja California in Mexico and then headed for Cabo San Lucas.



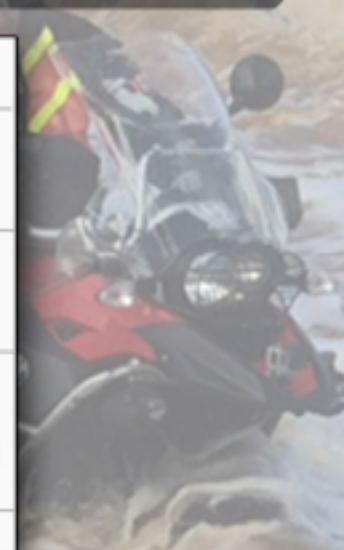
On our way, we were caught in Hurricane Odile; we had to stop as the roads were closed both Northbound and Southbound due to the flooded road. The next day, after the storm slowed down, we attempted to pursue our road trip.

But, this is when I attempted to cross the flooded road. I was taken away by the current...



A pay loader which happened to be there managed to get a rope and pulled me out and he also helped my son by carrying his bike across the 'river'. We loaded the bike on a police truck and they brought me back to the hotel where we did the proper mechanics on the BMW GSA to get it going again...

Category 4 major hurricane (SSHWS/MWS)	
Hurricane Odile as a Category 4 hurricane on September 14, 2014	
Formed	September 10, 2014
Dissipated	September 19, 2014 (Remnant low after September 18)
Highest winds	<i>1-minute sustained:</i> 140 mph (220 km/h)
Lowest pressure	918 mbar (hPa); 27.11 inHg
Fatalities	11 direct, 4 indirect
Damage	\$1.22 billion (2014 USD)
Areas affected	Mexico, Southwestern United States, Texas
Part of the 2014 Pacific hurricane season	



At that point, all the roads were closed and we had to buy gas by the liter. This is when my son had to turn back; his suspension was damaged by sand infiltration.



So I continued to the next town called Guerrero Negro where I had to wait for gasoline as the tanks were empty.



After which, I continued towards Santa Rosalia. The roads had been destroyed and so was the town which had been devastated by the hurricane...



I continued onto La Paz which had also been destroyed...



...but I managed to find a room at one of the remaining Motel at 9:00 p.m. and waited the next day to take the ferry crossing the Sea of Cortez to Mazatlán, Mexico.



When I finally arrived in Mazatlán 16 hours later, the weather was completely different. It was a beautiful day and I decided to stay over for a few days to rest.



Afterwards, I rode South East to Guadalajara to have my motorcycle inspected at the local BMW motor dealer in the city. I was greeted by Francisco Vasquez and his wife, who are originally from Guadalajara but lived in Calgary for 6 years. I was invited to the local BMW Motorcycle Club as a guest of honor and was greeted by the National President of BMW. A group of people that influenced my stay in Mexico, it allowed me a safe trip.



From Guadalajara, I went to Querétaro, then to Pachuca and Veracruz on the East Coast where I joined the locals in the running class at the Café Bicentenario.



After that, I had my long waited expresso and it was very good!

From there, I rode to the city of Puebla and onto Cayo Del Carmen on the East Coast to Villa Hermosa and Palenque to visit the region of the Chiapas where I visited the Mayas. From there, to Cascades de Agua Azul, San Cristobal de Las Casas and entering Guatemala and Tapachula.



What impressed me most of these places was the Maya ruins and the Cascades. People greeted me in each area. What a joyful passage!



At the border of Guatemala, I met two Canadians from Nova Scotia who were travelling by car to Panama, as they were putting their car in a container to have it shipped to Columbia. These amazing Canadians finished a trip from London, England to Mongolia.



Went to Antigua where all the roads are made out of stones.



After a month, I finally had the chance to stop at a local barber shop.



Local people selling at the hotel.



I had the opportunity to meet this lovely lady for dinner!



Then, riding toward the West Coast and crossing over on the small island of Conception (Champerico) and, to get back to the main land, I had to board my motorcycle on a barge. As you can see in the picture, it was not too sturdy... I had to turn the bike on itself to get off! Big job!! From there I headed East to El Florido in Honduras.



Then to La Entrada and San Pedro Sula on the East Coast.



There are frequent accidents where trucks turn over going downhill as shown on picture.



In San Pedro, fruits and veggies are abundant as you can see on the fruit stands. Those fruits stands made my day!



From San Pedro I headed East to the Gulf of Honduras.



Then I headed West towards Penal Akua Yojoa, one of the largest lakes in Central America.



And back down to the mountains in El Salvador headed West for a brief entry in the country.

At one point I was stuck in the sand on one of the beaches with my motorcycle, then I headed back South towards San Lorenzo and into Nicaragua by Guasaule.



Went to Chinandega, Leon, Puerto San Dino onto Managua to Grenada and San Orge in the island of Muya Guipa. Then West again to San Juan Del Sur where I took my motorcycle in the hotel for a couple of days of rest. I had diner at a nice restaurant on the beach with a lovely lady.



Fruits are available everywhere on the roads.



When I crossed over in Costa Rica, I headed to the West Coast to Costa Rica to Liberia.



Costa Rica is a surfers' paradise, the locals were getting ready for a day of surfing.



There are still ghettos in these countries and I had a chance to stop at one of these places.



While I was on the country side, I noticed palm tree plantations, after inquiry, I found out these palm trees were used for palm oil.



Then continuing South into the Gulfито, I crossed over to Panama, into Paso Canoas, then headed towards La Concepcion, David district, headed towards Santiago in Panama, and from there, headed East towards Santa Fe, and rode on gravel roads to the Gulf of Mosquitoes on the Atlantic.



Local people on their Sunday walk.



Stopped in at a local farmhouse to meet this couple with their machetes; they operated a sawmill for furniture.



Then went down to the Pacific Coast of Panama. On the way, I stopped to see a cattle roundup.



Upon arriving in the West Coast, I stopped in to see this young man from New Zealand who was making his own surfboards in the village of Surfcamp Guanico.

Then back to Chitray heading towards Panama City.



I met four Mexican from Tijuana, who were heading to Ushuaia, Argentina.



Streets of Colon.



I was in Panama City waiting to embark on a boat to cross over to Cartagena Colombia. The boat was in the reserve of Guna Yala. There, I met Canadians and a Norwegian.

The sailboat was a 100 ft vessel. On board, we were a small group of motorcyclist. The trip to cross to Colombia via San Blas took four days.



As they were lifting my motorcycle on the ship.



We stayed overnight at one of the beautiful islands of San Blas.



We arrived in Colombia.



I travelled South on the East Coast of Colombia, and heading through small villages, where I met this artist making beautiful artwork with ceramics.

From there, I headed to Santa Martha going through small fishing villages and stopped in the beautiful village of Taranga. Then I headed to Riohacha on Route 90 and Macao, and back down on route 88, to Valledupar towards Bogota.



And from Bogota, I headed down to Cisneros for a day of rest and stopped at a local church to have a small ceremony for Jo-Ann who passed away a few days earlier.



Then I headed in to Medellin.



Beautiful city with flowers, fruits, vegetables and artwork.

Sunday October 25th, I left heading towards Cali through the mountains. Stopped to take photos of local cyclists; cycling is a national sport in Colombia. And from Cali, I headed to the West Coast in Buenaventura, but the army prevented me from going further because they were having trouble with the farc guerrillas and the drug cartels, so I headed South towards the city of Pasto. Beautiful road with mountains and army bunkers all along.



On my way, I stopped at a local roadside restaurant, where the lady was making soup.

Then into the city of Pasto, Colombia. Where I stayed in a hotel owned by a French, who stayed in the city for the past 20 years. I then headed to Ecuador.



I entered Ecuador in San Lorenzo and traveled to Otavalo where I met a local artisan who made scarves from lamb wool, starting from scratch to finishing by hand.



Went to Quito for a visit and an oil change on my motorcycle.



And then I went to the statue which represents the division between the Northern and the Southern hemisphere.



Still in Ecuador, I travelled to a cocoa plantation to see where chocolate comes from.

Then I headed towards the West Coast to Guayaquil where I spent a few days and took a plane to the Galapagos Islands.



Here, I visited a local making his own sugarcane syrup all by hand and I also visited his coffee plantation. He was making his own moonshine which I had a chance to taste 60% pure alcohol. After drinking it, we made a test in his stove (alembic) with the moonshine.



Then, I went to see the turtles. I was also able to have nice company after a hectic day!



Went over to see the wild iguanas & sea lions.



Then back after a few days to Guayaquil. Where I met Edwin Ortega, Commanding Officer of the Ecuador Army who was also on his motorcycle and accompanied me on my way to Cuenca at altitudes of 3,000 meters through the valley fog.



While in Cuenca, the lady at the hotel let me inside with my motorcycle.



On November 2nd, there was a fiesta celebrating the Independence Day of Ecuador.



From Cuenca, I headed to the West Coast, to Machala, where I met young cyclists who were doing 100km training. I bought them Gatorade and juice as they had nothing to drink with them.



As you may know, Ecuador is the main banana producing country in the world. All the plants are wrapped to be protected against insects and animals.



Then I crossed over to Peru, Huaquillas and Mancora. With the beautiful beaches, and a nice hotel on the Pacific Ocean.



This young lady from California, invited me for dinner since I had helped her find a place to stay when I was crossing the border.



Then I headed South, towards the desert land of Piura. On my way, I stopped at Chilaio to have a lunch and met the local police force, who escorted me back on the main road.



After towards Chimbote, through the deserts, and Chiclayo to visit ruins which had just been discovered.



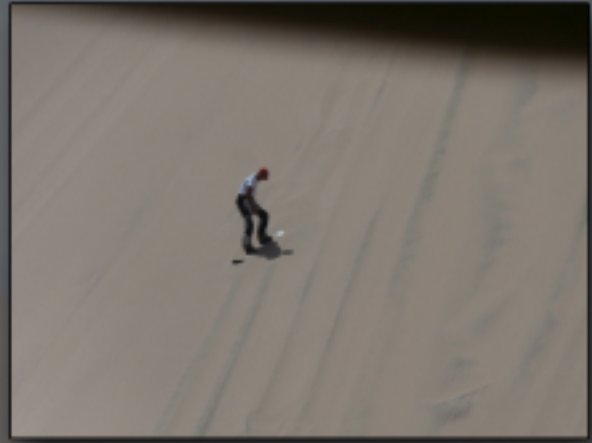
Then I went to Chimbote, where a local dealer repaired a flat on my motorcycle. While at the hotel for the night, I met a gentleman called Glen Lund, originally from Viña del Mar in Chile. Glen was on a business trip in Chimbote. When I arrived in Lima, Peru, Glen and his employees had reserved hotel rooms, and one was for me. My motorcycle was brought in the hotel once again.



While I was in Lima, Miraflores District, I did my morning training and found this beautiful shopping center on the cliff of the mountain and I had a nice Juan Valdez Café.



Beautiful area for surfers, it gave me a chance to do paragliding.



From Lima, I went to Ica to go sandboarding on the outskirts of this nice oasis in the desert. From there, I headed South to Nazca, and then to Cusco and Machu Picchu.



Then center of Cusco, where once again I brought my motorcycle in the hotel.



Riding through small villages, I was greeted by young kids, and this gentleman sharpening his tools manually.

Country houses are built with blocks made of sand.



There are many lumberyards in small villages.



Local people are not very camera-friendly.



On the way to Puno, I met this young couple from France who were cycling to Chile.



Entering the city of Puno on Lake Titicaca, one of the largest lake in South America.



In La Paz in Union Square.



From there, I went across to Bolivia after a short visit to the original village of Copacabana.



Locals delivering beef products to the local stores and restaurants.



I arrived at the Pacific Coastal town of Arica in Chile. There was a big difference in the way of living in Bolivia compared to Chile. From Arica, I headed through the desert, for 726km to the town of Antofagasta with one gas station in between, at Iquique.

While on my way to Antofagasta, I stopped to look at the big caterpillar trucks that are used in the copper mines. After taking the picture, they told me that this was a miniature truck compared to the ones in the mine.



A view from my hotel room in Antofagasta.



Then I headed back North East to Calama, and I visited the mine of Chuquicamata which is the largest copper mine in the world.



From Calama, I headed South East to San Pedro de Atacama. Beautiful village in the desert. Then I went into the Sea of Salt of Agua Blanca to look at the pink flamingos.



Here I am photographed on the Sea of Salt.



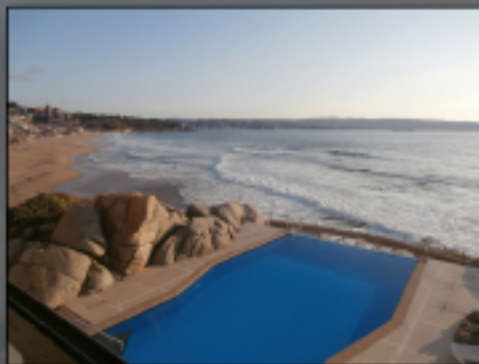
Brazilians motorcyclists that I met on my way to Vina del Mar who arrived by San Pedro and were heading to Santiago and back across the Andes Mountains through Argentina and Paraguay; they accompanied me for two days.



November 17th was the day I arrived at the flower clock in Viña del Mar, where I was surprisingly met by Glen Lund, who had followed me on my GPS Spot.



Central Park of Valparaiso with the chief of police, who wanted to show me his BMW motorcycle.



From there I was invited to stay at my friend Glen Lunds house. There was only one house on the oceanfront; that's where I stayed.



The next day, through a friend of mine, I went over to visit a lady from Montréal named Diane who was now residing in Viña del Mar.



Then I went to Santiago. Very beautiful city but very busy.



In Santiago, I brought my motorcycle to the BMW dealer for total inspection and change of tire after 20,000 km on the road. Since I was there for a few days, I met with Serge Berthiaume, a former resident of Mont-Tremblant, Québec who is now residing and living at the ski resort El Colorado-Farellones.



After leaving Santiago I went South into the Rapel Valley which is the largest wine production region in Chile. Visiting the Viña Santa Helena and Viña San Pedro wineries.



I headed towards the West Coast to Villarica, and Pucon to visit the active volcano.





And also the thermal springs and the Los Ríos Region.



Then I took the ferry towards Argentina through the border crossing Hua Hum International Pass. I rode along a 50 km construction and gravel road stretch in Argentina to a small town called San Martín de los Andes.



Had a beer with Manolo at his resto bar.



Later on, I drove on a beautiful mountain road to San Carlos de Bariloche. Beautiful area in the midst of lakes and snow-capped mountains, where there is also chocolate boutiques and huge steaks which I couldn't eat all by myself.



Then I re-entered Chile through the Cardenal Antonio Samoré Pass over to the Southern Andes. From there, I headed to Osorno. In Osorno, I stayed at the Innsbruck Hotel, a German-style hotel, inspired by German immigrants.

Then I travelled towards the South East to Puerto Varas, on the shore of Llanquihue Lake.



In Puerto Varas, through a friend of mine, I was invited to pilot a Cessna. From up there, I had an overall view of Puerto Varas and Puerto Montt.



After two days in the area, I took a ferry across to the Isla de Chiloé.



And in the city of Castro, I had the opportunity to see the stilt houses. And Chiloé is also known as the island of churches.

An extraordinary feature is the end of the Pan American Highway which starts in Fairbank, Alaska and ends in Quellón, so I took a picture of my motorcycle at the end of the road.





Then I headed back North, and on the ferry, I took a few pictures of salmon coming from the salmon farms. Chile is the second largest salmon producer in the world.



After that, I rode to Puerto Montt then down the Carretera Austral formally known as Carretera General Augusto Pinochet, which runs approximately 1,240 km from Puerto Montt to Villa O'Higgins, through rural Patagonia which is accessible only by ferry and gravel roads. On the first ferry, I encountered two motorcyclists, one from Singapore and the other from Argentina. Both joined me to ride to the end of the road.



On the way, we stopped in Chaitén. That was on December 1st. At certain times, the roads were very hard to access because of the construction.



This is a picture of me while on one of the ferry going towards Coyhaique. I met this young couple from Sweden traveling the same route on bicycles.



In Villa Amengual, I encountered these people from California, United States that started their trip in Ushuaia and were going back to California.



And from Coyhaique, I headed to Puerto Rio Tranquilo, where I met this gentleman from Germany who was carrying his motorcycle behind his 6 wheel camper.



Then I entered the town of Cochrane, which I had heard about because one of our Canadian famous skiers had died in an avalanche in September. From Cochrane, I headed towards Puerto Yungay.



And then travelled to the end of the Carretera Austral, Lago O'Higgins. I turned around and headed back North on very dangerous roads made for one vehicle only.



I headed back to Cochrane, crossed over to Argentina, by a farm road of 185 km long, the last Pass South to cross over to Argentina, Paso Raballos. There was only one or two farmhouses on the route. The passing of vehicles or people is very rare or inexistent; it would be unfortunate to have problems.



At the border crossing Argentina, there was only one official, who was posted one month at a time.



I headed to Argentina towards El Chaltén to see Mount Fitz Roy.



After I left El Chaltén, I went to El Calafate to admire the glaciers at the Los Glaciares National Park.



Then I headed South towards Chile and stayed overnight at Cerro Castillo.



From there, I went to Torres del Paine where 80-100 km/h winds stopped me as it threw me and my moto off the road I had to go to a hotel. I stayed for a couple of days of rest at Tierra Patagonia.



The hotel helped me out with gas before I headed on Ruta Del Fin del Mundo towards Punta Arenas. The road was in a good condition but the winds were still very strong.



I used the ferry to cross over to Porvenir, still in Chile I then headed East to Tierra del Fuego Province, Argentina.



I crossed into Argentina in San Sebastian, Río Grande and Ushuaia. Ushuaia is regarded as the most Southern city in the world.



I headed back North, towards Río Gallegos and took the ferry across.



I stopped along the way while heading to Valdes Peninsula. When I stopped at a gas station, I met a traveller from Denmark who had been on the road for the past two years with his truck.

I stayed overnight in Puerto Pirámides. I also visited Estancia San Lorenzo, Tierra de Pingüinos; Valdes Peninsula is known for the penguin reserve and the mara, which is unique to Patagonia.



From there, I headed to Pigüé which was colonized by French immigrants.



I left and headed to San Carlos de Bolívar.



Buenos Aires where my first stop was at Café Tortoni. The manager came out and wanted to be photographed with me.



In Buenos Aires, I visited the Presidential Palace.



Then to Perito Moreno and Boca, where tango was first discovered.



I had lunch with a lovely lady at a tango evening at Café Tortoni.



Picture of the busy Florida Avenue.





I was in Buenos Aires for about 5 days on December 23rd, 2014.

On December 24th, I had a nice dinner with two motorcyclists friends that I had met earlier in San Sebastián when I helped them to repair a flat tire.



On December 25th, I took the ferry to cross to Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay.



From there over to Montevideo, then Punta del Este which is a beautiful city with attractive homes.



From Santa Teresa, on the East Coast, I headed to the frontier of Brazil which is 2000 km distance of Rio de Janeiro. I met a group of motorcyclists who were going for a fun weekend in Uruguay.





Then I entered the region of Novo Hamburgo, an area of German descendants. It is a beautiful region with flowers, wineries, colorful homes and small bistros.



I then entered Rota Romântica and at the information bureau, there was one lady that was welcoming. people. I met a group of motorcyclists at a store who was selling local wine products.



On the route, I stopped at a restaurant-hotel called Snow Valley. I was photographed with the owner, a guy who resided in Montréal for a few years. That is when I noticed that he had decorative oars on his wall which had Mont-Tremblant carved on them, which is about 1 hour from my house.



Along the way, I saw many capybaras, an animal from Southern Brazil that lives in the lowland areas.





I descended into the town of Orleans which is by Serra Do Rio Do Rastro the most dramatic descent I did in my trip! From there, I headed to Florianópolis; capital city and second largest city of Santa Catarina.



Serra do Rio do Rastro is a mountain range located in the southeast of the state of Santa Catarina, Southern Brazil. It is crossed by the road SC-438, with remarkable landscapes and deep crags.

This mountain range is situated between the municipalities of Lauro Müller and Bom Jardim da Serra, and its highest point is situated at 1,460 metres (4,790 feet) above sea level. In the highest areas of this place, the Atlantic Ocean, located about 100 km (62 mi) away, can be spotted on clear days. Frosts are common and snowfalls can occur in the highest areas.



I headed back towards Curitiba, then São Paulo and finally on December 31st, I arrived in Rio de Janeiro. My first stop in Rio was at Copacabana Beach where the temperature was 42.5 Celsius.



On New Year's Eve, I took a plane to Buenos Aires to meet David Bensadoun, president of Aldo International, who was participating in the Dakar Rally. David gave me a tour of the pit area and I couldn't believe the amount of money and energy that was invested in this event!



These are a few of the vehicles that were participating in the race.



Late in the evening, on January 1st, I returned to Rio de Janeiro to visit the beaches and Ipanema.



I did a bit of training on the beach.





During that day, I met local cyclists who just finished their training and were drinking coconut juice.



There was a sand castle welcoming the New Year on Copacabana Beach, where 2 million persons had a beach party!!



After days of rest, I began preparing my motorcycle for the return back home. On January 19th, I left Rio for Montréal and my motorcycle left for Dallas, Texas where I brought my motorcycle back to Montreal in May 2015 for August 2015: the Trans Amazonian Adventure motorcycle challenge!!

Here is my next adventure
August 2015

Amazonia

This trip will, without any doubt, be an adventure to be remembered and talked about. Do you know anyone who has been to the Dutch speaking country of Suriname? What about French Guiana? It's very unlikely. Devil's Island was made famous by the Movie Papillon. I will ride through the jungle of the Amazon River from it's beginning to the East coast...

St. Joseph Island

Royale Island

Devil's Island



Approximately forty-five days, non-stop in dirt, mud, forest tracks, rain, mountain passes and thankfully paved roads. I will be able to view historical and cultural destinations, wildlife and amazing scenery! It is a real adventure that will demand tenacity, determination and flexibility.



As I've seen in my past trips, you need to be prepared for anything, any events that may be thrown at you. If you want a predictable adventure; this is not one for you, this one will separate you from the crowd.



Day 1 – Lima
 Day 2 – Peru: Aguas Verdes
 Day 3 – Peru
 Day 4 – Peru: Machu Picchu
 Day 5 – Peru
 Day 6 – Peru: Inapari
 Day 7 – Brazil: Inapari
 Day 8 – Brazil
 Day 9 – Brazil: Porto Velho – Belem
 Day 10 – Brazil: Belem
 Day 11 – Brazil (boat trip 24 hours) to Macapa
 Day 12 – Boat trip continues
 Day 13 – Brazil: Macapa – Olapoque (border)
 Day 14 – French Guiana: St Georges
 Day 15 – French Guiana
 Day 16 – French Guiana
 Day 17 – French Guiana: Saint Laurent du Maroni (border)
 Day 18 – Suriname: Albina
 Day 19 – Suriname
 Day 20 – Suriname
 Day 21 – Suriname: Long Island
 Day 22 – Guyana: Corriverton

Day 23 – Guyana
 Day 24 – Guyana
 Day 25 – Guyana: Saini Iagnetus
 Day 26 – Brazil: Saini Iagnetus
 Day 27 – Brazil
 Day 28 – Brazil
 Day 29 – Brazil: Pacaraima (border)
 Day 30 – Venezuela: Santa Elena de Uairen
 Day 31 – Venezuela
 Day 32 – Venezuela
 Day 33 – Venezuela: San Cristobal
 Day 34 – Colombia: Cucuta
 Day 35 – Colombia
 Day 36 – Colombia: Santa Marta
 Day 37 – Colombia: Santa Marta
 Day 38 – Colombia: Puerto Colombia
 Day 39 – Colombia: Cartagena
 Day 40 – Colombia: Cartagena
 Day 41 – Colombia: Medellin
 Day 42 – Colombia: Bogota
 Day 43 – Colombia: Bogota
 Day 44 – Bogota to Montréal, Canada

