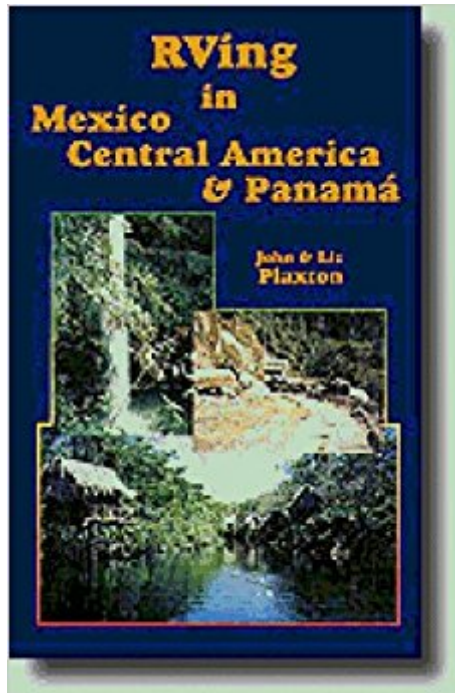




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# RVing In Mexico, Central America And Panama



## Synopsis

Although a friendly, easy-to-read record of traveling in a Class C recreational vehicle, this timeless travelog is exciting, interesting and useful to many types people, including other RVers, tour operators, back backers, and armchair adventurers. The Plaxton's bought their first motorhome, sold their house, quit their jobs, and spent 18 months living a dream. You'll certainly pick up some good advice and tips from traveling writers John and Liz Plaxton, who set off in 1994 to "go where no RV has gone before." Not only do they share their favorite RV parks and beaches, but they also should help you avoid some of their disappointments and near disasters. It's a rambling kind of travel book for budget RVers who aren't in a hurry. John and Liz take you from getting prepared (including "things we would do differently" and "things we wished we had taken along") to their adventures in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. They've included their expenses and observations throughout. Thanks to their philosophy "Take a risk, it's more fun," the Plaxtons ignored the nay-sayers and set off on the adventure of a lifetime. Have you ever dreamed about enjoying Mexico's Copper Canyon from the front of a locomotive, climbing Guatemala's Mayan temples, undergoing surgery in El Salvador, bartering in public markets in Honduras, riding a wallowing banana boat in Nicaragua, listening to the thunder of a Costa Rican volcano, or crewing a sailboat passing through the Panama Canal? Have you ever dreamed of watching white-faced monkeys watching you from behind jungle leaves, observing a monstrous Cayman that moved so slowly vegetation grew on its camouflaged back, or using binoculars to catch a glimpse of the rare Quetzal bird or an almost invisible sloth turned green with fungus? These authors did. And, on only US\$ 1,150 per month.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"... and it's a great book!" Peter Schwierzke "I loved my copy but won't lend it!! :-)" Carol Isaacs, via snail mail when ordering another as a gift "... makes for fascinating reading." David Eidell, Mexican tour operator "We had your book mailed to us at Nogales the day before we crossed the border. We both loved reading it. You gave us lots of insights. ...We will be going through the Guatamalan border the first of December. ...I thought you would get a kick out of hearing that we spent 10 days in your exact spot in San Miguel de Allende on Juarez Park. What a beautiful spot, and no one bothered us. ... Your book was a good source of information and inspiration. Good work!" Janey Kenyon E-mail "You have a 'voice', a friendly style, that many writers try for years to develop." Dianne Greenslade, member of the Canadian Authors Association "Thanks again for the words of wisdom in your book. The major take home message for me was probably -- they did it, so can we." Raymond Pederson, e-mail, after driving back from Costa Rica "I started reading at nine and finally forced myself to stop at 12:30 AM; after all, I had to be up in five hours." Charliene Peterson ===== -- Various

JOHN AND LIZ PLAXTON EXPLORE CENTRAL AMERICA VIA RV. In January 1994, in their first motorhome, with only a map of Canada's westerly province and a book about Costa Rica, John and Liz Plaxton crossed the 49th parallel and headed for Central America. After visiting eight countries and logging 25,700 miles, they rushed back to British Columbia 541 days later for their son's wedding. Using John's notes and Liz's daily diary and pictures, he wrote, she edited, and they self-published and marketed their first book, a factual, often funny, travelogue entitled RVing in Mexico, Central America and Panama. During their first month in Mexico, they rode a train through Copper Canyon twice, both times on the cowcatcher of a diesel locomotive. During their last week in Panama they hired on as line-handlers and sailed -- after using their RV battery to jump start a boat's engine -- through the Panama Canal. In the many months between, the Plaxton's slept beside an erupting volcano, camped on golden beaches, bartered in open markets, visited a church whose baroque walls overflowed with gold leaf, ate delicious foods from street vendors, swam beneath a waterfall, learned the tasty secret of coconut sponge in the jungles of Costa Rica, battled an invasion of ants for three weeks, swam in an underground cenote, taught English to would-be waiters and waitresses, danced the Mexican two-step, explored pyramids, and slowly learned a little espanyol. They journeyed up a jungle river only to discover the `native village' was an old movie set. They took four hours to travel 45 miles of El Salvadorean highway and found their mountainous destination had no electricity, and no gasoline. They saw the setting sun flash into emerald green, then sink into the Pacific. Under a full platinum moon, they watched giant baby turtles crawl up out of Nicaraguan sand. John lost a fingertip in Nicaragua. He needed 15 stitches to repair a slashed

artery in El Salvador. Surprisingly, he was uninjured after falling into a deep hole when blinded by spraying gasoline. Liz, a Registered Nurse, kept busy repairing John's injuries. The Plaxton's met hundreds of wonderful people, and continue writing to some. They even encountered one of those horrible policemen we hear about so often, the kind who demands money. He got it, too, because John had driven through a red light. It was a lot cheaper than driving around crowded and confusing Guadalajara trying to find the headquarters building where his licence would have been held, and then paying a fine. Back in North America a year and a half later, the Plaxton's enjoyed a rest in their home park of Pine Lake, Alberta, then it was off to Baja to escape another Canadian winter. Their next excursion? To Inuvik, inside the Arctic Circle, as far north as they can travel in a motorhome in Canada. ===== -- Coast to Coast: Nov/Dec 1997, page 29

Have you ever wanted to RV in Mexico but have not quite made it yet? Or maybe you have done Mexico and would now like to venture further south into Central America. Or maybe the only way you feel comfortable about travelling into Mexico and destinations further south is from your armchair. Whatever the case, RVing in Mexico, Central America, and Panama by John & Liz Plaxton is just the book for you. In 1994, British Columbians, John and Liz, set out in their first RV, a Class C motorhome ,with a motorcycle for places unknown in Central America. Their mottos were: "Take a risk. It is more fun" and "We'll go where no RV has gone before." For the next year and a half that is just what they did. RVing in Mexico, Central America, and Panama takes you along on their adventurous journey, across mountains, to black beaches and active volcanoes into rain forests, swimming in the Panama Canal and through the Copper Canyon in ways you would never consider. The book is broken into sections starting with a chapter entitled "Getting Ready and Being Prepared," which covers the cost of their trip and things they would have done differently. The next chapter contains their letters to The RV Times, a Canadian magazine for which John is now a contributing writer. These letters give an overview starting with their search for the right RV and continue with updates of their journey every few months. Each of the remaining eight chapters tells of the experiences John and Liz had as they traveled through the eight Central American countries. These chapters provide the cost of fuels in each country, the exchange rate at the time, what the border crossing entailed and how to minimize mordida or payoffs. John and Liz also share the camping locations they discovered which range from full hook-ups, to beaches, to no-parking areas on busy city streets. John is one of those people who likes to push his outer limits and in his 50s still acts as if the were in his 20s. As a result, and much to the frustration of the retired nurse in Liz, John put the Mexico and El Salvador medical systems to the test. He shares his unexpected findings in the book. RVing in Mexico, Central America and Panam has stories for everyone. Being a dog lover, my

favorite was of a "sad, head-drooping mongrel that hobbled up on three legs to several people, pitifully balancing himself while holding his useless right front paw off the ground." You ask how this could be my favorite story. The ending will surprise you. My one regret after reading this book is that I did not have a map at my side so I could easily follow John and Liz's journey. As their trip came to an end, John wrote, "We had reached and surpassed our goal. Fourteen months and eight countries after leaving Canada\* -- plus one transmission, a new fridge, a rebuilt storage compartment, one battery, a dozen flats, two tires, a roll of duct tape\*\* and thousands of liters of gas later -- we drove over the Panama Canal. Not only that, but we sailed in it. That's not too bad for a uni-lingual couple in their early 50s who had never owned a motorhome before. Not bad at all." John and Liz are back in Central America\*\*\* now with a Class A motorhome and a car this time. [Note: These should read:\*USA; \*\* tape; and \*\*\*Baja California, Mexico.] ===== -- Stephanie Bernhagen

I read RVing in Mexico, Central America and Panam three times and I still shake my head in amazement over the exploits of John and Liz Plaxton. The couple have taken pen in hand to record their 18-month adventure traversing the roads from their BC home to Mexico, Central America and Panama in their 1979 Security Class C motorhome. In many ways the book is a travel log with enough description provided most of the time to make retracing their path reasonably possible. Due to the fact that the Plaxton's decided not to follow the usual "mileage" round robin style of presentation, the book does jump around a bit -- quite a bit in places. The authors, instead, blocked the trip into a country by country format. Rarely is any book written right there as it all happens as the days unfold. The couple had their laptop along and the text of the journey was apparently produced daily. This, plus the excellent writing style always makes the reader included on every step of the way. To do the book justice, every reader should have the various country maps or an atlas handy so as to plot the Plaxton's actual course. As I stated, the book was amazing. The Plaxton's scarcely knew any Spanish, yet they dry camped alone in strange places, had two motorcycle accidents, lost all brakes on their motorhome approaching a red light, rode standing six hours on the very front of a locomotive through the tunnels and trestles of Mexico's Copper Canyon, swam in a swim-forbidden lake with crocodiles and arrived safely home to tell the story. That's certainly taunting both the gods and the odds. Risky and adventurous, yes, but accompany or tailgate them all the way, I would not. However, their 315 page book is so jammed with information and clearly presented details that the reader has already had a full vacation of thrills just in the first 80 pages alone. The information about travelling in these areas, including rules and regulations, visas required, how to avoid "rip offs" (especially on gasoline fill-ups) and get around government bureaucracy is invaluable. For those who are thinking of travelling into Mexico and the

other areas, this book is a must beforehand. Even for those who don't, read it anyway -- it's doubly necessary to help you fully appreciate your travels right here in Canada and, maybe even that cursed GST as well! For any amigo reading RVing in Mexico, Central America and Panam, John and Liz's book it is almost as good as being right there. To say the least, it is definitely exciting.

==== -- RVgazette: Fall 1997, page 38 If you know someone who's dreamed of packing up (or buying) a motor home and heading south of the border, consider this book. You'll certainly pick up some good advice and tips from traveling writers John and Liz Plaxton, who set off in 1994 to "go where no RV has gone before." Not only do they share their favorite RV parks and beaches, but they also should help you avoid some of their disappointments and near disasters. It's a rambling kind of travel book for budget RVers who aren't in a hurry. John and Liz take you from getting prepared (including "things we would do differently" and "things we wished we had taken along") to their adventures in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panam. They've included their expenses and observations throughout. Thanks to their philosophy "Take a risk, it's more fun," the Plaxtons ignored the nay-sayers and set off on the adventure of a lifetime. And they're ready to take off again, this time heading north for Inuvik, NWT, Canada, inside the Arctic Circle. -- RV Life November 1997

My and my wife's mottos are "Take a risk, carefully. It's more fun." and "We'll go where few RV's have gone before." This book was written to encourage others to do just that in Latin America, where the people are wonderful and the sightseeing is spectacular. This is not a guide book, but a travelog that gives the readers hundreds of helpful hints and a feeling for the people and the countries.

The book was fine, however, it was written in 1995/96. I'm sure a lot of the information is outdated. If I had known the year, I would not have purchase this book.

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