



“ This highway is a spine, a nervous system that links a thriving, swirling, changing continent ”



This ain't working. How the hell can I describe three years' travel across a continent in a paragraph? I can't. And even if I could, it still wouldn't be right. The difference between reading and riding is as vivid as the experience gap that lies between 'sex is a pleasurable encounter that provokes euphoria' and getting your Cialis-addled brains fucked out by a stripper from Suriname with pierced nipples and the kung-fu grip. And I think I've just talked myself out of a job.

Let the route speak for itself. Starting in chilly Alaska, the Panam runs down into the west of Canada, becomes the Pacific Coast Highway in the States and passes

through Big Sur and LA en route to San Diego, where it cuts east across the desert and south into Mexico.

And south into Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, until it dead-ends into the jungle of the Darien Gap, re-emerging across the border in Medellin, Colombia, cuts west through Bogota to Ecuador, where it opens its legs and shows its class as it begins the long drop south, plummeting through Peru and into Chile.

Done? Nope. In Santiago it switches east, across the Andes, past Aconcagua, America's highest peak, across the vast pampas, all the way into Buenos Aires.

Despite the Kilometre Zero signposts, the Pan-American doesn't really stop there, either. Like all weary travellers, the highway takes a well-deserved BA break, enjoys a step of tango and couple of dozen bottles of cheap red wine in The Gibraltar pub, and eventually gets its shit together, jumps on the ferry across the River Plate to Uruguay and it's off again, racing through Rio de Janeiro, up, up, up to Caracas in Venezuela, back west to Medellin, Colombia, and Finnegan begin again. This is the journey that never, ever ends.

Too good to be true. No, really. The Panamericana doesn't actually exist. This is no Panama Canal. No pith-helmeted >



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