



The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America

RICK'S ROADS

Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What



BLOG POST: 2022.10.02
Port Aransas Beach, TX



Once again, the size of Texas impressed me. I looked at the map, saw Austin, saw Port Aransas, and quickly thought, “Two hours.” Nope, wrong again, Ricko. When GooGirl told me 3:55, I was flummoxed.

It was an effortless ride, though. I could have saved 20 minutes or so by doing the I-35 thing back to San Antonio and then I-37 south-southeast the rest of the way, but I wanted to get the feel of south Texas. So, GooGirl grudgingly gave me an alternate (and more direct) route down TX-130 to TX 183. Then I hopped onto I-69E to get over to I-37 for the last stretch through Corpus Christi (I wonder if there is a large Jewish community in that city) and out to the long, narrow strip to Port Aransas.



The final turn of the long ride was onto firm, flat sand. This designated way even bore the name Port Aransas Beach Road.

A long row of bollards – basically, three-foot-tall telephone pole stumps -- went on for miles, to both north and south, putting a limit on how far vehicles could go towards the Gulf of Mexico. Porta-Potties could be seen every quarter-mile or so. (Maybe more maybe less, I didn't pace it off.)



Scott and Jenn had a happy place here that they said I should check out: The Port A Beach Lodge. They'd stayed there more than once, loving the convenience and relative isolation of it. I sought it out and parked within easy walking distance of it. I was confident that the bar would be calling my name sooner or later.



The top attraction for Blue Maxx and I, though, was the boondockability of this beach. I found out that a permit was required for overnight parking, but one could easily be purchased at a number of places nearby. I got mine at a convenient store for \$12. Here's the scoop:

A purchased permit is valid from January 1st through December 31st of its respective calendar year.



Where to park with a permit: The sticker allows the vehicle to park on the beach anywhere between mile markers 0 through 62. This is from near Horace Caldwell Pier all the way through Port Aransas Beach and to the Kleberg County line (south of Bob Hall Pier), making the permit valid in both Port Aransas and Corpus Christi.

Where to park on the beach for free: In the Port Aransas city limits, there are limited free parking spots available between the South Jetty and Horace Caldwell Pier and between mile markers 52 and 58. These spots fill up quickly, though.

[\[https://www.portaransas.org/beach/beach-rules/parking-permits/\]](https://www.portaransas.org/beach/beach-rules/parking-permits/)

So, my \$12 only bought me three months. But that's just a buck a week. In reality, of course, it was \$12 for about 24 hours, which still beats any campground I've ever (legally) stayed in.

I couldn't just park here and live forever on \$12/year, though. There is a three-night limit for camping during any three-week period. Again, more than enough for me.



I got here around mid-afternoon. Yeah, I know, not exactly a crack-o-dawn departure from Scott's abode. The night before had something to do with that.

It was reasonably sunny when I arrived, but more clouds rolled in shortly thereafter. They were friendly clouds, though, and added some nice artistic style to the otherwise featureless beach scene.

I did eventually stroll up to the bar at Port A Beach Lodge to have a beer. It's a classic beach bar. Not many frills, lots of plain wood, a roof over your head to shelter you from the searing sun, good tunes, and cold drinks.

Nothing on the menu grabbed me, though. I gave it a chance, but I already had a solid plan in place for using my single-burner butane stove and cooking up a couple of burgers of my very own.



In my last year or so of living in a stationary structure, I must have grilled cheeseburgers on the outdoor grill four-to-five times a week. This little butane stove, therefore, was a must-have when it came to equipping BM. It had not gotten much use, though, and I was seriously jonesing for that sizzled slab of self-cooked ground chuck.

In fact, the menu reminded me so strongly of that, I practically chugged down my beer and departed.

And, mannnnn, they were deeeelicious! “The Spot” was almost impossible to miss, but these hit it dead center.

The breeze was amazing, so I chilled out in a wide-open van for a couple of hours, just relaxing, breathing, and watching the sky get dimmer and dimmer. I called it a night early, because I wanted to wake up in time for sunrise.



Sunrise time was a very easy-to-take 7:15 CDT. There were some low clouds above the horizon to enhance the glow. People were already out strolling by the water's edge. Crazy morning people.



I felt no urge to go out there. I liked having the flat sand and some of the bollards in my shots. I also like the fact that I could just sink back into bed as soon as I felt sated with my photos. Which is what I did, flipping my position on the bed, so I could watch the sun's climb through my window.



I snoozed away for three more hours of contented z's.

The morning on the beach was just as nice as the evening had been. I stayed till 12:15. Then hit the road, resolving to be back sometime.

Maybe I'll even go in the water next time. =)