

VOYAGE IN PRINCIPITO

PART-2a Guadalupe Island Baja Mexico

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ISLA GUADALUPE | BAJA MEXICO

We had to anchor without an engine since the engine quit while we were on route from Santa Cruz Island. There was no way we were going back to Santa Barbara after all the trouble it had been to actually leave.

We traveled 5 days to get to Isla Guadalupe, a distance of 350 miles – we probably averaged less than 3 Knots an hour for this leg of the trip because we were under reduced sail and the size of the waves.

What an experience to have negotiated those seas and the intensity of the rain, followed by dead calm, and being thoroughly thrashed about. It even hailed and to arrive at the base of a 4000 foot mountain sheltering us from the storms was poetic. This was truly a joy and a relief. The calm was so welcome and felt like a reward for the discomfort we had to endure.

According to the chart we were in about 10 fathoms (60ft) of water – we would have to come quite close to the island to find shallow enough water to set our anchor. The island here was “[steep to](#)”. The East Facing vertical cliffs onshore meant that there would be no wind close to shore.

To determine the depth of water I used a lead line which is a lead weight on the end of a twisted rope with markings at every fathom [6 feet] I cast the line off the bow to determine the depth of the water. No electronics remember! The lead line didn't hit bottom at 5 fathoms or 30 feet. Deduct 5 feet

for Principito's draught which means that there is approximately 25 feet of water beneath the keel.

The lowest tides are approximately 4 ft according to the Nautical Almanac for that year and day leaving us with 21 theoretical feet of water below the keel at low tide. Once we dropped the anchor we would determine the actual depth.

Since we were slipping through the water from momentum alone, because we had no engine we had no choice but to drop anchor. I had already stowed the Genoa and Staysail.

I went back to the cockpit and with Julianne releasing the mainsheet I set the boom in the Boom Gallows and dropped the main sail. We were about 250 yards offshore. I went back up to the foredeck and paid out the chain careful not to let it all out at once. I knew I had 100 feet of chain. We were still moving towards land. I felt a slight resistance from the anchor but had no idea whether the anchor itself had dug in and set or whether the weight of the chain alone was stopping our forward progress. The prevailing and current wind was from the West. The anchorage was East facing. If the wind picked up from the West we would be blown out of the anchorage a far better situation than a strong southeaster blowing us onshore.

To determine the actual depth of the water to confirm if the anchor was sitting on the bottom or whether there was a large amount of chain on the bottom I dropped the lead