

MEXICO'S BAJA PENINSULA



PARTNERS
IN CONSERVATION



© Andrea Izzotti

A WWF Partner Adventure to Mexico's Sea of Cortez and Southern Baja Peninsula with WWF-Mexico's Maria Jose Villanueva

March 8 - 15, 2020

The Baja Peninsula supports an amazing diversity of marine life, including many species of reef fish, sharks, whales and marine turtles. As tourists flock to the beautiful landscapes and unique coastline, WWF works with partners to ensure that the region remains a healthy and productive ecosystem that can support local communities as well as the abundant wildlife within and near its waters. On this expedition, accompanied by Maria Jose Villanueva and researchers from WWF-Mexico, we begin in Los Cabos for a private humpback whale watching excursion. We travel to La Paz where experts will take us to the beautiful island of Espiritu Santo.

While visiting the island, we will have a chance to swim with the local sea lion colony and lookout for humpback whales. Dolphins, whale sharks, and other species of whales are among the marine animals we hope to encounter. After La Paz, we escape to Magdalena Bay for a two-night camping adventure to see the amazing gray whales that travel to these protected waters. We will also participate in a marine turtle monitoring project with Grupo Tortuguero, which partners with WWF to monitor endangered sea turtles.

Itinerary at a Glance

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation
1	March 8	Arrive Los Cabos	Casa Natalia
2	March 9	Humpback Whales in Los Cabos	Casa Natalia
3	March 10	Transfer to La Paz	Costa Baja Resort & Spa
4	March 11	Private Day Trip to Espiritu Santo Island	Costa Baja Resort & Spa
5	March 12	Gray Whales in Magdalena Bay	RED's Magdalena Bay Eco Camp
6	March 13	Sea Turtle Monitoring in Magdalena Bay	RED's Magdalena Bay Eco Camp
7	March 14	Magdalena Bay and La Paz	Costa Baja Resort & Spa
8	March 15	Depart La Paz or Los Cabos Airport	



© Carlos Aguilera/ WWF-Telcel

Proposed Itinerary

Day 1, March 8: Arrive Los Cabos, Mexico

On arrival to Mexico at the San José del Cabo Airport, you will be met and privately transferred to Casa Natalia, our hotel in Los Cabos. This evening we'll join local WWF staff for a welcome dinner at Mi Casa and have an overview of the week ahead.

Overnight: Casa Natalia

(D)

Day 2, March 9: Humpback Whale Watching in Los Cabos

In the morning we'll depart the hotel for a private humpback whale watching adventure. This is our prime opportunity to meet the humpback whale in the deep blue waters of Los Cabos. WWF staff will demonstrate how humpback whale populations are being monitored by census and photo-ID, and we will use a hydrophone to try and listen to the atmospheric song of the male humpback. We may even witness a humpback breach. Snorkeling equipment, wetsuits, clean towels, box lunch and drinks are included in this private boat trip.

In the afternoon, we will meet with local officials and tour operators to discuss how whale watching activities can sustainably exist in the region without impacting the wellbeing of the wildlife and surrounding coast. After our boat excursion, the afternoon is free to relax in the hotel or explore San José del Cabo. We'll have dinner at Flora Farms, a local favorite for fresh farm-to-table dining.

Overnight: Casa Natalia

(B,L,D)

Day 3, March 10: Los Cabos to La Paz

This morning we depart the hotel and drive north to La Paz. On the way we visit Todos Santos, a quaint, historic town along the arid Pacific coast. Here our guide will discuss the history of the town as an indigenous settlement and the thriving culture of vibrant arts and cuisine. We will break here for lunch, and before departing, our guide will lead us through the estuary, home to migratory and marine birds.

We reach La Paz and check in to our luxurious hotel located beside the beach. You are free to enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure beside the pool or exploring La Paz before dinner at Il Rustico.

Overnight: Costa Baja Resort & Spa

(B,L,D)

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com



© RED Travel Mexico

Day 4, March 11: Private Day Trip to Espiritu Santo Island

This morning, we meet in the lobby and walk to the nearby marina to travel by boat to the postcard-worthy island of Espiritu Santo. Here, we meet Whale Sharks, considered the “gentle giants” of the oceans. These docile beasts - the largest fish on the planet - return annually to La Paz Bay to feed on plankton. As we learn more about the efforts supporting their protection, you’ll have the opportunity to snorkel with these incredible animals. During our observation, we will follow specific guidelines to prevent stress on the animals.

Step ashore at an Eco Camp on the bay of El Candelero on Espiritu Santo Island, where we will picnic on the beach and relax in the warm sun. While there, we have the chance to kayak or paddleboard in crystal-clear turquoise waters that surround the island.

After lunch, we’ll travel by boat to Los Islotes, known as the Sea Lion Colony; there we will suit up in snorkeling gear and hop into the water with over 400 playful sea lions. Be sure to keep an eye out for dolphins, whales and sea turtles while unwinding on the boat ride back to La Paz. Dinner will be on your own this evening, and WWF staff will make recommendations and reservations upon request.

Overnight: Costa Baja Resort & Spa

(B,L)

Day 5, March 12: Private Whale Watching Excursion to Magdalena Bay

We meet at our hotel to escape to Magdalena Bay on a two-night camping adventure to encounter gray whales and monitor endangered sea turtles. We arrive in Puerto San Carlos and settle into the camp before boarding a private boat in search of giants. Gray whales have been called “friendly ones” as they frequently approach boats to investigate the occupants. Your naturalist guide will share their knowledge of these magnificent mammals and tell the story of their incredible yearly migration to mate and calve.

This evening there will be a brief introduction to efforts to protect sea turtle populations, including monitoring research. Watch as conservationists prepare turtle nets for the next day’s research followed by an evening boat excursion to watch as the nets are set. Retire to your camp before dinner.

Overnight: RED’s Magdalena Bay Eco Camp

(B,L,D)

Day 6, March 13: Sea Turtling Monitoring in Magdalena Bay

Today will be spent with sea turtles! After breakfast, small groups will take turns and board boats to study black sea turtles, also called the Pacific green sea turtle, named for the color of their cartilage and fat, not their shells. You will be accompanied by researchers from WWF-supported Grupo Tortuguero, a

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com

network of local scientists and volunteers that monitor and protect several local sea turtle species. The network's efforts have helped bring the black sea turtle back from possible extinction by working with local communities, the fishing industry, and others to reduce poaching and entanglement in fishing lines and nets. Under their guidance and supervision, the turtles will be caught in nets and brought ashore to examine and measure. While collecting data, we will help measure their size and weight before the turtles are released back into the water.

Throughout the day, there will be opportunities to kayak through the bay's mysterious mangroves, hike the fine-sand dunes along picturesque beaches, or partake in a cooking demonstration in RED's camp kitchen. Begin the evening with happy hour on the beach. After dinner, stargaze with the sound of the gentle surf in the background while your guide points out constellations, or exchange stories with fellow travelers while seated around a campfire.

Overnight: RED's Magdalena Bay Eco Camp (B,L,D)

Day 7, March 14: Private Whale Watching Excursion to Bahia Magdalena and Return to La Paz
After a good night's rest, wake up early to watch Magdalena Bay come to life and understand why it is known as the jewel of the Pacific. After breakfast we will head out on the water in search again for gray whales. On a private boat, we will navigate through the tranquil channel that connects Puerto San Carlos and Lopez Mateos. Here is our final chance to encounter gray whales. We will have lunch before returning to La Paz, full of memories from Magdalena Bay! WWF staff will join us at a local restaurant for our farewell dinner.

Overnight: Costa Baja Resort & Spa (B,L,D)

Days 8, March 15: Private Transfer from Costa Baja Resort to San José El Cabo Airport or La Paz Airport
This morning you'll meet in the lobby to be transferred to San José El Cabo Airport or La Paz Airport for your flight home.

(B)

Day to day touring may evolve and change. A final program will be issued prior to departure.

Meet our Expert



For over eight years Maria Jose Villanueva has worked with WWF-Mexico, helping establish a nationwide partnership with over 60 NGOs, indigenous communities, local and federal governments, and private sector businesses to conserve Mexico's unique biodiversity. She also helped develop WWF-Mexico's five-year strategic conservation plan and worked to protect species such as the monarch butterfly and the vaquita. As the current Conservation Director, she now leads the Ocean, Terrestrial Ecosystem, Climate Change, and Freshwater programs. Prior to WWF, Maria Jose earned her PhD in Marine Sciences and Limnology with an emphasis in marine mammals from the Institute of Marine Sciences and Limnology as well as worked for several conservation organizations in Mexico, and taught biology and conservation courses.

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com

About Partner Adventures

WWF Partner Adventures is an invitation-only conservation travel program for our closest supporters, along with friends and family, to see firsthand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making. These custom-designed journeys are led by WWF experts and offer exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work, and immerse yourself in the worlds of our field staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

What to Expect

March is an excellent time to visit southern Baja with dry, warm days and cooling ocean breezes in the evening. Expect temperatures in the low-80s during the day and low-60s in the evening. The average March sea temperature is about 70°F.

We will make every reasonable effort to operate the trip as advertised, but alterations will more than likely occur, mainly due to weather, currents and tides or to take full advantage of wildlife encounters or cultural events. We will discuss our planned itinerary daily with our local expert guides and will always choose the best available option. Boating tours are subject to change or cancellation at any time due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond our control.

Accommodations



Casa Natalia Nestled in the art district of San José del Cabo, this intimate boutique hotel is the perfect option for those looking to relax and explore the area. Set upon grounds with soaring palm trees and exotic flowers, Casa Natalia is like an oasis of calm. Service oriented, your satisfaction is of paramount importance to the attentive staff. The rooms, with modern tiled floors and striking feature walls with Mexican art and murals are a place to both relax

and be inspired. Spacious, light and beautifully finished, all rooms have an open concept plus secluded terraces or balconies for added privacy. The marble bathrooms are also spacious and in keeping with the modern design. The Spa Suite offers a terrace complete with a hot tub. The hotel pool is a great place for a refreshing dip after a morning exploring all the nearby attractions that range from golf courses, beach clubs, art walks and cultural delights.



Costa Baja Resort and Spa The Costa Baja Resort and Spa is set on the Sea of Cortez, overlooking a marina and a beautiful white sand beach. Its location just 10 minutes from La Paz makes it a great base from which to explore Baja California. The luxuriously-appointed rooms all have stunning views either of the marina, the Sea of Cortez or the surrounding mountains. Bright white linens and outside views offset a palette of dark blues and dark woods. The rooms are relaxed

and comfortable, allowing guests to kick back and enjoy their vacation. Within the resort there are multiple top-class restaurants and bars as well as a spa and fitness center and an outside infinity pool.

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com



RED's Magdalena Bay Ecocamp RED's eco-camp is designed to provide maximum comfort in balance with our natural settings. The canvas tents stand 6'6" tall and each has a private shaded area. Mattresses are raised, and comfortable sheets and bedding will make you feel right at home. Shower tent boasts wooden flooring and a traditional ladle shower with hot water available upon request. Bathrooms consist of odorless composting toilets.

About Our Travel Partner



At Iconic Adventures, a passion for travel is the internal compass that guides our business values and the way we live. We have experienced first-hand the positive impact amazing travel experiences have had in our personal and professional lives, and we want to bring that same experience to our clients.

Reservation Information and Trip Details

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com

DATES: March 8 – 15, 2020

BASE COST: \$5,925 per person, double occupancy (\$500 deposit due at registration)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$445 per person

GROUP SIZE: Limited to 14 guests and 10 guests are required to operate this trip.

INCLUDED: Scheduled arrival and departure airport transfers; accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities listed in itinerary; snorkeling during the Espiritu Santo and whale shark excursions; private vehicle transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary; non-alcoholic beverages with meals; full-time guide for duration of program; all gratuities to porters, guides, drivers, hotel and wait staff; all permits; government, service and room taxes; carbon offset for tour.

NOT INCLUDED: Travel to and from start and end points of the trip (Los Cabos and Los Cabos/La Paz); alcoholic beverages (except on the first and last night of the trip); passport and visa fees; immunization costs; items of a personal nature (phone calls, souvenirs, laundry, internet, etc.); airline baggage fees;

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com

medical evacuation insurance and travel insurance; snorkeling and snorkeling gear (except for the Espiritu Santo and whale shark excursions); tips for non-group services.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend protecting your investment with a comprehensive active travel insurance policy that covers you for medical, accident, medical evacuation, as well as additional expenses such as trip cancellation/interruption, baggage and personal effects protection. This insurance will protect you from financial disappointment in the event that unforeseen circumstances prevent you from participating in the trip, or for other reasons.

Iconic has partnered with RoamRight to ensure each of our guests has access to the best travel insurance for the types of trips we take together. RoamRight offers multiple coverage options to suit your unique needs and provides industry-leading support and concierge services. While you're en route, you'll have access to 24-hour emergency medical, business assistance, and emergency travel and concierge services. Learn more about the different coverage options at [RoamRight](#).

Although every possible care is taken to safeguard you and your property, World Wildlife Fund and Iconic Adventures are not liable for any accidents, injuries, illnesses or death incurred; any loss of, or damage to, your property; or any unforeseen changes or interruptions to the trip. In the event of early departure from the trip, no credit on any unused portions will be given and the cancellation policy will apply.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A passport is required for international travel, and many countries require that passports must be valid for at least six months after the date of entry. Certain destinations may require a visa for entry, US citizens can check requirements at travel.state.gov; citizens of other nationalities should check with the appropriate embassy.

RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENTS: A \$500 deposit due at sign-up and final payment will be due 90 days prior to the trip.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS:

- *270+ days before the beginning of the trip: 100% refund of deposit
- *91-269 days before the beginning of the trip: 50% refund of deposit
- *61-90 days before the beginning of the trip: 75% refund of trip cost
- *31-60 days before the beginning of the trip: 50% refund of trip cost
- *0-30 days before the beginning of the trip: 100% cancellation fee (no refund given)

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:

Arrival: Please arrive into Los Cabos International Airport (SJD), before 4:00 PM on day 1.

Departure: We recommend departing from La Paz International Airport (LAP), if possible. You are free to depart from La Paz after 9:00 AM on the final day. If departing out of Los Cabos International Airport (SJD), please plan to fly out after 12:00 PM.

To register or if you have questions, please contact EMILY SCHULMAN at Iconic Adventures at (844) 642-6642 or emilys@iconicadventures.com