

Sea Kayaking in Baja Paddling the Sea of Cortez



TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Days, 7 Nights in Baja, Mexico
- 6 Days sea kayaking the Sea of Cortez
- 5 nights beach camping
- Observe wildlife in their natural habitat
- 2 nights at the beachfront Hotel Oasis in Loreto
- Optional hiking and snorkeling

NOTE: Some itineraries are longer and feature special highlights. See the Trip Cost and Dates section for more information.



Trip Overview

Our sea kayaking adventure in Baja, Mexico offers paddling in one of the most spectacular locations on Earth. Stunning coastline, secluded islands, a wide variety of avian and marine life, and great paddling conditions make this a remarkable adventure vacation. We spend six days on a guided self-supported sea kayaking expedition, visiting several uninhabited islands and navigating along Baja's rugged coastline. Five nights are spent camping on white sand beaches and enjoying delicious local cuisine. Snorkeling and hiking opportunities abound throughout the trip, as do chances to enjoy Baja's amazing sunsets.

Our journey begins and ends in Loreto on the Sea of Cortez. Loreto boasts some of the earliest Spanish missions in the Americas and features unique architecture and rich cultural history. During our six-day paddling adventure, we travel 30 – 40 miles along the coast, visiting the uninhabited Isla Carmen and Isla Danzante along the way. Our journey is self-supported, meaning we carry everything we need with us in our one-person and two-person kayaks.

Each day we reach a spectacular beach camp on the coast or one of the islands. Many of our camps offer beautiful desert hikes to scenic views into remote canyons. Our Mexican guides explain the indigenous uses of various desert plants and how the local inhabitants live in this harsh desert environment. Our camps offer excellent snorkeling and swimming in the calm waters of protected coves, and our evenings are filled with delicious food and a beautiful starlit sky.

Our paddling journey is both a relaxing beach vacation and an exciting adventure. The scenery, the wildlife, the camaraderie and the Mexican culture make this trip the experience of a lifetime. We invite you, your friends and your family to join us on this remarkable adventure in Baja.

Difficulty Rating

Our Baja Sea Kayaking Adventure is considered MODERATE. This is a self-support trip and you will be paddling your own kayak. There will also be optional hiking and snorkeling opportunities.

Weather

The weather in Baja is idyllic most of the year, particularly during the winter months in the United States. We run our trips in Baja between October and April, when daytime highs range from the 70s to the low 90s and lows typically dropping into the 60s or high 50s at night. Rain is rare throughout the year in Baja, and particularly during the period we run our trips.

The water temperatures are typically warmer in October through early December and often a wetsuit is not needed for snorkeling during these times. As water temperatures cool, wetsuits become more desirable in the January through April months.

Hurricanes can occasionally affect Baja and our trips in the early part of our season, as hurricane season is ending. Summer in Baja, particularly on the eastern gulf side can be very hot and uncomfortable. The climate in the extreme south and on the Pacific Coast is often much more mild during the summer months.

Detailed Trip Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive to airport in Loreto, Baja, Mexico. We will meet you at the airport and travel by taxi van to a hotel in Loreto. An orientation meeting and welcome dinner helps to familiarize guests with the upcoming adventure and offers an opportunity to meet each other and the guides. *D*

Day 2-Day 6: Early in the morning we transfer by van to a protected beach where we begin our kayaking journey. We enjoy a beach breakfast buffet, and then spend some time discussing safety issues, proper paddling technique and methods to pack our equipment in our sea kayaks. We use high-quality fiberglass sit-in sea kayaks and have both single and double kayaks available for guest use. Once we have finished packing our kayaks, we gently glide into the Sea of Cortez to begin our journey.

Each day we travel two to four hours by sea kayak between camps. Daily paddling schedules involve early morning departures (sometimes we begin paddling by sunrise) to avoid traveling in possible choppy conditions later in the day. During the entire journey, we plan one or two lay-over days, in which we do not move camps and spend a day hiking and exploring the

local desert and the mysteries of the tide pools. Our guides are experts in desert flora and fauna, and in the uses of various plants and trees by the indigenous peoples of Baja. Conditions permitting, we often embark on island crossings to Isla Danzante and Isla Carmen. Each evening, we enjoy delicious local cuisine in spectacular surroundings. Our five nights on the water are spent camping on the beach under thousands of brilliant stars. *B, L, D each day*

Day 7: By now we have traveled along the coastline some 30-40 miles. Late in the morning, we meet our vans and drive back to Loreto, arriving by mid-day. Guests have some time for an afternoon of town life and shopping. In the evening we're off to a local restaurant for a farewell dinner. Stay at hotel in Loreto. *B, L, D*

Day 8: Breakfast is on your own this morning. For early departures the hotel restaurant can accommodate your schedule, or head downtown to Café Olé for a leisurely brunch at the locals' favorite. Your guides will help you with transportation information.

Trip Cost & Dates

October 9-15: 7 days	Price:\$1,195/Full Moon
October 23-29: 7days	Price:\$1,195/Best Snorkeling
November 6-16: 11days	Price:\$1,195/Mulege-Loreta Avid Paddler
November 19-27: 9days	Price:\$1,195/Thanksgiving
December 4-12: 9days	Price:\$1,195/Full Moon&Traditions
December 17-25:9days	Price:\$1,195/Christmas
December 24-January 1: 9days	Price:\$1,195/Holidays

Prices listed are per person plus airfare to Loreto, Baja, Mexico
Single Supplement: \$100

What's Included

- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages (except where noted in itinerary)
- All lodging and camping
- All kayaking and group camping equipment
- Professional and experienced trip leaders
- Excellent customer service

What's Not Included

The cost of the trip does not include airfare to/from Loreto, Baja, Mexico; optional gratuities for local guides, and applicable taxes.

Tipping is not required, but is generally customary if you feel your guides have worked hard and provided you with a wonderful experience. While any amount is appreciated, a gratuity of \$20 per guest per day is considered a nice tip. For multi-day trips on which a crew of several guides has worked, your gratuity can be given to any of the guides and they will pool and share all tips equally.

Why Northwest Voyageurs

Safety: The most important part of any outdoor adventure is safety. Safety comes first and foremost from having experienced, well trained guides who know how to avoid dangerous situations and minimize risk. All outdoor adventures have inherent risks associated with them. Our job as your outfitter is to minimize that risk as much as possible. In 25 years of guiding whitewater trips, we have never had a serious injury. Our safety record is impeccable and speaks for itself.

Exceptional People: When we consider hiring anyone in our company, we want to ensure first and foremost that the person is extraordinary. Maybe we are selfish - we like to surround ourselves with inspiring people! We know we can teach almost anyone the skills to row a boat, or work at our front desk. But we can't teach people to understand people and how to exceed their expectations. This trait is inborn and we search long and hard to find these people.

Experience: Experienced guides bring more to the table than a safe trip. They bring deep knowledge of our rivers and destinations - and they also know how to maximize the fun-factor while minimizing risk. We boast some of the most experienced guides in the industry, as evidenced by a fair amount of white and grey hair in our guide staff. We also boast a very high level of education in our guides and staff in a variety of fields.

Service: Our owners have extremely high expectations of themselves and our staff. We differentiate ourselves on providing an extraordinarily high level of service on our trips and in our lodge. Our goal is to solve your problems and issues before you have them and to smile the entire time. Ultimately, it's our passion for sharing the outdoors with people who may be out of their element that drives us to provide this level of service. It makes your experience that much more rewarding - and makes you want to come back again and again.

Professionalism: While our guides are fun-loving and relaxed, they are also professionals. They've been trained in customer service and are able to handle difficult situations with grace and poise.

Delicious Gourmet Food: One of the elements of our trips that stay with our guests the longest is our amazing food. The meals we provide are mostly meatless and fresh with local flavor! Our Mexican guides add a fantastic flair with their family recipes for traditional recipes and grandma's secret seasonings. Here is a sample of menus:

Dinners: chicken or vegetarian tamales, salad; spaghetti with meatless sauce, salad; bean burritos or tostadas with cheese and Spanish rice; pasta and vegetables, salad; lentil or vegetable soups; chicken mole or cheese enchiladas and rice; fish tacos or seafood soup; all accompanied either by tortillas, Bollilos (locally made French rolls) or crackers.

Breakfasts: Mexican eggs with cheese, beans, onions or vegetables; pancakes with syrup or honey; rice cereal with fruit honey, and nuts; oatmeal with raisins and nuts; and granola, cold cereals, yogurt, and fresh fruit salads.

Lunches: Sandwiches – cheese, tomato, and avocado; guacamole and quesadillas; tabouli salad; pasta salad; salami and cheeses; tuna salad; peanut butter, jam and snacks; all accompanied either by tortillas, bread or crackers, cookies, and fresh fruit.

Desserts: Fruit cobbler, cake, cookies, pudding, regional sweets, etc.

Drinks: Fresh coffee, teas, cocoa, Tang in various flavors, and juices

Strict vegetarians should bring your own protein supplements, lacto, or non-wheat alternatives as special diet foods are not easily bought in Loreto. Please contact us as soon as possible if you have any special dietary questions. There is no refrigeration or ice available once we leave Loreto for the put-in.

Getting Here

Flights into Loreto are not always the easiest flights to find, though we promise you the remoteness of the destination more than makes up for the temporary challenge of finding flights. The easiest way to get to Loreto is on Alaska Airlines, which flies direct from Los Angeles to Loreto on Tuesday, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays. Our trips are scheduled typically from Sunday to Sunday. Connections can be made from western cities on Alaska Airlines, or on many other domestic carriers that work with Alaska.

Other flights are available on AeroMexico which partners with Delta Airlines. You can also take flights to Cabo San Lucas or La Paz and then connect internally to Loreto.

Driving to Loreto is also an option for those living in southern California. Expect a long two day drive from San Diego to Loreto.

Important Documents

To be granted entry into Mexico, U.S. citizens should travel with a valid passport. If you do not have a passport, please contact the nearest consulate for information on alternative documentation needed for entry. If one parent, or a guardian, is traveling with a child under 18 years old, you must have a notarized affidavit from the absent parent authorizing your travel time and flight plan. If flying, your tourist card will be issued at the airport and stamped upon arrival in Mexico. You must keep your tourist card with you until departure from Mexico.

Shots

You should always consult your local physician and/or your local travel health clinic before traveling internationally.

Water

Drinking water used on trips will be from a local purified water outlet.

Recommended Reading List

Almost an Island – Berger, Bruce (new, very fun reading)
Gathering the Desert – Nabhan, Gary
A Desert Country Near the Sea – Zwinger, Ann
The Last of the Californios – Crosby, Harry (out of print, check your library)
Log from the Sea of Cortez – Steinbeck, John
Into a Desert Place – Macintosh, Graham
Marine Animals of the Sea of Cortez – Gotschell, D.
Baja California Plant Field Guide – Coyle/Roberts
National Geographic Birds of North America
The Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins – Leatherwood/Reeves

Emergencies

Should your friends or family have an emergency, please ask them to contact us directly at the lodge at (208) 628-3021. We will do our best to get any appropriate message to you. It is often exceedingly difficult for us to reach our trips with a message, as we are often in remote, roadless wilderness areas. You will be responsible for any cost associated with retrieving you early from a trip or getting a message to you. So please be sure to let your friends and family know that they should be very clear with us the urgency of the message.

Payment and Cancellation Policy

Northwest Voyageurs requires a non-refundable \$400 deposit from each person to secure your reservation on this trip. Final payments are due no later than 90 days prior to the departure date. If you find you must cancel your trip, please notify Northwest Voyageurs in writing as soon as possible. If we have not received your final payment by the due date, and if we have not received written notification of your need to cancel your reservation, Northwest

Voyageurs may at its sole discretion charge the remaining invoice balance to your credit card on file or consider the reservation cancelled and release your spaces.

All payments are non-refundable. However, if you notify us in writing of your need to cancel your trip at least 90 days prior to your departure, we will hold payments on your account less the initial deposit for a period of one year. If you notify us less than 90 days prior to your departure, all payments will be forfeited. Please understand that once you sign up, we lose the right to sell your space to another individual. Therefore, we regretfully cannot make exceptions to our cancellation policies. Northwest Voyageurs **STRONGLY** recommends purchasing travel insurance for all multi-day reservations.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance can cover unforeseen costs or problems such as lost baggage, cancelled flights, and the costs of canceling your trip due to illness or injury. Northwest Voyageurs **STRONGLY** recommends purchasing travel insurance for this trip. It is very important to consider purchasing your insurance within 15 days of making your reservation, as there are additional benefits included in the policy including a waiver of pre-existing medical conditions. For more information, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit:

<http://www.travelinsure.com/what/selecthigh.htm?32922>

Other Questions

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us by email at info@voyageurs.com or by phone at (800) 727-9977 and we will be more than happy to assist you in any way that we can.

Detailed Packing List:

Allowable trip gear: 1 medium clothing bag (or two small bags), 1 sleeping bag and pad, 1 small daypack, personal snorkel gear (optional).

Please pay special attention and allowable size of personal trip gear bags.

Because we are self-sufficient on our tours, carrying all of our food and water with us, we have limited space in the kayaks and ask that you bring only the items on the equipment list. Clothing and gear listed here should be sufficient for the Fall through Spring paddling season and still allow room for us in the boats.

A medium size zippered nylon duffel, approx. 20" x 12" should be about the size of your largest bag, or two small duffels half that size. They work great with a plastic garbage bag stuffed inside for waterproofing. Or use small or medium size river dry bags. We recommend a small day or belt pack with plastic bag liner for notebook, camera, sunglasses, and sunscreen, etc, to keep handy while we're traveling.

Don't bother buying fancy new gear for your trip. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater camping.

Recommended Gear List:

(* starred items are not necessary in October or May)

- 1 pair tennis shoes, river shoes, or dive booties for loading and unloading kayaks in water
- 1 pair of sturdy walking shoes (see note on reverse)
- sleeping bag, fiberfill good to approx. 35 degrees f (no cotton)
- sleeping pad, closed cell ensolite or thermarest type (please, no plastic air mattresses or non-water proof foam pads)
- small ground cloth, could be your rain poncho
- sleeping bag stuffsack or dry bag (line the inside with a plastic bag for added protection)
- polypropylene or similar long underwear, top and bottom (no cotton)
- 1 wind jacket
- 1 waterproof jacket and pants, or poncho
- *1 warm layer (fleece or wool, sweater or jacket)
- 1 pair of long pants
- 1 lightweight long sleeved shirt
- 2 pair shorts (one quick-dry)
- 2 t-shirts
- 2 pair socks (1 wool*)
- underclothes
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 towel, medium size
- 1 bandana

- hat with brim
- *wool or polypropylene hat & gloves
- sunglasses
- toothbrush and paste
- body lotion
- sunscreen
- lip balm
- insect repellent
- small container biodegradable camp soap
- personal medications
- seasick medication if tendency for motion sickness
- washcloth
- flashlight and spare batteries (couples, bring one each)
- 1 quart size water bottle per person
- 1 small sized day pack or belt pack

Optional

- camp chair (Crazy Creek type)
- pocket knife
- wrap-around cloth for beachwear
- nylon wind pants
- notebook and pencil
- camera and film in waterproof bag (hard, suitcase types don't pack well)
- mask, snorkel & fins
- wetsuit for snorkeling
- binoculars
- frisbee or travel games
- gloves for paddling
- small musical instrument
- reading book

Other Optional Gear:

- Fishing gear: saltwater rod and reel, line 15 – 30 lbs., 06 hooks, wire leader, lures (rapallas, rebels, 3-4"; feathers, kast masters, squids, your favorites).
- Note: because of rules on permits, fishing is restricted to certain areas which guides will describe at the beginning of the trip. Catch-and-release is often preferable. Please inform us if you wish to fish. We will apply for your license prior to the trip if you are bringing fishing gear.