

# Whale Watching in Baja, Mexico



## Highlights

A multiple award-winning tour (including a mention in National Geographic's '50 Tours of a Lifetime' list), this trip to the Baja Peninsula in Mexico is an unbeatable tour for lovers of the ocean. You spend your days sea kayaking & whale watching in Baja, whilst at night you will be camping in the beautiful wilderness....

The Gulf of California (popularly known as the Sea of Cortez) was formed five million years ago as the result of tectonic activity, separating the Baja Peninsula from the mainland of Mexico. What is left today is a haven for marine and coastal life, and with its beautiful waters perfect for diving and other water sports it is hardly any wonder why this ocean paradise attracts visitors from all corners of the globe.

Species found in the area include the gray, blue, fin and humpback whales. On the sea of Cortez side of the peninsula, you find blue, fin and humpback whales from Feb through April. Gray whales are found on the Pacific side of the Baja peninsula between February and March each year, before returning to Alaska for the summer months. Protected from sharks in the shallow lagoon waters, these magnificent leviathans travel 10,000 kilometres in the Pacific Ocean to breed and grow their dwindling numbers. Thanks to the conservation efforts in the region, you'll get the opportunity to watch this once critically endangered animal in its natural habitat, and even stroke them as they curiously come to investigate - of all the amazing things you will do on your time here, getting this close to the whales is an experience which is guaranteed to stay with you forever.

During your eight days on the tour you'll partake in a whole host of activities, including gray whale watching, visits to a major calving lagoon, snorkelling in the crystal waters and kayaking in Loreto Bay National Marine Park. While here you'll spend the majority of the week working out of luxury campsites, giving you the benefit of being located at the best beach spots and having most of the facilities a hotel can offer. The food you'll get on the tour is also exquisite, expertly prepared and sourced from fresh and local ingredients.

## Is it for me?

There are a few limitations imposed on the trip with regards to physicality. Ideally you are over 14 and under 70, physically fit and not overweight. Although you don't need previous kayak experience (it's an easy and fun skill to learn), you'll find the tour easier if you have a degree of upper body fitness.

Don't let the above put you off - if you have any concerns, they can be discussed ahead of time. Essentially you don't need to have any more than a reasonable level of fitness.

## Accommodation

For the first and last two nights of the eight-day tour you'll be staying at a hotel in Loreto, the very first settlement in the region which has grown to become a city dedicated almost entirely to tourism. For the rest of the week you'll be staying in camps stocked with the very best equipment, including quality tents, seating and self-inflating foam pads. You'll get a nice balance between staying in the wilderness of the outdoors with all the benefits of cosy indoor accommodation.

The food, it has to be said, is top-notch. Mainly comprising of Dutch oven cookery, you'll be feasting on filling gourmet meals from chicken mole to stuffed chile relleno and all the fresh fish you can eat. What's more, each meal is topped off with a delicious dessert (usually made from the fruits growing in the area), as well as freshly ground coffee and cocktails to sip while watching those perfect Pacific sunsets.

Prices from

**886** GBP (8 days) per person

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## Itinerary

There are several options ranging from a eight day expedition with no motorboat support (you will be loading your gear on your kayaks) to a 10 day tour with motorboat support. Full details of each option are available in the booking box. The following is the itinerary for the eight day tour.

**Day One:** Arrival in Loreto by air. At the Loreto airport, you'll be greeted by our ground service and transported to our hotel in Loreto before checking into pre-assigned rooms. You're on your own for sightseeing or shopping until the evening pre-trip meeting in the hotel lobby, where the guys answer questions and let you know the meeting time for the next day. They'll also be able to point you in the right direction with regards to where to buy dinner if you'd like to eat out, otherwise you're welcome to purchase a meal at the hotel.

**Day Two:** After eating breakfast and arriving at the designated meeting time the group will board a van and drive to the put-in site. After loading the boats, you'll be taught the basics of paddling and thoroughly review safety procedures, and won't leave shore until all participants feel comfortable in the boats. During the day you'll kayak to the first campsite which will be your night's accommodation, as well as making a 50-minute, two to three mile crossing to the off-shore islands of Carmen and Danzante in Loreto Bay National Marine Park.

**Days Three to Five:** Each day begins with spectacular sunrises and ends with delightfully cool evenings enjoying sunsets, stars, moonrise, and even bioluminescence. You'll spend our time paddling and exploring the scenic cliffs and coves of Danzante and Carmen, in addition to camping on sandy beaches which allows for superb snorkeling, swimming, tide pooling, and strolling. During the trip there will be three or four different camps on the islands with one or two layover days (I.e the party will paddle out and back from the same camp.) You will generally paddle around four hours per day, with breaks.

Everyone sleeps in comfortable and roomy dome tents, although with Baja's lack of insects you may be tempted to sleep out under the stars. Several campsites have a desert arroyo hike which will give you spectacular views as well as a great opportunity to explore some of the desert flora unique to Baja.

**Day Six:** After a final breakfast you'll break camp and paddle to the take-out site in the early afternoon. At the take-out, you will unpack and proceed to our hotel in Loreto where you'll definitely enjoy a hot shower! In the evening you'll go to a great local restaurant for a fun dinner, where everyone can toast your new found kayaking skills and friends (please note that this dinner is not included in the price.)

**Day Seven:** Today is, for many, the climax of the tour - the whale-watching day excursion to Magdalena Bay on the Baja California peninsula's west coast. Seafood lunch is included, but dinner will be on your own. Please note that sometimes, this day tour may be switched with day two in the itinerary.

**Day Eight:** You are on your own for transportation to the airport for your flight homeward. You can use C&C English-speaking, air conditioned van transport for \$8 each, or taxis (Spanish-speaking) are easily found, approximately \$5-6 per person; but make sure you depart for the airport no later than hours before flight.

## Details

### Getting there

There is an airport in Loreto, the start and end point of the tour.

### Price includes

Three nights hotel in Loreto, airport transfer at start of tour, all sleeping bags/camping/kayak gear, meals at camp, three naturalist guides. National Park Fee of \$25 is paid separately. Tours with 6 or less participants are subject to a \$150 surcharge.

### Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed