



La Lobera is home to one of the most important colonies of sea lions in the Gulf of California © Christiana Ferris/TNC

PRE-TRIP ITINERARY

The Nature Conservancy 

Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Baja California

A SPECIAL NATURE
CONSERVANCY DEPARTURE
MARCH 24 - 30, 2019

- Estimated Price: \$4,350 per person based on double occupancy, \$4,960 single occupancy
- Trip cost is based on a minimum of 8 participants in shared accommodations. Final trip costs will be based on actual number of participants.

The seas surrounding the Baja California Peninsula are among the richest on Earth. Its abundant fisheries, including shrimp, squid, tuna and sardines, constitute 75% of the country's annual catch, contributing \$900 million dollars to Mexico's economy each year. These resources are the engine of the region's economic growth and key source of income, food and livelihoods for nearly 10 million people. By working with our conservation partners, the government and local communities to sustain their resources for present and future generations, we are creating solutions that work not only in this part of Mexico, but can later be replicated in the rest of the country and other parts of the world. Thank you for your interest in exploring The Nature Conservancy's work to safeguard a bright future for the impressive biodiversity that this region offers.

Day 1: MARCH 24

Welcome to Mexico! Upon arrival in the charming historic town of Loreto, you will be met to travel to the Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa located in the Nopoló Bay, five minutes from the airport and ten minutes from downtown Loreto.

After settling in, join the group for a welcome lunch and trip overview at the hotel's restaurant. Spend the afternoon on a visit to the San Javier Mission, which is an hour drive from Loreto. This Mission was established in 1758 and is so well preserved, it is still used as a church today.

In the evening, you will enjoy dinner at one of Loreto's restaurants.

Overnight: Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa

www.loretobayresort.com

Day 2: MARCH 25

After breakfast at the hotel, depart to the Loreto marina to board a skiff boat for a four-hour tour of the Loreto Marine Park. The seas surrounding Baja California are places of tremendous natural wealth. They provide habitat for more than a quarter of the world's marine mammals, including blue, gray, fin, humpback and pilot whales. Loreto Bay ranks among the highest in the region in biological and ecological value. The five-island chain within the Loreto Marine Park is home to 29 marine mammal species, the most in all of Mexico: 15 species of whale, 17 species of marine birds and five species of turtles, including the endangered black sea turtle that feeds in the seagrass beds of Loreto Bay. You will have the option to hike, swim and snorkel in and around Coronado Island. The marine reserve has been a TNC priority since it was created in 1996.

After enjoying a picnic lunch on the Island, return to Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa to clean up. Spend the rest of the afternoon resting or kayaking and exploring in and around the Nopoló Bay. Dinner will be at the resort.

Overnight: Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa



"Misión San Francisco Javier de Ygüe-Blaundó" by Kirt Edblom, Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0



A male humpback whale leaps from the water © Carlos Aguilera Calderón



A tourist boat explores the water off the rugged coast of Isla Espíritu Santo © Mark Godfrey/TNC

Day 3: MARCH 26

After breakfast at the hotel, depart to Ligüi to board a skiff boat to Isla Danzante and for a private whale observation tour.

Spend the morning exploring and keeping an eye out for blue whales, the largest animals ever known to have lived on Earth, and other marine mammals. You will be greeted by dolphins, pelicans and blue-footed boobies as you travel to a scenic spot on one of the islands for lunch. After lunch, take a hike on the island with a local naturalist guide, looking for endemic plants, animals and birds. You may also choose to cool off with a snorkel in the clear blue-green waters, accompanied by a rainbow of tropical fish.

Return to Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa in the afternoon to clean up and rest. In the evening, enjoy a guided evening kayak tour of Loreto waterfront before dinner. Afterwards, enjoy dinner in one of Loreto's restaurants.

Overnight: Loreto Bay Golf Resort & Spa

Day 4: MARCH 27

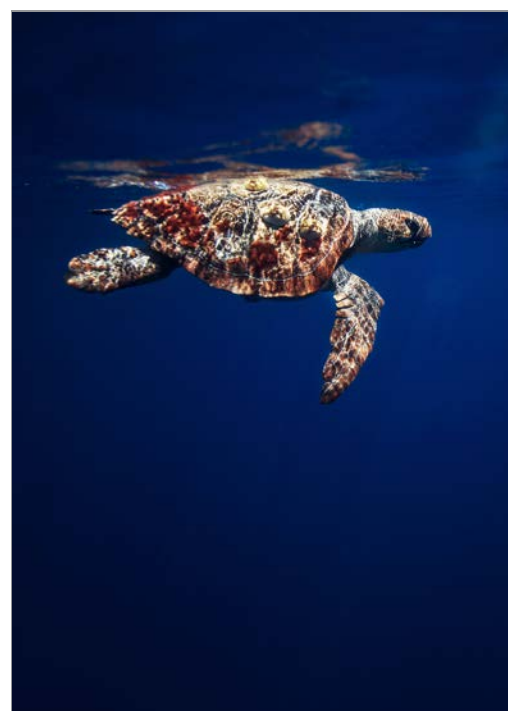
After a quick breakfast at the hotel, depart early to Puerto Lopez Mateos in Magdalena Bay (a 1.75-hour drive). It is one of the richest and largest intact coastal wetlands along the Pacific coast. Located in a transition zone where the two most important currents of the Eastern Pacific meet—the cooler California Current from the north and the warmer Equatorial Counter Current from the south—the area undergoes water temperature fluctuations, which contribute to its incredible biodiversity and productivity. Magdalena Bay is a vital calving area for the migratory gray whale and is its southernmost refuge during the months of January through April.

Upon arrival, board skiff boats for a two-hour whale observation tour. After seeing these impressive marine mammals and their calves, enjoy a lunch in Lopez Mateos. After lunch, drive four hours to La Paz. Once there, check in to your hotel, CostaBaja Resort & Spa. In the evening, you will be treated to seafood and other local delicacies at Azul Marino, one of the city's top restaurants located in the CostaBaja marina.

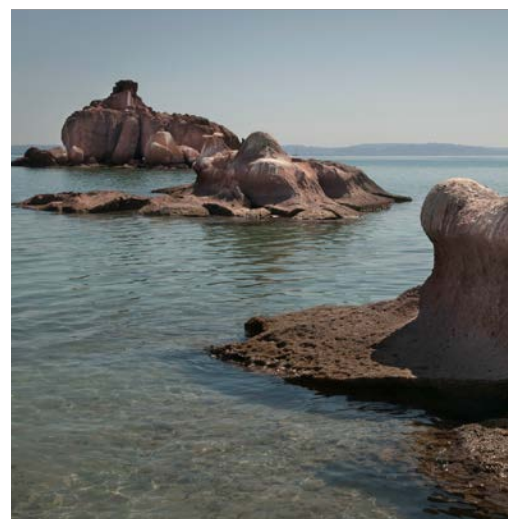
Overnight: CostaBaja Resort & Spa
www.costabajaresort.com



Brown pelicans rest on a small fishing boat. © Mark Godfrey/TNC



Loggerhead Sea Turtle along Baja California © Salome Barro/TNC Photo Contest 2018



The rugged coast of Mexico's Isla Espíritu Santo © Mark Godfrey/TNC

Day 5: MARCH 28

After storing your luggage at CostaBaja and enjoying breakfast at the hotel, grab your overnight bag and depart on an excursion to the Isla Espiritu Santo Marine Park, one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world. The Mexican Government purchased Isla Espiritu Santo in 2003 with funding and technical assistance provided by the Conservancy and others. In 2007, the marine area surrounding the island was declared a national marine park. Today, Isla Espiritu Santo is a model for marine conservation in the region.

The 90-minute trip to the island is an adventure in itself. Be on the lookout for whale sharks (and have the opportunity to snorkel alongside them!) while traveling through the La Paz Bay, as well as dolphins and mobula rays putting on an acrobatic display in the boat's wake. Try to spot some of the abundant bird species that inhabit the area. Upon arrival at the island, you'll settle into your canvas-sided tents then rejoin the group for a picnic lunch on the beach. Spend the rest of the day relaxing on a secluded beach, taking a hike on the island's arid terrain, snorkeling and swimming or kayaking or paddle boarding on the bay.

In the evening, enjoy cocktail hour on the beach followed by dinner at the camp and stargazing.

Overnight: Bonanza Beach, Isla Espiritu Santo

Day 6: MARCH 29

Enjoy the sounds of the crashing waves during breakfast at camp before packing up and boarding a boat destined for Los Islotes. Once there, snorkel with the residential sea lion colony. Enjoy a picnic lunch on the island.

Return to CostaBaja for your final night. Spend the afternoon at your leisure at the hotel: walk along the beach, swim in the pool or relax.

Enjoy a farewell dinner at Las Tres Virgenes and celebrate the week with your fellow travellers.

Overnight: CostaBaja



Canvas tents on the beach of Isla Espiritu Santo © Jill Bernier/TNC



A California Sea Lion swims in the warm coastal waters of Isla Espiritu Santo © Mark Godfrey/TNC



Arid coastline and blue-green waters near La Paz © Mark Godfrey/TNC

Day 7: MARCH 30

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel.

Depart to the San Jose del Cabo or La Paz International Airports for your flight home.

Thank you for traveling with
The Nature Conservancy!

CONTACT INFORMATION

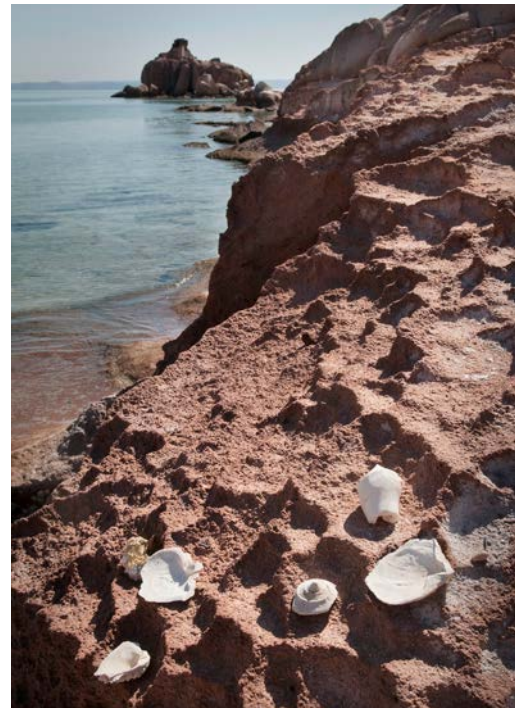
Please do not hesitate to contact Joe Solomon with Iconic Adventures if you have any questions or needs regarding trip logistics.

Email: tnc@iconicadventures.com

Phone: (800) 329-4930



A school of sardines in the waters off Baja California © Carlos Aguilera Calderón



Seashells washed up on the rugged coast of Isla Espíritu Santo © Mark Godfrey/TNC



Brown pelicans float in the water near La Paz © Mark Godfrey/TNC