

A TASTE OF BAJA CALIFORNIA PENINSULA with Leslie and Julian Duval

ITINERARY 13 days

DAY 1. San Diego – Guadalupe Valley - Ensenada

THE NORTH / MEXICO'S WINE COUNTRY

Begin your trip in San Diego. Cross the border, process the permit to enter Mexico. Walk through a traditional Mexican market, colorful and lively, displaying fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs for any ailment, age-old cooking gear, piñatas and more from all Mexico. Continue along Highway One toll road, one of the most scenic roads in Mexico, then head into the wine country. Rolling hills, granite boulders and vineyards adorn the landscape of Guadalupe Valley, the heart of the wine country. After a quick lunch, visit a couple of wineries set among rows of grapevines, ranging from simple working establishments to state of the art industries, often displaying innovative architecture. Taste premium wines comparing production processes and flavors. Arrive in Ensenada and settle in the charming hotel perched on a rocky coast. Brief time to relax and to admire the spectacular view from the gardens or the balcony of your room, then drive into town for a Baja – Med dinner at a well-recognized local restaurant.

Hotel Las Rosas, Ensenada

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in Guadalupe Valley- gourmet *tortas*. Dinner at Baja Med restaurant

DAY 2. Ensenada - San Quintin

SCENIC COASTLINE

Wake up to the sound of waves crashing against the rocks and enjoy breakfast with a view before checking out of the hotel. Brief tour of Ensenada, the boardwalk and the “Mercado Negro” fish market. Continuing the drive south encircle scenic Todos Santos Bay to reach the Bufadora, the famous blowhole, the second largest marine geyser in the world. The natural sea spout shoots water 100 feet high. A fish taco lunch is at the Bufadora. In San Vicente, stop at the community museum. Cross an important agricultural area and arrive in San Quintín. The hotel for the night fronts a beautiful beach. Dinner is in the hotel.

Hotel Mision Santa Maria, San Quintín

Meals Breakfast. Lunch fish tacos at the Bufadora. Dinner at the hotel

DAY 3. San Quintin – Cataviña

SECLUDED BAY / WELCOME TO THE DESERT

In the morning, board a local worker’s bus to get acquainted with the beautiful, secluded bay of San Quintin, its array of extinct volcanoes, and an oyster farm. After lunch, plunge into the enchanting Central Desert and enter a world of fantasy in the midst of unique vegetation. Take a nature walk in beautiful landscape. Cross “Reserva de los Cirios” named in honor of the tall, graceful Boojum tree, Baja’s signature plant. Spend the night in scenic isolated Cataviña and enjoy a finger food dinner.

Hotel Mision, Cataviña

Meals Breakfast. Picnic lunch at oyster farm. Dinner at hotel

DAY 4. Cataviña – Bahía de Los Angeles - Guerrero Negro

UNIQUE DESERT GARDEN / AZURE BAY

Located in the Central Desert, a combination of sun, sand, gigantic granite boulders, and amusing combinations of Boo Jums, Cardons and Elephant trees make Cataviña a superb desert garden. Spend the morning investigating the flora in this attractive setting. Nature walks include a visit to a small cave with simple rock art. Depart for Guerrero Negro with a detour to Bahía de Los Angeles, an island-dotted azure bay, and have lunch in a local restaurant. Located on the 28th parallel, Guerrero Negro is the home of the largest salt plant in the world and one of the gray whale sanctuaries.

Hotel Halfway Inn, Guerrero Negro

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in Bahía de los Angeles. Dinner at hotel

DAY 5. Guerrero Negro – Whale Watching Excursion –Rock Art Excursion - San Ignacio

MEET THE WHALES / ROCK ART

Begin the day with an early morning excursion to meet the gray whales in Scammon’s Lagoon (Ojo de Liebre) The four-hour whale watching excursion includes a drive through the salt beds, the boat ride among the whales and lunch. Embrace the sanctuary to view these enormous mammals at arm’s length, some even let themselves be petted! Each year, gray whales travel thousands of miles from the Arctic Ocean to the warm waters of this wildlife refuge to court, mate, give birth and care for their young. Enter the sanctuary by driving through La Exportadora de Sal, one of the largest salt plants in the world and learn about its activities.

Upon returning into town, continue the journey to Sierra de San Francisco. Local vans are needed for the excursion. Ancient inhabitants of the peninsula left a rich heritage of monumental rock art sites located in deep canyons. In the Sierra San Francisco, climb steep walls and cross desert vegetation to reach an ancient Spanish vaquero village to view the easily-accessible El Raton cave, a site protected by UNESCO, which contains murals depicting scenes of prehistoric life, animals and people probably related to ceremonial activities and daily life.(approximately a 4 hrs. detour) Continue to San Ignacio, a charming town that developed around its famous 18th century mission in the midst of a lush, tranquil palm oasis.

Hotel Desert Inn, San Ignacio

Meals Breakfast. Box lunch at lagoon and burritos in San Francisquito. Dinner at hotel

DAY 6. San Ignacio - Laguna de San Ignacio - San Ignacio

MORE WHALES / MISSION OASIS

Enhance the whale experience with a second adventuresome ride among whales, this time in San Ignacio Lagoon. Board local vans to reach the secluded lagoon and in pangas admire the majestic mammals in the protected San Ignacio Sanctuary. A hot lunch is served at the lagoon. Migrating birds can be spotted along the shore. Back in San Ignacio, enjoy a relaxed evening.

Hotel Desert Inn, San Ignacio

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in the lagoon. Dinner on your own.

DAY 7. San Ignacio – Santa Rosalia – Mulege – Loreto

OLD FRENCH COLONY / PALM RIVER / BLUE WATERS

The variety of scenery makes this part of the road probably the most interesting. Follow the “Tres Virgenes” volcanoes, cones of red lava rock dotted with gracious white elephant trees.

Take a short detour to the Tres Virgenes Eco Reserve for a walk in the prickly desert. Then the road reaches one of the steepest grades in the peninsula leading to the blue waters of the Sea of Cortes. Pass through the towns of Santa Rosalia and Mulege. The French established the old copper mining town of Santa Rosalia and brought over the prefabricated iron church designed by Mr. Eiffel. Visit the church along with the old French quarters and the Boleo mine museum; an additional stop is at the Boleo bakery. Mulege is an ancient mission settlement in the midst of a palm oasis. A visit to its mission and a meal stop gives us a chance to enjoy this pleasant community. As we leave town, a beautiful coastal stretch along Bahia de Concepcion reminds us of the beaches of the Caribbean. Loreto is the oldest mission and permanent settlement of the Californias. It also served as the capital of the territory for over 100 years. The mission is still standing today and houses a museum. The beautiful hacienda style hotel faces the Sea of Cortes.

Hotel La Misión, Loreto

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in Las Casitas in Mulege. Dinner at Palapa restaurant in town.

DAY 8. Loreto – Coronado Island - Sierra de La Giganta – San Xavier Mission – Loreto

VOLCANIC ISLAND / ANCIENT MISSIONS / JAGGED PEAKS

Located in the Loreto Bay Marine Park Reserve, the small gorgeous volcanic Island of Coronado offers bountiful sea and bird life against intricate volcanic rock formations. A white sandy cove encloses emerald crystal clear water. With a small panga, encircle the island, rest on the beach, swim and snorkel and hike among the neatly arranged desert vegetation, enjoy picnic lunch on the beach. Return to shore and head for the mountains! The city is surrounded by the impressively rugged peaks of the Sierra de la Giganta. Drive into these mountains to visit San Xavier, one of the best preserved of all the missions with its original Mission orchard. A stop is made along the way in a ranch to learn about the process of making goat cheese. Taste the cheese on a tortilla that you learned to make. Back in Loreto, visit the town and time permitting, its museums and galleries. The evening is free to enjoy dinner at a restaurant of your choice.

Hotel La Misión, Loreto

Meals Breakfast. Picnic lunch on the island. Dinner on your own.

DAY 9. Loreto – La Paz.

PEACEFUL CITY / SUNSET BEACH DINNER

Depart in the morning to continue driving along scenic sea-shores, through Sierra de la Giganta mountains and across an important agricultural area to reach La Paz. Although La Paz is the most important city of the southern part of the peninsula, its tree-lined streets and calm clear beaches inspire tranquility. A walk along the “malecon” (boardwalk) is a treat. Settle in the hotel, then head out to the beaches. The first stop is at stunning Balandra Bay. Pearl white beaches accessed solely by foot or by sea and a healthy bird-filled mangrove enclose the azure bay. You may wish to explore the surroundings on a brief scenic walk that offers magnificent panoramic views of the bay and sight the seven shades of blue that make Balandra special. Continue to Pichilingue beach to enjoy the romantic coast and view the sunset while having a shrimp dinner in a beach “palapa” restaurant.

Hotel Catedral, La Paz

Meals Breakfast. Taco lunch at Rancho Viejo. Dinner at Pichilingue beach palapa.

DAY 10. La Paz – Isla Espiritu Santo – La Paz.

CRYSTAL WATERS, WHITE SAND, SEA LIFE

The “Golfo de California” (commonly known as Sea of Cortes) has been defined as one of the most biologically diverse marine areas in the world. Within the Sea of Cortes Marine Park Reserve, the protected island of Espiritu Santo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offers a variety of attractions: fascinating geology, snorkeling with sea lions and tropical fish in crystal clear water, pristine beaches, hidden coves, and isolation. Take a boat out to the island for a day full of activities. Return to the hotel. In the late afternoon, join the local Paseños on a leisurely stroll along the malecón (boardwalk). Dinner is at a well known fish and sea food restaurant.

Hotel Catedral, La Paz

Meals Breakfast. Lunch on the island. Dinner at Bismarkcito in town.

DAY 11. La Paz – El Triunfo - Todos Santos

MINES / ARTIST COLONY

Depart La Paz to cross the peninsula and reach the Pacific Ocean. Take a detour to the recently restored ex mining colonial town of El Triunfo. Walk through the remains of foundries, and chimneys including a 300 ft. cylinder smoke stack designed by Eiffel. The pride of the town is the museum, not of mining but of music! Lunch is in a café located in one of the original homes. Continue to the fertile oasis of Todos Santos, now home to many artists and art galleries. Established to process sugar cane, the abandoned haciendas have been adapted into boutique hotels, restaurants and galleries. Spend the afternoon relaxing or strolling in town along the shops and galleries, or venture into the oasis on foot. Dinner event with a Oaxaca native includes a fun mezcal tasting and a delicious dinner.

Hotel Casa Tota, Todos Santos

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in El Triunfo. Dinner in El Refugio Mezcalería

DAY 12. Todos Santos - San Jose del Cabo

LAND’S END

Depart for the last stretch of the road to reach Los Cabos, the tip, land’s end. In Cabo San Lucas, take a boat excursion to reach the famous arch which marks the spot where “land ends and heaven begins”, then continue into the open sea to search for humpback whales which may be sighted rounding the tip. Lunch is in Cabo San Lucas, then drive along the Los Cabos Corridor, a stretch of beautiful beaches dotted with conspicuous hotels, which connects the busy resort of Cabo San Lucas to San Jose del Cabo. The latter is a rather quaint town of narrow streets and Spanish style buildings at the mouth of a palm-lined river. The cozy colonial hotel is off a restaurant and shopping street, one block from the main square with its restored mission church. Farewell dinner is in the hotel’s well-known restaurant.

Hotel Tropicana Inn, San José del Cabo

Meals Breakfast. Lunch in Cabo San Lucas. Farewell dinner at hotel

DAY 13. San Jose del Cabo – San Diego

FAREWELL TO BAJA

Program ends in San José del Cabo. Free time until departure for the San José del Cabo airport. Transfer to the Los Cabos airport is included for departures on the last day of the program.

Meals Breakfast.

FEATURES INCLUDE

- Comfortable private land transportation
- Twelve nights accommodations
- All meals (less two dinners) with one drink. Snacks and drinking water throughout the trip
- All visits and side excursions described in the itinerary
- Permit to enter Mexico
- Services of experienced guide
- Taxes and tips of included meals and hotels

FEATURES NOT INCLUDED

- Tip to group leader, drivers and special excursions staff
- Return flight
- Two dinners, additional beverages
- Personal expenses

PRICE \$3,220.00 per person in double occupancy
\$700.00 single supplement

DATE Sunday March 29 to Friday April 10, 2020

ENROLLMENTS

For additional information please contact Andiamo
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VALID PASSPORT MANDATORY

PLEASE NOTE

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information featured on this itinerary. Itineraries are based on our best information at this time. Circumstances beyond our control may require us to adjust itineraries or other details. We regret any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding.