



## Baja Ecotours

### Whale Watching at San Ignacio Lagoon

#### 5 Day Air Trip Itinerary

#### Welcome

Maldo, Johnny and the entire staff of Baja Ecotours welcome you to the journey of a lifetime. You'll soon be joining us at our remote Ecolodge (Campo Cortez) at San Ignacio lagoon where man and leviathan (that's a whale) have formed a unique, and peaceful relationship. We look forward to your visit and have put together the following information to help prepare you for your journey into the remote Baja wilderness. Please review it to ensure that you are properly prepared.

#### Itinerary In Brief: 5 Days and 4 Nights

Trip begins and ends at: <b>Handlery Hotel – San Diego</b>	
6:30 pm: Evening before departure	Meet in lobby at the Hotel to check in with guide (informal meeting to cover any questions & role call)
<b>Day 1 at: 7:00 am</b>	Meet in hotel lobby with your baggage ready to go; depart for Ensenada airport at 7:15am
11:00am -11:30am	Aircraft departs for San Ignacio Lagoon
Flight duration: 2.5 hours	Scenic flight over peninsula and beaches
2pm – 2:30pm (mountain time)	Arrive to San Ignacio Lagoon airstrip
2:30 – 3:45pm	Transport to camp & Camp orientation at camp
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Time to relax, walk beaches, kayak & get familiar with camp, happy hour at 5pm
<b>Days 2 thru 4</b>	Whale watching & camp activities: Whale watching twice daily, kayaking, group excursions to tide pools, beach combing, birding and relaxing at base camp
<b>Day 5:</b>	Return trip to San Diego
7:00am	Early breakfast and farewell to staff
8:00am	Load bus with your baggage
8:45am	Return flight to Ensenada (approx. 2.5 hours)
3:30pm to 6:00pm	We return to our Hotel in San Diego
<b>Recommended that you DO NOT make return flights today. Delays are possible &amp; likely</b>	

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## 5 Day Air Trip Details

**Pre-departure day:** Meet our guide in the lobby of the designated hotel at 6:30 pm (**the day before our departure day**) for an informal meeting to take a roll call of all our travelers and answer any last minute questions as well as go over your travel documents. This is not a mandatory meeting; however, it is recommended to show up to meet your guide. If for any reason you are unable to make the meeting, please let our office or the guide know ahead of time. And if you are running late, just call our guide on his cell phone.

**Meeting Location:** Handlery Hotel and Resort  
**Address:** 950 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA. Tel: 619-298-0511  
**Website:** [www.handlery.com](http://www.handlery.com) Reservations Email: [reservations-hhr@handlery.com](mailto:reservations-hhr@handlery.com)

## DAY 1:

**7:00am:** Meet in the lobby with your luggage ready to load onto the charter bus. We recommend that you eat breakfast at the hotel before departure—our next meal is a light lunch & snacks en-route to camp. The hotel restaurant is open at 6am for your convenience or you can pre-order a breakfast sandwich the evening before at the front desk. Snacks are served on the bus and plane.

**7:15am:** We board our charter bus and depart for the airport. We cross the border at San Ysidro where we check in with immigration and customs, then head to the commercial airport in Ensenada located approximately one hour and a half down the coast from the San Diego border. Our drive is a relatively scenic drive and takes us through the seaside towns of Rosarito and Baja Malibu along the coastline. Total drive time is about two hours from the hotel on a commercially chartered bus. Snacks and drinks are provided on the bus.

**10:30am:** Arrive Ensenada airport. We'll get our bags off of the bus and bring them into the small lobby and also clear with Mexican customs before boarding our aircraft.

**11:00am – 11:30pm:** Depart Ensenada for a scenic two and a half hour flight down the coast to San Ignacio Lagoon. We'll fly along the Pacific Ocean and we'll be able to spot South bound Gray Whales along the Pacific coastline.

**Time change:** When on the plane, you now will want to turn your watch ahead by one hour. Baja Sur and San Ignacio Lagoon are on mountain time, while San Diego is on Pacific Time. We'll now be using mountain time when referring to times at the lagoon.

## Mountain Times

**2:00pm to 2:30pm:** Arrive San Ignacio Lagoon Airstrip. Our bus will be waiting for you and drive back to camp. You'll be introduced to the camp, assigned to your cabins, and oriented to the camp facilities. Today spend time at the camp and walk the tide pools, see whales from shore or enjoy kayaking.

**5:30pm:** Happy hour at our dining palapa. Enjoy the remarkable sunset and meet the staff and other guests.

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**DAYS 2-4:**

Spend three full days at “Campo Cortez” eco-lodge with two whale watching trips daily and enjoy the relaxing atmosphere - kayaking, hiking, beach combing or bird watching. Each morning, after a hearty breakfast you'll depart on our skiffs to see the whales. Each trip lasts approximately two hours from the time we leave camp. You'll witness the spectacular behavior of these gentle giants as they breach and spy hop all around us, sometimes approaching our skiffs for a better view of us. Observe mothers tending to their calves and males courting females. There is truly no place like this on the planet. Lunch is served midday and a second whale watch follows around 1:30pm.

**Other activities:** After whale watching simply relax and absorb the ancient unbroken rhythms of the lagoon and its splendid wildlife; wander the shell strewn beaches; join an afternoon kayaking trip; or take a natural history excursion with our guides.

**Happy Hour Daily at 5:30pm & Dinner by 6:30pm**

At day's end you'll be treated to coffee, cocktails and other refreshments as the sun sets over the dunes in the distance, leaving a vermilion sky in its shadow. Sunsets are followed by authentic local Mexican meals with plenty of hand-made tortillas and fresh foods from the region. Dinner is followed by informal lectures, slide and video presentations as well as conversation amongst guests. At the end of each evening you'll retire to your cabin where you'll relax to the sounds of the lagoon with whales breathing in the distance and coyotes howling to the moon.

**DAY 5:**

Early departure from the lagoon this morning: Breakfast shall be served at 7am so we can get an early start back to San Diego. Before breakfast, check out of your cabin and bring your luggage to the palapa so that we can load the bus. Enjoy your last breakfast with the crew and guests. Our flight brings us back to Ensenada usually by 10:30am to 1:30pm local Pacific time where we board our chartered bus back to San Diego and the hotel. Return times to our hotel in San Diego are anywhere from 3:30pm to 6:00pm. But delays can and do happen, so please do not plan other connecting air travel on this day. We recommend you plan your travel the following day.

**How To Pack – Your Luggage**

**How to pack:** We suggest you travel light since our aircraft are very small and have very little luggage space. We have a luggage limitation of 35lbs (17kilos) per guest plus your handbag or camera bag and request you pack your items in a **soft-sided** canvas style bag. No large (hard) luggage, please. It will not fit on the aircraft.

**LUGGAGE:** it is very important that you keep your luggage with you at ALL times. DO NOT rely on ANYONE to load your luggage or carry it for you. Many bags have been left behind in the airport lobby, on the bus or sitting in the parking area next to the plane because someone just simply forgot to load their luggage. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR BELONGINGS – and we ask you to keep them in sight at all times.

**Passports**

Mexico & the USA both require you to have a valid passport when transiting across the border or while boarding a commercial aircraft. You MUST have a valid passport. Apply well in advance (usually 4-5 weeks to get your US passport).

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## Camp Itinerary And Activities

<p><b>Daily Camp Schedule:</b></p> <p>7:00am: Coffee/cereals/fruit        8:00am: Hot breakfast        8:45am: Whale watching        12:00pm: Lunch        1:30pm: Whale watching        5:30pm: Happy hour        6:30pm: Dinner        9:00pm: Lights out-Palapa</p>	<p><b>Camp Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Naturalist lead excursions &amp; lectures</li> <li>○ Guided tide pool exploration &amp; critter hunts</li> <li>○ Guided kayaking excursions to mangroves</li> <li>○ Up close whale observation &amp; petting</li> <li>○ Night-time sky-gazing—incredible skies at night</li> <li>○ Bird watching &amp; Beach combing</li> <li>○ Happy hour &amp; incredible sunsets</li> <li>○ Gray whale bone-yard</li> </ul>
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***\*Camp schedule will vary day to day based on tide movements and weather***

## Included In Your Trip Fee

- All meals, beverages (sodas, beer & margaritas) at Campo Cortez
- Round trip transportation from San Diego to San Ignacio Lagoon
- Entrance fee to Vizcaino Biosphere – (additional charge)
- Tourist card: Mexican tourist visa (additional charge)
- Airport fees & taxes – (additional charge)
- Sleeping bag, pillow, blanket & linens
- Solar electric battery charging station
- Clean bathrooms with flushing toilets
- Naturalist led walks & discussions
- Two whale watching trips per day
- Kayaking & tide pool exploration
- Snacks on bus and airplane
- Hot water showers

## Not Included In Your Trip Fee

- Call or imported liquor drinks while at camp
- Transportation to San Diego
- Hotel stays in San Diego
- Travel insurance
- Staff gratuity

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### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is available in order to secure your entire trip against any unforeseen incidents such as medical cancellations (*the most common cancellation*), mechanical failure, weather, etc... If you would like to secure your trip against any unforeseen cancellation, just call or email us and we will supply you with our insurance agency that offers a variety of travel insurance policies. Or visit our travel insurance provider CSA Travel at: [www.CSATravelPro.com/83332891](http://www.CSATravelPro.com/83332891)

**(HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)**

### A Note About Your Expedition & Mother Nature

Please keep in mind that your expedition is just that, an expedition into the remote Baja wilderness. Our daily itinerary is flexible allowing us the opportunity to take advantage of any unexpected wildlife or natural history encounters. While we make every effort to stick to our daily itinerary, unexpected delays may result due to any number of circumstances, such as bad weather or mechanical failures. Keep a flexible attitude and open spirit and you will be rewarded with the wildlife encounter of a lifetime. We'll see you soon in the Baja.

### **Tourist Cards – How to get one**

As of February, 2016, we can now apply in advance for our tourist cards. This is very important and will save us up to an hour of waiting at the border crossing if ALL GUESTS can print out their FMM (tourist cards) in ADVANCE. All you have to do is fill in an application, you DO NOT need to pay for it online. Once you have this printed, bring it with you to the pre-departure meeting so your guide can check to see it is complete. The form is all in Spanish, but the link provided below will guide you on how to fill out the form. When asked WHAT border crossing---we use San Ysidro known as EL CHAPARRAL. It is very important you put the correct dates. The exact date you enter into Mexico and the exact date that you leave Mexico—check your trip dates!

**Link to Form:**      <https://www.inm.gob.mx/fmme/publico/solicitud.html>

**Link to Directions:** <https://www.bajabound.com/before/permits/mexicoFMMonline.php#1>

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Map of San Ignacio Lagoon



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