

# NAVTEC Expeditions

## GENERAL TRIP INFORMATION

info@navtec.com • 800-833-1278 • FAX 435-259-5823 • www.navtec.com

As long time explorers of the Baja peninsula, we love this part of the world and we like taking people out and showing them around. We hope you will decide to come and go on our next adventure. We have included information here that we think will be helpful in planning your vacation. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions at all. We'd like to hear from you.

### EXPERIENCE

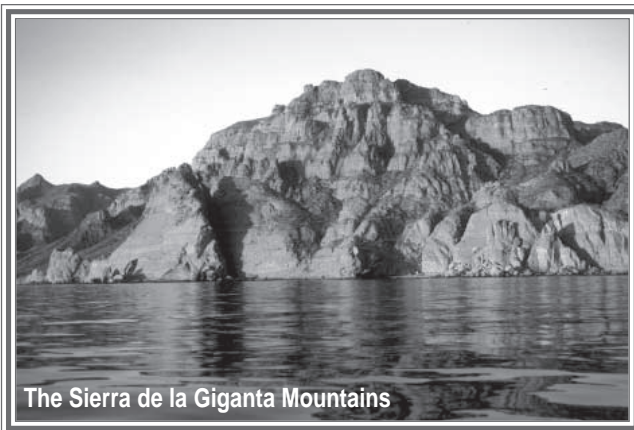
Our trips are designed for anyone in reasonably good health and spirit and **NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY**. Paddling is a technique that anyone can learn. Before each trip begins, there is a comprehensive sea kayak instructional session designed to acquaint you with paddling techniques and the associated gear. After a few days on the water, you will be paddling with confidence. Our guides will assist you with and help you understand the basics of paddling. Many our guests are ocean kayaking for the first time, but with the help of an experienced guide, beginning paddlers can safely enjoy sea kayaking. Our guides can also help you work on your advanced techniques as well.

### CLIMATE

NAVTEC trips are scheduled from October to May of each year when sea kayaking conditions are best. Baja's southern gulf coast is cool in the morning and evening and hot during the day. Winters are moderate with daytime highs of 70 to 80 degrees F (21-27 degrees C). Rain is infrequent, but does occur with wind and sun being the most substantial factors encountered. Magdalena Bay and the Pacific coast of Baja average a high of 60 to 75 degrees F (16-24 degrees C). Winter nights can drop to 48 degrees F (9 degrees C). It is always safest to be prepared for varied weather conditions.

### MEALS

The cost of your trip includes all meals while on the trip (but not



The Sierra de la Giganta Mountains



in the hotels). We pride ourselves on our cooking skills and our outstanding meals. All ingredients are fresh, wholesome and filling. Your guides do all of the cooking, but you are welcome to join in if you wish. If you have special dietary needs, let our office know in advance and we will try to accommodate you. You will surely eat well

on our trips. Everyone washes his or her own plate, cup and silverware after each meal, a tradition in our industry. Cold water and lemonade mix are always available. In camp, we supply plenty of coffee, tea and cocoa as well. Bring your own supply of beer, soda, juice, or other beverages of your choice, which we will try to keep iced down for you (ice can become

short towards the end of the trip). Before we launch we'll stop at one of the local stores so you can purchase trip beverages.

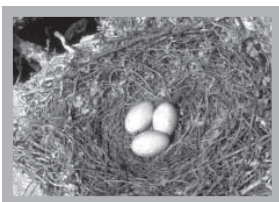
### PHYSICAL PREPARATION

All of our trips are designed for your participation, so reasonable fitness and good health is required. You will be able to participate in most activities if you so wish. This is *your* trip, so don't feel as if you must participate in anything you do not wish to. We do ask that everyone pitch in and lend a hand when it comes time to load and unload the boats when we arrive at and depart from the night's camp. Many hands make light work.

Regular exercise before any outdoor trip will increase your level of enjoyment. If you have the time, we recommend swimming or working out with light weights to help you get your paddling muscles ready for the trip. Stretching, however, is the most crucial preparation needed prior to outdoor activity and this we *highly* recommend.

### GEAR AND GUIDES

NAVTEC's seasoned guides work very hard to ensure a safe and fun trip. Extensive "on-the-water" experience and the highest qualifications in wilderness first aid and emergency procedure are required of our guides. Diverse travel experience and enthusiasm for



the outdoors help our guides make your trip the best it can be. Some of our crew have over 20 years guiding experience to their credit. NAVTEC uses only the finest gear with comfort, reliability and ease of operation being the principal criteria. You will be

adequately prepared for the wide range of conditions you may experience on your trip.

### FLIGHTS

Loreto, the oldest town in Baja California Sur, Mexico is surrounded by the incomparable scenery of the Sierra de la Giganta mountain range, the desert and the Sea of Cortez. Nature was generous with Loreto which is why NAVTEC has found a home here. Loreto (LTO) has one flight a day from Los Angeles (LAX, International Terminal).

The one carrier to Loreto is AERO CALIFORNIA. They can be reached at 1-800-237-6225. Call and make reservations soon. International travel to Baja can be easy and inexpensive if you make arrangements in advance, so do not delay! Make sure to coordinate your domestic flight with your international flight. You should arrive in Los

Angeles *at least* two hours in advance of your Baja flight. We would suggest checking your own baggage to avoid lost luggage and overbooking hassles. There is a Mexican departure tax of \$12 U.S. payable at the time of boarding. This may be included in your flight price, so be sure to find out. All routings are subject to change; call the airlines for the latest information.



### DOCUMENTS

Traveling in Baja requires proof of citizenship such as a valid passport or a *notarized* copy of your birth certificate. You will fill out a Mexican tourist card at the Loreto Airport when you enter Baja. This you will need to keep with you for the duration of your stay in Mexico and present it at the airport when you leave. Minors, under the age of 18 years, are required to have a notarized consent form from both parents when traveling alone or with a single parent. It is your responsibility to have all the necessary travel documents for your trip.

### MONEY

You may wish to bring *pesos* although it is not necessary. The value of the *peso* fluctuates, but has been hovering around 9.43 (10-15-99) *pesos* to the U.S. dollar. Dollars are readily accepted in Baja and



twenty dollar bills or smaller are preferred. Most hotels will give you close to the bank exchange rate. Some stores and most hotels accept major credit cards, but they will not be useful for most of the shops in Loreto and La Paz. Travellers checks may be considered, but some places may not accept them. A 10% tax is included in many prices, but sometimes shows up as an extra on hotel and restaurant bills.



### HEALTH

Baja's standards of sanitation are higher than those of the rest of Mexico. Tap water is fine and there have been few reported incidents involving waterborne disease.

Change of diet is always a factor when on vacation, so bring prescription or over-the-counter medication for personal sensitivities such as motion sickness, diarrhea, and headaches. As always, you should watch out for sun and drink lots of fluids.

### DRUGS

Mexico has very harsh and strict laws regarding possession of illicit drugs, so please do not jeopardize your vacation by bringing anything other than prescription drugs in their original containers.

### PACKING & LUGGAGE

OPTION: Lost luggage can certainly alter your vacation plans. A good idea is to pack all our your trip clothes etc. as "carry on". Pack in a soft duffel bag (lined with heavy duty garbage bags.) Use this as "carry on" while flying. This way, if the airline does misplace your luggage you still have everything you need to continue your trip. Don't forget your passport or notarized birth certificate. Also, to avoid further problems, personally check your baggage directly on your Aero California flight in L.A.

Once in Loreto, we will provide you with a waterproof sea bag for your gear while on the trip. If you have a lot of gear, some of it can be carried in your personal duffel bag (your carry on piece).

We provide you with a two-person tent (one person if you are traveling alone). This is included in your trip cost. If you bring your own sleeping bag, we will provide you with a waterproof sea bag for it. Sleeping bag units (sleeping bag, ground pad, ground cloth all in a waterproof sea bag) can be rented from us at \$30.00 per unit per trip. Here is our suggested packing list.

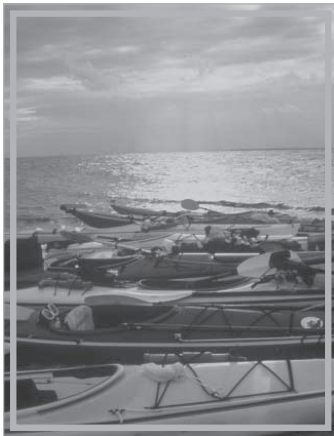
- Soft duffel bag to pack into
- sweater or jacket (wool or fleece works best)
- good quality two-piece waterproof rain gear
- swim suit
- 2 pair-fast drying shorts
- sweat pants
- long pants
- t-shirts
- at least one warm long sleeve shirt (more mid-winter)
- 1 pair quality tennis shoes & 1 pair sandals
- socks.
- hat (baseball cap, visor or wide-brimmed hat for

sun protection, warm hat in case of inclement weather on mid-winter trips)

- sunglasses with securing strap
- toilet articles, etc., (biodegradable soap, tooth brush w/paste, comb, insect repellent, skin lotion, waterproof sun screen, lip balm, personal medicines, beach towel and wash cloth)
- sleeping gear (sleeping bag, sleeping pad & ground cloth)
- flashlight or head lamp with extra batteries
- canteen or waterbottle
- proof of citizenship (Passport or notarized copy of your birth certificate)
- \$200 in contingency funds
- heavy duty plastic garbage bags for dirty and wet cloths

#### Optional items

- fins, mask, snorkel (a net bag to carry them in is nice)
- wetsuit or dive skin (if you wish to do a lot of snorkeling during mid-winter trips. Water temp is about 65°F)
- camera and film supplies (extra batteries and film. Slide film cannot be purchased in Mexico)
- binoculars (waterproof are best)
- fishing pole & tackle (the fishing can be good)
- notebook, writing paper, pencil or good book
- Spanish dictionary & field guides
- small day pack or fanny pack.
- paddling jacket
- paddling gloves



is of the utmost concern on our trips.

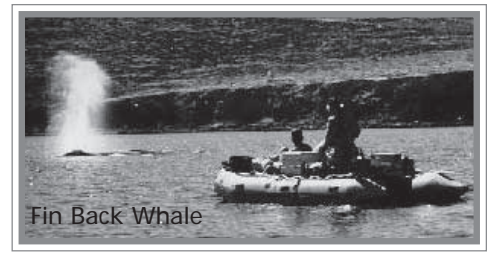
#### BAJA'S NATURAL HISTORY

Much like Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, Baja's unique environment has led to superlative endemism. Darwin, quite easily, could have concluded the same evolutionary theories from a visit here. An arid-to-tropical slice of mountains and plains isolated between two large bodies of water with even more remote islands has led to a wonderful display of unique animal and plant species many of which are indigenous to the Gulf of California. Many of the species are so bizarre as to inspire awe and disbelief.

As a visitor moves southward in Baja, he encounters a wonderland

where familiar plants gradually give way to exotic species formed by millennia of isolation and extreme aridity.

Fantastic plant forms-growing sometimes in patches and sometimes in whole forests- give the landscape a surreal, dreamlike look. A vision of grotesque splendor, the *elephant tree* is one of the strangest of Baja's own species. Immense *cardons*, the world's largest cacti, lift their columnar arms to bewildering heights, dwarfing the gnarled branches of twenty foot tree yuccas. The largest specimens may be 200 years old, 60 feet high and weigh up to 10 tons. Strange as they may seem, all of Baja's plants are



Fin Back Whale

magnificently adapted to withstand the heat and drought equipped with their own special mechanism for collecting and conserving precious moisture. While such adaptations are not unique, many of Baja's plants are themselves unique. In the cactus family alone, 80 of the peninsula's 110 species grow nowhere else on earth.

In stark contrast to the still and barren desert, the glistening Sea of Cortez is a dizzying spectacle of abundant life. The reason for the crowded animal population along this plantless

coastline is the surrounding water. Surging up and down the narrow gulf, the flow and ebb of tides cause great currents and eddies. All this agitation ensures a high oxygen content in the water and maximum movement of nutrients from the depths. This results in an abundance of marine life. The diversity of marine life in the Sea of Cortez is also due to variations in the water temperature, depth, and the great range of topography.

Because of the generosity of the sea, the gulf is a gathering place for many sea and shore birds. The islands of the Sea of Cortez have the most spectacular concentration of nesting sea birds on the west coast of North America- roughly 360 species. Some of the birds cruise the oceans of the world, only rarely resting on a beach or promontory. As breeding season approaches, they make their way back to that same small island in the Gulf of California, free to nest, lay eggs and hatch



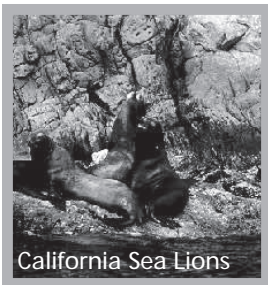
Snowy White Egrets

#### RISK & INSURANCE

We recommend the purchase of travel insurance to protect your vacation investment against baggage loss, trip cancellation, accident, weather interruption, delayed or missed flights. There may be unforeseen problems or situations out of our control. NAVTEC Expeditions can assume no responsibility. Everyone is required to sign a standard release before the trip acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety



Bahia San Basilio



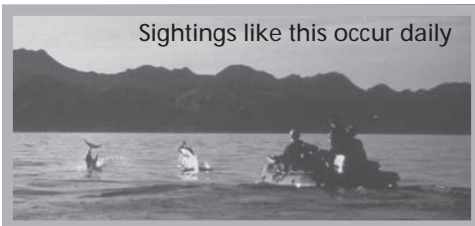
California Sea Lions

their young. Some of the islands are almost exclusively bird islands, with either permanent or migratory populations including the *Brown and Blue-footed booby*, *petrels*, *murrelets*, *Heermann's gulls*, *Royal terns*, *Peregrine falcons*, *ospreys* and *turkey vultures*. *Brown pelicans* patrol the beaches, *Black and Double-crested cormorants* with wings outstretched to dry plunge

into the water after their prey, and magnificent *frigatebirds* float overhead with their widespread, graceful wings and long forked tails. An explosion of bird life- fluttering, crying, screaming and flapping furiously- awaits you.

The distant islands dotting the brilliant blue waters are often found to be a treasure of diverse and unusual life forms. All along the beaches, there are many shells that have either washed ashore or been left by a human or animal predator. You can find *murex*, *scallops*, *snail*, and *clams* as you walk above the tide line disturbing hundreds of *crabs* scurrying around on their tiptoes. The tide pools themselves contain

hundreds of tiny fish and deeper pools house *starfish*, spiny purple *sea urchins*, green flecked *sea cucumbers* as well as *sea turtles*.



Sightings like this occur daily

All but about 10 percent of the 568 known species of fish in the gulf are found close to the shore. Since the inshore waters quickly drop off to the depth of 100 to 150 fathoms, virtually all of the gulf's fish can be sighted within sight of land. Sightings like this occur daily

Clouds of brilliantly colored fish and sardines dance around you as you snorkel. The Sea of Cortez contains a rainbow of brightly colored semitropical fish and invertebrates such as *Butterfly fish*, *Parrot fish*, *puffers*, *Damsel fish*, *Squirrel fish*, *Barracudas*, *Trigger fish*, *Zebra moray*, *Sea horse*, *Anemones*, *sponges* and *corals* to name just a few. Swimming just beyond them are *mackerel*, *giant sea bass*, *grouper*, *yellowtail*, and *dorado*. Giant *manta rays* are also found in the gulf. These kite-like creatures are sinister in appearance, but virtually harmless. Less harmless are the shark that patrol the Gulf's waters including *hammerheads*, *tiger* and *leopard sharks* as well as a few others.

The water surrounding the Baja peninsula contains an abundance of marine mammals and over 20 species of *cetaceans* (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) have been identified. A full-time resident population of *Finbacks* lives in the Sea of Cortez, often concentrated around the Midriff Region; others winter in the Pacific. *Humpbacks*, with their long, white flippers and musical talents, inhabit the Sea of Cortez and the waters of the Cape in winter. *Blue whales*, the largest animal to ever live on earth at 100 feet long and 150 tons, cruise off the Pacific coast and often visit the Sea of Cortez between late winter and spring. *Sperm whales* are occasionally seen sometimes traveling in large groups. *Orcas* or "killer whales" often stay near the coastal islands attracted to the numerous sea lions that live there. The *common* and *bottle-nosed dolphin* are the two most popular dolphins found in the area. The common-nose dolphin are most abundant in pods or schools



sometimes numbering in the hundreds.

In the bays, lagoons and offshore islands of Baja's Pacific coast, at least three marine mammals thought to be headed for the brink of extinction- the *Gray whale*, the *Guadalupe fur seal*, and the *Elephant seal*- have managed to re-establish themselves. Their survival is an eloquent tribute to the virtues of Baja's isolation. California sea lions, Elephant seals and Harbor seals, common to Baja waters, breed and calve on the larger islands along the Pacific coast and are quite amusing to encounter. The most spectacular of these three virtually extinct mammals, however, is the gray whale. Each year, from December to March, the lagoons of Baja's west coast swarm with about 6,000 of these magnificent creatures, courting, breeding and giving birth to their young. Bahia Magdalena, a vast wilderness of sand dunes, mangrove channels, and protected waters, is one of the best places along Baja's Pacific coast to see the Gray whales. It's a gentle encounter, not really understood, but not easily forgotten by those who experience it.

Baja is one of the corners of the world in which a few animals appear to be holding their own- or even gaining a little- in the battle to survive man's destructiveness. Perhaps one of the greatest wonders of Baja is that a region so seemingly dead and sterile is, in fact, an abundant giver and protector of life. With growing recognition, Baja may be able to go on giving pleasure, insight and understanding to the people of this all-too-crowded planet.

