

Baja Pre-departure Information

Planning For Your Trip

We are so excited to have you join us in Baja this season! Please read this pre-departure information carefully. Taking care of flights, travel documents, and planning for your trip well in advance will make it that much more enjoyable.

Travel Documents

Proof of citizenship is required to enter Mexico. You will need a valid passport. If you are a citizen of any country other than the U.S. or Canada, please check with a local consulate or tourist office for the necessary requirements. A free tourist card will be issued to you on the flight to Loreto. Half of this tourist card will be collected by immigration officials upon your arrival. The other half must be presented when you leave the country. Do not lose this document and keep it with your passport.

If you are planning on driving down to Loreto from the States, please call or email us, and let us share with you the current information on the mandatory acquiring of a Tourist card at the border on your way down.

Note: It's a great idea to have a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport as a backup. Keep this copy in a part of your luggage that is separate from where you are keeping your passport. Another option is to take a picture of it with your cell phone.

Food, Water and Other Beverages

Over the years we've developed a creative menu to please our guests, and our food has received rave reviews! We also carry plenty of snacks for breaks while paddling. Our snack selection typically consists of fruit and nut mixes, trail mixes and "Locals energy bars" such as peanut and amaranth bars. If you are a vegetarian or have other dietary considerations, please let us know in advance so we can talk about your needs and plan accordingly. There is a place to list this on the documents you'll be returning to us.

Drinking water for the Loreto area (as in most of Baja) comes from a very pure desert aquifer. Nonetheless, while you are in town, we recommend drinking purified bottled water. During the kayak trip we will carry water purchased from a water purification plant.

There is available but limited space for bringing along alcoholic beverages such as beer or tequila. Your guide can give you advice on this during the pre-trip meeting on the evening before we launch. You will have time to make purchases in town that evening, and we will pack it along with

our other food and gear in our kayaks during the trip.

Money and Additional Costs

There is no need to buy pesos before your arrival, as most merchants will accept U.S. dollars. Change will be given to you in pesos, however, so it's best to have small bills for easy exchange and to avoid leaving with excess pesos.

If you need more cash during your stay, there is an ATM machine available centrally located at the bank near the town Plaza. Some places do accept traveler's checks and visa/MasterCard for payments but not all, so it is recommended to bring or withdraw enough cash to comfortably cover the following:

- Several meals while in town.
- Incidentals such as special souvenirs you might find, presents, items you may have forgotten.
- Cocktails or appetizers while exploring town.
- Expenses you may encounter if arriving early or staying after the trip.
- Tips for guides and other services.

Speaking of Tips ... Tipping!

Many guests ask us for recommendations on tipping so here are some guidelines: If you would like to express your appreciation to your guides through a gratuity, please know that such recognition will be enthusiastically received. The industry standard for a guided trip is approximately 15 to 20 percent of the trip cost, and can vary depending upon the level of service you feel you received. If you wish to tip your guides, having cash (not credit cards) available is helpful. All tips will be collected by your trip leader and equally disbursed amongst your guides at the end of your trip.

Tips for services, besides guide services, (such as for your van driver, your hotel maid, and meals) paid for by Paddling South, are already covered by Paddling South.

Drivers

If you are driving to Loreto you may store your vehicle at a campground where it will be secure during the kayak trip. Be sure to notify us of your driving plans in advance. We recommend National Geographic adventure Maps.

You will also need Mexican auto insurance. We recommend Baja Bound www.bajabound.com
888.552.2252

Trip Payments

Your Baja trip is reserved with a non-refundable 20% deposit per person. Balance of payment is due 60 days prior to your trip start date, after which it is nonrefundable. Your balance will be **automatically charged** at this time to the credit card on file. If you prefer to pay by check, or need

any payment accommodations, please be sure to inform us prior to this 60 day deadline. Trip deposits and balance of payments are nonrefundable. Once you've signed up, we lose the right to sell your reserved space to other individuals or groups. Therefore we regret that we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason as well as those listed above we strongly recommend you consider purchasing a travel insurance plan. Paddling South recommends you consider purchasing trip insurance to protect against any unforeseen circumstances that may arise, causing you to cancel your trip. We provide a link to a reliable trip insurance supplier below under "Insurance".

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend you protect your vacation through the purchase of a short term traveler's insurance policy, covering baggage loss, and accident and trip cancellation. PADDLING SOUTH accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged or delayed property. Trip cancellation insurance can reimburse you for any nonrefundable air and land expenses should you have to cancel your space due to family illness. It can also cover any emergency evacuation expenses should you become ill during the trip. PADDLING SOUTH has an unblemished safety record. Although every effort is made to ensure a safe trip, you should realize that in the event of illness or injury, evacuation can be expensive. Please check your medical coverage and be sure it is adequate. There are many travel insurance companies to choose from. Our Preferred Travel planners Bob and Jessica can help you choose a company and policy that will best meet your needs. Contact them at:

Bob Entwisle 415.819.5665 bobetravels@gmail.com

Jessica Entwisle 925.286.0811 jessica.eandetravelservices@gmail.com

Note: We suggest purchasing your travel insurance at the same time you make your air and lodging reservations but in no case later than the date of your final trip payment. Purchasing travel insurance before your final payment will provide you with a 'waiver' of pre-existing conditions. Insurance acquired after final payment will not provide protection for pre-existing conditions.

Connectivity

Internet connectivity in town can be spotty. WiFi connections can be fine but there is no guarantee. Even at the best hotels, or internet cafés, WiFi connections can be extremely slow. We would recommend that you think of your vacation as a time to disconnect from the web / email etc. and enjoy the moment. It is a rare gift to be unplugged these days and just be present where we are. If you do have critical business that must be performed using an internet connection we recommend you try to transact it prior to your arrival.

Island Time

Once we step "onto the water" we will be on "island time" and sunrise and sunset will become more important than the actual time on your watch. Our ability to communicate with the outside world will be limited, and cell service is effectively nonexistent. Make those "all important calls"

before you go, and relax and enjoy!

Charging Electronics

In town, you will be able to charge your devices with standard (US/Canadian) electrical outlets. On the trip we invite you to slip into “Baja time” and limit the usage of electronics. We also know that many of you use your phones as cameras, or use your camera heavily. If you are going to want to recharge your electronics on the trip, please bring a battery or solar based travel charger sufficient to recharge your electronics for the number of days you will not be in town.

Medical and Health

Please promptly and in detail fill out our medical and health questions in the Profile questions section of your online reservation. It is vital that trip members with any medical problems or disabilities make them known to us.

Most of our guides have C.P.R. and advanced first aid training. We have a well-equipped first aid kit for emergencies and common problems. However, if you have any prescription medications, or specific over-the-counter medications you may require, please remember to bring them with you.

The conditions are those found on any long wilderness trip: inaccessibility to civilization and vulnerability to the elements. Immediate evacuation to the U.S. can be prolonged and difficult, so medical emergencies must be handled in the field. PADDLING SOUTH assumes no liability regarding provision of health care. Please review your medical insurance, and the insurance options/additional coverage offered by travel insurance.

Minimum Physical Requirements

We have guests of all ages on our trips and we find that those guests in good physical condition, regardless of age, are in the best position to enjoy themselves. Our trips are not designed to be overly physically intense, but most people find that after a day of kayaking or hiking, snorkeling and camping, they are pleasantly tired! Here are some guidelines for minimum physical requirements in order to enjoy your trip. If you feel comfortable with the following types of activities you are in a perfect position to enjoy your trip. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office and we can talk through them with you.

- Paddle for 1 – 3 hours a day (with breaks).
- Enjoy a camping lifestyle which includes getting in and out of camp chairs and tents, squatting down for a wide variety of activities, walking up and down rocky slopes or sandy dunes to your tent, and possibly a bit of “rock hopping” through the intertidal.
- Getting in/out of your kayak, and help to carry your craft up the beach.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to give family and friends an emergency contact number, please give them our office number: (415) 332-8494. As it may be difficult and expensive to contact you during the kayak trip, this should only be done in cases of emergency.

Limitation of Liability

PADDLING SOUTH (its Owners, Outfitters, Agents and Employees) gives notice that they act only in the capacity of agents for the participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services and assume no responsibility for injury, delay, irregularity, loss, or damage to person or property in connection with any service resulting directly or indirectly from any of the following causes: acts of God, detention, annoyance, weather, failure of any means of transportation to comply with schedules, quarantine, strikes, civil disturbance, theft, government regulations, discrepancies or change in transit or hotel service over which it has no control.

Flight Information – Tips for Getting to Loreto

Here are some suggestions for making your flights to/from Loreto as smooth as possible:

- **When do you need to arrive?** The day before “Day 1” of your tour itinerary.
- **When can we leave?** Anytime during the first full day, following the last published day of your tour.
- **Book early.** The lowest fares and best seats sell out first.
- **Please reconfirm** your flights directly with the airline 72 hours prior to departure for Baja.
- **We recommend you allow 2 hours** on your return to LAX to clear customs and reach your connecting flight.
- **We know that the challenges** of scheduling and traveling can sometimes be demanding and exhausting; we encourage you to relax and enjoy the ride!

Arrival

Airport to hotel transfer is included in your Baja trip cost when you arrive in Loreto on the day before “Day One” of your trip itinerary. Upon arrival at the Loreto International Airport after clearing customs, look for a “Paddling South” sign held up by our ground service. You and your luggage will be transferred to your hotel along with the rest of the arriving group guests. This transfer is included in your Baja trip cost only if you arrive in Loreto on the day before “Day One” of your trip itinerary. If you are arriving prior to this, we ask you to provide for your own transportation to your extra nights lodging choice.

Transportation is not provided to the airport on your “Fly Out” day. You will typically have the morning to mid-day to yourself in town, and we suggest arranging with the taxi drivers who are usually in front of our hotel for your on time delivery to the airport ahead of time. The hotel

reception can help with this arrangement if necessary.

Paddling South will communicate, either before your trip, or via your guides upon your arrival as to the location and time for an evening group meeting. Once everyone has arrived and is settled in, we'll enjoy meeting each other, and your guides will answer any questions and go over the upcoming itinerary which depends on the trip you are on.

Loreto is on Mountain Standard Time, one hour later than California, and in addition, Loreto enters and leaves Daylight Savings Time on different days than does the United States, so make sure to check the local time upon arrival.

Missing Your Flight

If you miss your flight or are otherwise delayed, please contact our office immediately. You may have to leave a message on our voicemail (415) 332-8494, but the guides will be advised of your delay so they can arrange to have you met upon arrival and transported to meet the group.

There may be an additional charge for this (approx. \$100). Travel Insurance will usually cover this charge as well, and thus another good reason to purchase.

Temperature and Sun Protection

During February, March and April, daytime air temperatures in Loreto range from low 70's earlier in the season to the mid 80's later on with light afternoon breezes, to sometimes strong northerly winds. With the aridity the nights can drop to the 50's on the earlier dates, occasionally into the 40's, thus requiring warm layers. By mid-March on, there are often evenings where no layers are needed.

October and November trip are characteristically warm and comfortable, with very little needed in the way of extra layers, until the end of November. December and January trips can be much cooler than one thinks of when they imagine beaches in Mexico, and a warm puffy jacket and fleece pants will not be unwelcomed in the evenings and early mornings. During the day, we erect shade tarps but light cotton clothing is also extremely important as it provides comfort and protection from the strong Baja sun. Feel free to call or email at any time for more specific advice on layering for your particular trip date.

Water Temperature and Snorkel Gear

Water temperatures range from 69 degrees early in our season to 77 degrees towards the end. Most people feel more comfortable snorkeling in full wetsuits in December and January and earlier in the Feb-Mid March Spring season when the water is cooler.

We have light wetsuits available which consist of a "farmer john" (sleeveless) suit that covers down

to the knees and a wetsuit jacket which fits over the top. Depending upon the water temperature, some guests may be more comfortable in a fuller or thicker wetsuit. For trips earlier in the season, if you know you are more comfortable in a warmer suit, or if you want to check for fit beforehand, we recommend you bring your own. We also have masks, snorkels and fins available. If you are an avid snorkeler and have your own gear, you are welcome to bring it down.

Packing Guidelines

Although we expect beautiful balmy weather, stormy winds occasionally intrude into the usually gracious Sea of Cortez. Follow the list closely and you will be comfortable throughout the trip. Feel free to adapt according to previous camping and kayaking experience. Keep in mind the list is oriented to make sure you have enough nighttime and morning layers for the earlier/cooler trip dates.

What Paddling South Provides:

- All commissary gear (meals, drinks etc.).
- Sun shade for use during the day and at meal times.
- A small “library” bag consisting of bird, fish and other interesting natural history books of the area.
- Fiberglass doubles and fiberglass/plastic singles, lightweight Werner paddles, PFDs, sprayskirts, pumps, paddle floats and paddling jackets.
- One or two person tent.
- Light wetsuits and snorkeling gear. You are also welcome to bring your own custom gear. We recommend bringing your own full suit for December - early March trips if you run on the cold side
- Sleeping bags are not included, but can be rented from us for an extra charge of \$30 per/week.
- Sleeping Pads: We provide ensolite sleeping pads at no charge, a closed cell foam pad for under your sleeping bag. While these are designed to insulate you from the cold of the ground, they do not offer much cushioning. Most of our clients find that they sleep much better by investing in a quality [self-inflating pad such as this](#). **We highly recommend you consider bringing something like this down with you for your sleeping comfort.**

How to Pack:

Please pay special attention to allowable size of personal trip gear bags. Because we are self-sufficient on our tours, carrying all of our food and water with us, we have limited space in the kayaks and ask that you bring only the items on the equipment list. Clothing and gear listed here should be sufficient for the fall through spring paddling season and still allow room for us in the boats!

Allowable trip gear: 1 medium clothing bag or two small bags, 1 sleeping bag and pad, 1

daypack, personal snorkel gear (opt).

A medium size zippered nylon duffel, approx. 20 x 12 should be about the size of your largest bag, or two small duffels half that size. They work great with a plastic garbage bag stuffed inside for waterproofing, or you can use small or medium size dry bags. Two 20 litre and one 10 litre are ideal. Nothing larger than 20 – 30 litre please.) A small day or belt pack with plastic bag liner will allow you to keep notebook, camera, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc. handy while we're traveling.

Don't bother buying fancy new gear for your trip. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater camping.

SEE PACKING LIST ON NEXT PAGE >>>>>

PADDLING SOUTH SEA KAYAK TRIP PACKING LIST:

Gear List: (Starred (*) items are not necessary in October or May.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping bag with compression sack with trash bag liner. Synthetic fiberfill is best approx. 35 degree F. • Sleeping pad: closed cell ensolite pad included but we recommend you bring down a more comfortable thermarest type (please, no plastic air mattresses or non-water proof foam pads) • 1 pair tennis shoes, sandals, or dive booties for loading and unloading kayaks in water • 1 pair of sturdy walking shoes (see note below) • Capilene or similar synthetic long underwear, top and bottom (no cotton) • 1 waterproof jacket and pants • 1 warm layer (fleece or wool, sweater or jacket) • 1 pair of long pants • 1 lightweight long sleeved shirt • 2 pair shorts (one quick-dry) • 2 T-shirts • 2 pair of socks (* 1 synthetic or wool) • Underclothes • 1 bathing suit • 1 towel, medium size • 1 bandana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunscreen (15, 20 or 30 +spf) and Lip balm • Insect repellent • Small container of biodegradable soap (Sea Suds or Camp Suds, not Dr. Bronner) • Personal medications, seasick medication if tendency to motion sickness • Washcloth/ face wipes • Headlamp (best), or flashlight and spare batteries • 1 quart size water bottle per person • 1 small sized day pack or belt pack • Two extra compactor bags for waterproofing your duffel bags <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp chair (Crazy Creek type provided) • Pocket knife • Wrap-around cloth (sarong) for beachwear • Notebook and pencil • Camera and memory cards in a waterproof bag (hard suitcase or Pelican case types don't pack well) • Mask & fins (We provide mask , snorkel and fins unless you have your own.) • Binoculars
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hat with brim • (*) Fleece or wool hat and gloves • Sunglasses with retainer (Croakies, Chums) • Toothbrush and paste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards or travel games • Gloves for paddling • Small musical instrument • Reading book
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Other Optional:

Fishing Gear saltwater rod and reel, line 15-30bs., 06 hooks, wire leader, lures (rapallas, rebels, 3-4; feathers, Kast Masters, squids, your favorites)

Note: Because of rules on permits, fishing is restricted to certain areas which guides will describe at the beginning of the trip. Catch-and-release is often preferable. Please inform us if you wish to fish. We will apply for your license prior to the trip if you are bringing fishing gear. There is license fee.

Note: Please bring all personal items with you from the States as Loreto has very limited supplies.

Some folks are fine with day hikes in walking shoes; but if you are prone to weak ankles, or think one of your main pleasures of the trip will be to take long hikes in our beautiful, rugged canyons, a high-topped, lightweight shoe would be a good choice.