



Baja Pre-departure Packet

Welcome! This packet contains the following:

Documents for Your Review:

- Pre-departure Information Sheet
- Baja Packing List (Clothing and Equipment)

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.

Note: It's a great idea to have a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport as a back-up. 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.

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.

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 online questionnaire you’ll be submitting to us.**

We do our best to accommodate various dietary restrictions within the context of the foods available locally here in Mexico. Clients typically are very pleased with the menu! We can provide a vegetarian option with each meal, but be aware that the local cuisine leans heavily towards fish, and other non-vegetarian main courses. If you list a vegetarian preference please let us know if you are flexible and can eat some fish and or meat. Please call us soon after reserving your trip if you have any special/severe dietary restrictions. Some may want to consider bringing any special dietary snacks that may ensure your specific needs are met satisfactorily.

*Please note that due to the nature of field kitchens, we are not able to guarantee against some inevitable cross contamination, and thus we are not able to accommodate those with **Celiac** on this trip.

Drinking water for the Loreto area 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 plenty of water purchased from a water purification plant in our support boat.

Paddling South provides a variety of beverages while on the trip. This includes sodas, mineral water and juices. We also provide a selection of herbal, black, and green tea as well as strong, hot coffee. We do our best to bring a selection of teas and sweeteners (sugar and honey), but if you have a favorite tea or sweetener, please feel free to bring it along.

We also bring a limited amount of local beer (enough for a beer or two per person per evening and enough Tequila for the group for one evening).

You are welcome to bring additional alcoholic beverages which we can carry on our boat. Many alcoholic beverages can be purchased in Loreto, however, the local wine selection is limited at best.

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.

Note: Most guests choose to use U.S. currency but do be aware that exchange rates may vary by establishment. If you are planning on making a significant number of purchases, and want the best exchange rate, you may choose to purchase pesos prior to arriving in Loreto.

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

- Several meals while in town.



- Transportation to and from airport to 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!

If you would like to express your appreciation to your guides through a gratuity, please know that such recognition will be enthusiastically received. As a guideline the industry standard is approximately 12-20 percent of the trip cost. All tips will be collected by your trip leader and equally dispersed amongst your guides at the end of your trip. **Please note at the trip's end there is no immediate access to ATMs or banks so please plan ahead in terms of any cash needed.**

Tips for services, besides guide services, that are included within the context of your trip are already covered. This would include such things like a boat driver on a whale watching trip, driver's tips for "in trip" transportation, etc.

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 Baja 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 all current cancellation policies apply. 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 non-refundable, and we recommend 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".

Insurance

We strongly recommend that 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 non-refundable air and land expenses should you have to cancel your space due to family illness. It may 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 Planner, Jessica can help you choose a company and policy that will best meet your needs. Contact her at; Jessica Entwisle Giannini 925-286-0811 jessica.eandetravelservices@gmail.com
-Note: We suggest purchasing your travel insurance at the 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 often provide you with a 'waiver' of pre-existing conditions. Insurance acquired after final payment will typically not provide protection for pre-existing conditions.

Everyone is required to sign the Acknowledgement of Risk and Liability Release before the trip, acknowledging their awareness that some risks are associated with kayaking, paddleboarding and wilderness travel. This can be found in your confirmation email letter by clicking on the "view/manage" your reservation link.

Connectivity

Internet connectivity in town can be spotty. Wi-Fi connections can be fine but there is no guarantee. Even at the best hotels, or internet cafés, Wi-Fi 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 non-existent. 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 re-charge your electronics for the number of days you will not be in town.

Medical and Health

Please completely fill out the Medical/health section on the online questionnaire. 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 may 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 physically intense, but most people find that after a day of kayaking or Stand Up paddling, 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 2–3 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 zone.
- Getting in/out/off of your kayak or paddleboard, and helping to carry your craft up the beach.

Information for clients going on our Sea Kayaking trips

Paddling South has both single and double kayaks. Double kayaks are more efficient to paddle and very stable. Single kayaks require an additional level of skill and physical conditioning in order to keep up with the group. Please know that clients travelling in doubles, will often have time to paddle single kayaks in the afternoons and on non-travel days weather permitting.

If your preference is a single kayak you must be a confident paddler with formal Sea Kayak training. Must be in excellent paddling condition sufficient to keep pace with two average paddlers in a double kayak. Exclusive use of a single is based on Program Manager or lead guide sign-off, and availability. Please call our office to discuss requesting a single.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to give family and friends an emergency contact number, please give them our office number: (415) 332-8494. It is a good idea to share our email address; paddle@seatrek.com as we will see that most hours of the day and night as well. 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 LLC (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? Anytime the day before **Day One of your published 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 transfers at the beginning and end of your tour are not covered in your tour cost.

The town of Loreto is a very short ride from the airport, and there is fast sanitized professional taxi transportation available just as you leave customs and enter into the airport lobby. The official taxi drivers will be in yellow shirts, and the pricing is set and reasonable.

Paddling South will communicate with you before your trip, as to the location and time for an evening group meeting the night before the trip starts. 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.



Baja Packing List

Air Temperature and Sun Protection

During February, March and April, daytime air temperatures in Loreto range from low 70s earlier in the season to the mid-80s later on with light afternoon breezes to sometimes strong northerly winds. The nights can drop to the 50s on the earlier dates, occasionally into the 40s, thus requiring warm layers. By mid-March on, there are often evenings where no layers are needed. October and early November trips are characteristically warm and comfortable, with very little needed in the way of extra layers. 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.

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 earlier in the 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 assure you have a good fit beforehand (we do have sizes running from XS - XXL) 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.

After you have arrived in Loreto and met with your guides, your bulk gear will be repacked into "boat bags" which will be given to you, along with a small personal "dry bag" for incidentals and a mesh bag for snorkeling gear. Your boat bags will be transported on our support boat while you are on the water (kayaking/paddleboarding). If you are unsure whether or not to bring an item on the packing list, we recommend you bring it. You will have enough boat bags to fit all the gear on the list, and the gear will be transported on the support boat from campsite to campsite.

Here's an example of how things will be packed:

- The large and medium size boat bags provided will hold your clothes and gear that need to stay dry.
- The small dry bag provided can be used as a "deck bag" that you will keep with you while on



the water. It will hold the items you might want while paddling(sunscreen, camera, windbreaker, lip balm etc.).

- Your snorkeling gear will typically be carried in your kayak.

Extra baggage, clothing, etc., that you don't need while "on the water" will be stored securely in our storage facility, and there will be no access to these items until the end of your trip. Valuables will go with you (passport, wallet). (In the event that you have an emergency which requires you to return to the United States, your passport is required, so having it with you gets you where you need to go as quickly as possible.) If you have a small laptop, talk to your guide about storage.

What Paddling South Provides

- All commissary gear (meals, drinks etc.).
- Sun shade and camp chairs for use during the day and at meal times.
- Sun "shower": we bring a limited amount of fresh water which is available for a quick "final rinse" if desired after a wonderful bath in the Sea of Cortez.
- A small "library" bag consisting of bird, fish and other interesting natural history books of the area.
- **For kayak trips** gear includes: fiberglass doubles and fiberglass/plastic singles, a couple paddleboards for around camp recreation, lightweight Werner paddles, PFDs, sprayskirts and paddling jackets.
- **For Stand Up paddling trips** gear includes: Paddleboards, paddles, PFDs & paddling jackets.
- Enough boat bags (2 large/medium and 1 small) for all your clothing, a large mesh bag (for carrying snorkel gear).
- A roomy one or two person tent.
- Light wetsuits and snorkeling gear you are welcome to use. You are also welcome to bring your own custom gear.
- Sleeping bags are not included, but can be rented from us for an extra charge of \$30 per week per item.

Packing List – What To Bring

CLOTHING

Tops

- 1 thin capilene shirt for paddling: a quick dry material (not cotton).
- 1 long sleeve shirt: some sort of light fabric for sun protection during the day (UPF suggested).
- 3 - 4 extra shirts: some people like 1 more long sleeve shirt (for bug protection if needed in the evening), a shirt to sleep in (the one you always keep clean), a tank top, an extra short sleeve shirt. The mix is up to you.
- 1 fleece sweater: cotton is not recommended
- 1 "puffy" jacket: any warm jacket (down, synthetic), you may not need it, but the desert can get very chilly at night (not needed for October or April trips).
- 1 wind/rain jacket: some sort of waterproof / water resistant jacket in case of wind and



(unlikely case) of rain.

- 1 warm fleece hat or beanie (especially for earlier trips).
- 1 sun hat with tie down strap (for wind) secured via a barrel lock.

Bottoms

- 2 pair's shorts: one quick drying nylon for paddling, one for hiking.
- 2 pair socks for hiking or the evening
- 1 lightweight pair of socks to wear with sandals for sun protection.
- 1 pair lightweight pants for daytime sun protection (lightweight, comfortable, non-cotton): any kind of light hiking pants work well). Many folks enjoy having a sarong for covering legs while sitting on the beach.
- 1 pair warm pants for night time warmth: fleece pants work great, or warm long underwear under a second pair of pants is another good option.
- Swimsuit.
- Underwear.

Town Clothes

- Casual clothes for 2 travel days and evenings in Loreto: these are clothes you will leave with your luggage staying in our secure storage while you are "on the water". It's always nice to have a fresh set of clothing ready for you when you finish your trip.

Footwear

- 1 pair for walking (e.g. running shoes or light hiking shoes): closed-toes shoes with ankle support are recommended to protect your feet and ankles from loose rock, cactus, etc. when walking in the desert.
- 1 pair for kayaking (e.g. Teva type sport sandals; neoprene booties or water shoes): sturdy enough to walk over some rocks getting in and out of the water. Sandals without a heel-strap are not recommended for getting in and out of the water or kayaking. "Flip-flop" type sandals are not recommended for kayaking.
- 1 pair of sandals for the beach: some people enjoy a second pair of sandals (or Crocs) for the beach to change into after kayaking. Sandals with toe protection for the beach can be helpful.



Miscellaneous

- 1 pair paddling gloves: biking gloves work great if you don't have, or don't want to invest in paddling gloves.
- 1 one quart plastic water bottle.
- Pareo or sarong.
- 2 bandannas; for use as napkin while dining, clean sunglasses, etc.
- 1 pair sunglasses with retention strap (e.g. Chums or Croakies).
- Waterproof reef safe sunscreen. (Tropic Sport is an good example)
- Lip protection: any kind of stick with sun protection in it.
- Toiletries: toothbrush, etc.
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications you require (**Motion sickness pills if needed**).
- 1 Saltwater shampoo and soap: Biodegradable please. Better for the environment. (Sea Suds or **Camp Suds** brand works best).
- 1 medium size towel.
- 1 Ditty bag to hold your personal toiletries and medications.
- Head lamp + extra batteries. (lamp with a second red bulb preferred. Does not blind others)
- Earplugs: if you are sensitive to sounds while sleeping or if you need them while swimming.
- Bug spray: some trips are bug free, and on some trips we experience bugs such as mosquitoes and "no-see-ums" which are similar. A long sleeve shirt and pants are your best defense, but a bug spray of your choice is recommended.
- Battery or solar based charger for electronics if you choose to use electronics on the trip.

Important Items

- Passport
- Wallet / Cash / Etc.
- Insurance Card / Travelers Insurance Info
- Copy of Passport
- Itinerary, Flight Confirmation Numbers, Tickets
- Names and phone numbers for hotels and contacts if travelling before or after the paddling portion of the trip.
- Cell Phone. Watch

Snorkeling

- Snorkel, mask, fins, wetsuit (Paddling South can provide this gear or you can bring your own. The wetsuits we provide are "shorty" wetsuits, and the water temperature can be brisk early in the season). We recommend bringing your own full suit for February - early March trips if you run on the cold side Anti-fog drops for your mask can be nice, but are not



required. Some people like light water socks under their fins to prevent chafing.

Camping Equipment

- Lightweight compact sleeping bag with stuff sack (Those who “sleep cold” should bring a bag rated to approximately 32° Fahrenheit.). Available for rent for \$30.
- Comfortable sleeping pad (self-inflating Thermarest or thick ensolite foam pad).

Optional

- Camera (in a waterproof box or bag) and extra batteries.
- Waterproof case for phone (if using the phone for pictures around the water is desired).
- Binoculars.
- Fishing gear (medium weight collapsible). Call office for advice if you wish.
- Reading material.
- Pen and paper for journal.
- Lightweight carabiner or two to clip your water bottle or other gear to other things like your kayak
- Sunglasses / glasses cleaner or wipes (for getting some of the salt off at the end of the day)
- Aloe-vera or other if you know you are prone to sunburn.
- Anti-itch cream such as a hydrocortisone if you like to carry it with you
- A small cloth for wiping sand off your feet before getting into your tent (an extra bandana works fine).
- Specialty beverages, snacks, or sweeteners of your choice. See the “Food Water and Beverages” section of the Pre-departure Packet for what we provide.
- Small pillowcase (stuff down jacket/clothing in to make a pillow).

Additional comments:

Ideally, on the water you are wearing quick drying clothes like a short or long sleeve lightweight capilene (non-cotton) shirt. At night it can get chilly so bring layers and don't forget a windbreaker.

Please try to bring all personal items with you from the States as Loreto can often have limited supplies of preferred items.