



SEA OF CORTEZ KAYAKING

Whales of the Blue Diamond

MEXICO ~ MULTISPORT ~ 8 DAYS

TRIP DETAILS

6 days sea kayaking
Hiking, snorkeling,
whale-watching

5 nights camping
2 nights hotel

DATES

November — April
Visit our website
tofino.com for schedule

2010 LAND COST

8 Day Itinerary
US \$1245 / CDN \$1375

6 Day Itinerary
US \$995 / Cdn \$1095

From: Loreto (LTO)
Group Size: 12
Single Sup.: US \$90 /
CDN \$100

Youth Discount 15%
(17 and under)

National Park User Fee:
US \$25

Small Group Supplement
(Groups of 6 and under)
\$150 US / CDN

Encompassing the coastline and offshore islands south of the town of Loreto on the Baja peninsula's eastern coast, this trip combines the best aspects of our most popular Baja sea kayak expeditions. The first stop is Isla Carmen which dominates the Parque Nacional Bahia Loreto. At 30 times the size of neighboring Isla Danzante it is 19 miles from tip to tip with numerous bays and points that make up winding coastline of many delightful paddling miles. The terrain on the island is varied with broad shallow bays and multicolored headlands backed by 1000-ft. high russet peaks. Our camps on the white sand beaches of Isla Carmen provide the best opportunities for whale sightings. Crossing to Isla Danzante we spend a night on this picturesque island before returning to the mainland. Beautiful kayaking and satisfying hikes combine to make this an all-around great Baja expedition.

The clear waters of the Sea of Cortez (Gulf of California) between Isla Carmen, its neighboring islands and the Baja mainland – the “Blue Diamond” are favored by Blue and Fin Whales and these massive animals can be observed frequently along the course of this trip. Lying out in your sleeping bag under a sky ablaze with stars and listening to the sound of the sonorous breathing of great whales from just offshore is an unforgettable experience. Small coves teem with exotically colored fish and this trip affords many opportunities for snorkeling in what is considered one of the finest fishing areas in Baja. Bird life abounds on the islands: ospreys nest on high headlands, brown pelicans congregate on partially submerged reefs, and blue footed boobies roost on white seaside cliffs.

Slip into the relaxing Baja rhythm of sunny days, memorable meals, star filled nights and blazing crimson-gold sunrises. Leave winter behind and discover the warmth of Baja.

ITINERARY (8 Day)

DAY 1 ~ Arrival

After arriving in Loreto guests will be met by an English speaking Tofino Expeditions representative and taken by airport vans to the hotel. Your trip guides will meet the group at 8 PM at the hotel's lobby for an orientation and discussion of trip details. Supper this evening is on your own and our representatives will be pleased to offer suggestions as well as directions to Loreto's many good restaurants. The hotel is happy to store your extra luggage in a secure room while you are out kayaking.

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DAY 2 ~ Isla Carmen

The group meets outside the hotel at 7:00 AM to board the van for the short drive south to our launch point near Puerto Escondido. As we near our destination, the peaks and hanging valleys of the Sierra Giganta tower above the coast road. South of Puerto Escondido the mountains drop straight into the sea and the highway turns inland. The group is met by the guides who have prepared the double sea kayaks for departure. A comprehensive sea kayak instructional session is presented while we enjoy a continental breakfast served on the beach. After an introduction to the art of kayak loading we set course across the channel to Carmen and our first campsite located on the white-sand beaches of Punta Baja. After settling into camp and having lunch, the balance of the day is devoted to orientation, kayak technique instruction, and snorkeling. In the early evening we'll enjoy our first beach "Happy Hour" with margaritas and botanas (snacks) followed by a gourmet Tofino Expeditions' dinner as the sun sets over the peaks of the Sierra Giganta.

DAY 3 ~ Isla Carmen – Punta Baja

The white-sand beaches of Punta Baja are gorgeous and some of the most photogenic in the park. This location is ideal for spotting Blue whales in the channel between Isla Carmen and Isla Danzante. We'll spend the day paddling the shoreline, visiting snorkeling coves and keep an eye out for telltale whale spouts offshore. When a whale is spotted we can paddle out for a closer look at these largest of all whales. Later in the afternoon before happy hour there will be a guided naturalist walk through the desert to observe the diversity of plant and animal life in this intact Sonoran desert environment.

DAY 4 ~ Isla Carmen – Arroyo Blanco

Wake up to the calls of wintering song birds from the bushes behind the beach. After breakfast we'll break camp and paddle north along the dramatic east coast of Isla Carmen stopping along the way to snorkel in some of the many coves. Our destination is the deep bay and white beach of aptly named Arroyo Blanco.

DAY 5 ~ Isla Carmen – Arroyo Rojo

The sight of the sun rising out of the Sea of Cortez starts the day. We'll continue exploring north on Carmen's eastern shore keeping watch for both whales offshore and some of the many Osprey that make their nests on the cliffs overlooking the sea. Lunch is at the equally aptly named Arroyo Rojo (red) and there will be time after to swim and relax before the paddle back to camp.

DAY 6 ~ Isla Danzante

Today we have an early start for the paddle south for the crossing to Isla Danzante. Our route will take us around the northern tip of this fortress-like island and into the picture perfect Honeymoon Cove where we'll stop to swim, snorkel and have lunch. Later in the afternoon we'll paddle south along the coast of Danzante to our campsite at Punta Arena where we will have an unobstructed view of the sun setting behind the Sierra Giganta.

Day 7 ~ Ensenada Blanca and Loreto

After breakfast, and perhaps a final swim, we load the kayaks for the relatively short paddle to our takeout point at Ensenda Blanca where we will be met by Tofino Expeditions' van and local transportation. We'll

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celebrate our return with a classic lunch of fish tacos at El Rey de Tacos (the king of tacos). Tofino Expeditions' guides, after extensive research, have decided that "El Rey" has the best tacos in Baja. After checking back into the hotel there is time to shower and explore this rustic old mission town. This evening there is an optional no-host group dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY 8 ~ Fly Home

After check out from the hotel it's time to meet our ground transport service for the trip to the airport in time (2 hours before flight time) for the return flight to Los Angeles.

6 DAY ITINERARY

This trip spends two less days on Isla Carmen (nominally Days 4 and 5 of the 8 day itinerary).

NOTE ON ITINERARY ~

Itineraries are intended as guidelines only and are subject to change at the discretion of your guides due to weather and other general logistical conditions at the time of the trip. Tofino Expeditions endeavors to produce trips of consistently high quality and safety without compromise.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Scheduling: All of our trips begin in Loreto, Baja California Sur, Mexico - airport code (LTO). The first scheduled day of all our itineraries is the arrival day and guests can arrive any time on this day. Likewise the final day of the itinerary is the departure day and guests can leave anytime on that day.

Airline Flights: At writing Alaska / Horizon Airlines, (800) 252-7522, offers direct flights between Los Angeles International airport (LAX) and Loreto airport (LTO) on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday and Friday (check alaskaair.com for added flights). During the winter/spring season demand is high so it is important to make reservations as early as possible. When scheduling flights on the homeward leg of your itinerary be sure to allow plenty of time between connections between your international and domestic flights as you'll need to clear immigration and customs upon re-entering the US regardless of your final destination. Significantly more flight options are available by flying into Los Cabos (SJD) at the southern tip of the Baja peninsula please call our office for details or check the Travel Tips link for this trip.

Passports: Starting January 8, 2007 passports are required for all air and sea travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. This is a change from prior travel requirements and will affect all United States citizens entering the United States from countries within the Western Hemisphere who do not currently possess valid passports.

Travel Agent: We recommend Elizabeth Holmes Travel in Seattle for your travel arrangements. They are familiar with flights to Baja and our itineraries and can help you find the best airfare. Contact them at 1-800-588-8361 or on the web at <http://www.elizabethholmes.com>.

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Hotel: We use the beachfront Desert Inn in Loreto (011-52-613-135-0025). All rooms have balconies facing the sea with a great view of Isla Carmen. The hotel has a beach, a pool and a decent restaurant. It is quietly off the main roads but a short walk from restaurants and shopping in the town center. The hotel has a secure luggage check for items not brought on the kayaking trip.

Health Concerns: No immunizations or vaccinations are required for Mexico and as general rule conditions in Baja are more hygienic than mainland Mexico. For your protection our trip water comes from purification plant in Loreto. On the trip fresh fruits and vegetables (organic when available) are good quality and plentiful. The range of restaurant food in Loreto is very good and safe (ask our group service representative or your guides for advice). Bottled water is readily available.

Weather: Loreto and vicinity weather in is generally mild in the winter with day-time temperatures averaging 70°F to 85°F and night-time temperatures 45°F to 55°F between December and mid-March. Spring day-time temperatures average 75°F to 90°F degrees and night-time temperatures average 50 to 65 degrees between mid-March and May. While In October and November, air temperatures range from 80°F to 90°K degrees and water temperatures range from 75°F to 80°F. Loreto is Sonoran desert and the possibility of rain is very small, but on rare occasions it can happen. Wind is a possibility anytime but is more common from December through February. Sea of Cortez water temperatures range from 68°F degrees in December to 75°F degrees in May which typically requires the use of a 3mm shorty wet suit for extended snorkeling (available for rent).

Advice: If you have any questions give our office a call. We've traveled the Baja from border to tip and personally used all of the modes of transportation and routes listed above. We're happy to advise you on your travel plans and tell you about some of our favorite Baja places.

What's Included

- ◆ professional guides
- ◆ two nights hotel accommodation
- ◆ airport transportation and baggage transfers
- ◆ expedition kayaks, tents, lifejackets and safety equipment
- ◆ dry bags
- ◆ all camp meals prepared by Tofino Expeditions staff
- ◆ group camping equipment
- ◆ group first aid kit

WHAT'S NOT

Airfares; insurance of any kind (we strongly suggest that you purchase travel insurance that covers medical and evacuation as well as cancellations for medical reasons) tipping of guides; town meals and beverages, items of a personal nature, snorkeling equipment and wet suits (available for rent).

AVAILABLE TO RENT

For a nominal fee we have available for rent: sleeping bags, sleeping pads, snorkel gear sets and shorty style wetsuits. Call our office for details.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Registering is easy!

Just call us at 1-800-677-0877 and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.tofino.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice and other details.

Why Tofino Expeditions?

We have more than 20 years of experience as an expedition guide service, are leaders in sea-kayak instruction and have an industry wide reputation for safety, service and great food(*in the November 2007 issue of National Geographic Adventure we were ranked as one of the best outfitters in the world and the top-rated sea kayak specialty company*) . We have guided thousands of paddlers on wilderness trips and are thrilled that so many guests become repeat clientele. Our trips are physically satisfying vacations that are designed to be relaxing, safe, thought-provoking and fun

We pride ourselves in preparing high-quality meals from the freshest available ingredients. We are committed to using organic ingredients whenever we can, and we support local food producers. Our menu varies, but a day could include a substantial North American breakfast and freshly ground organic coffee, wholesome sandwiches and fresh salads for lunch, tried-and-true international favorites for supper and fresh baked goods almost every day. In Mexico, we integrate local produce with organic ingredients we have brought from home.

Our Commitment to Conservation

For over 12 years Tofino Expeditions actively supported the formation and implementation of the Gulf of California Ecological Reserve. First through the Conservation International NGO set up for purpose of protecting the islands and waters of the Gulf and then through participation with SEMARNAP the government agency charged with managing the Reserve. SEMARNAP has formally recognized Tofino Expeditions for “environmental excellence” in expedition practices and field management.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-800-677-0877 if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.tofino.com.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Questions?

Please don't hesitate to call us if you have questions or concerns. we're here to help you. You can also find answers to many questions on our website (www.tofino.com)=

To Register:

If you would like to reserve a space on one of our expeditions, you can either call (800-677-0877), fax (503-364-5326), email us (info@tofino.com) or register online at our website (www.tofino.com). We accept Visa and Mastercard for deposits and trip costs. If you have any questions about our trips please contact our office.

Deposits and Payment

A \$400 per person deposit holds your space until 60 days before trip departure, when payment is due in full. If your deposit is made by credit card we will process the balance 60 days prior to departure unless notified to do otherwise. Due to the nature of international operations, prices are subject to change.

Inclusive Services

The information package for each trip contains a comprehensive list of equipment and services which are included in the trip cost. Please read these carefully and call our office if you require further information.

Not included

Airfares, most meals in towns (to allow for individual choice), gratuities to staff, insurance of any kind, airport taxes (if any), alcoholic beverages or soft drinks and other items of a personal nature. Medical costs, costs of hospitalization, evacuation by helicopter or any other means are not covered in the trip cost.

Single Travelers

Hotel and tent accommodations are based on double occupancy. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we will match you with a room/tent mate of the same sex if one is available. If there is no one with whom you can share, or if you prefer single hotel accommodations, you are requested to pay the single supplement fee listed for your trip (not all trips include such fees).

Small Groups

In the event that a trip is under subscribed we will add a small-group surcharge rather than cancel the departure. For our Baja trips the small group surcharge is \$150 US per person for groups of 6 or less.

Trip Prices

Trip prices are subject to change due to currency fluctuations and other factors beyond Tofino Expeditions' control.

Cancellations

A significant portion of our expenses are committed long before departure. At the time we receive written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following fees will apply (all dates are from departure date):

Baja Mexico and British Columbia Departures:

From time of reservation until 90 days prior to departure: \$150

89 to 60 days prior to departure: \$400

59 to 30 days prior to departure: 50% of Land Cost

29 days or less prior to departure: 100% of Land Cost.

Canceled Trips

Due to the nature of operating in the wilderness and remote international areas, Tofino Expeditions reserves the right to cancel any trip prior to departure for any reason whatsoever, including inadequate sign-up which makes the trip economically unfeasible for us to operate or logistical problems which may impede trip operations. At least 1 month notice prior to the departure date will be given for a trip cancellation due to inadequate sign-up. In such a case, a full refund of the trip Cost is given, but Tofino Expeditions is not responsible for expenses incurred by trip members in preparation for the trip (e.g., non-refundable airline tickets, medical expenses, equipment etc.)