

# SAN IGNACIO LAGOON WHALE CAMP

Stetson

## DOCUMENTATION / VISA

A valid passport is required to travel to Mexico. When you arrive in Mexico, they will give you a Customs form to fill out. Only 2 cameras per person and 1 computer are allowed without paying an import tax. A cell phone is not considered a camera, however some inspectors consider an underwater housing to be a camera. Cigarettes and alcohol are taxed at 400%.

## MONEY / CREDIT CARDS

The U.S. dollar is readily accepted in Mexico and preferred. There's no need to exchange dollars to pesos. The old style \$50 & \$100 bills are not always accepted. It's best to bring the new style \$50 & \$100 bills, but you may receive change in pesos. Credit cards are also readily accepted in Mexico. Whenever I travel, I always bring extra cash. During a hurricane a few years ago, all the electricity went out and so did all the computers. Since the computers were down, none of the businesses would accept credit cards. Cash only. Also bring plenty of smaller bills (\$1 & \$5) for tipping at the hotel.

## INSURANCE

San Ignacio Lagoon is extremely remote. If there is a medical emergency, Baja Expedition may need to charter a plane to fly somebody to the nearest medical facility. This could cost \$25,000 or more that the person would be responsible for. Baja Expeditions requires that everybody have an insurance policy that covers an emergency evacuation and medical care. Not all policies cover Covid cancellations. Find out exactly what is and isn't covered. DAN, the Divers Alert Network ( [www.DAN.org](http://www.DAN.org) ) and Dive Assure ( [www.Diveassure.com](http://www.Diveassure.com) ) both offer insurance for non-diving travel.

## COVID TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Baja Expeditions / Mexico No Longer Requires a Covid Test before coming to Mexico. The United States no longer requires proof of a negative Covid test prior to returning to the U.S.

## BOOKING AIRLINE AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Everybody will need to book their own airline and hotel reservations in Cabo. Baja Expeditions will arrange for the charter flight. It is strongly recommended that you book your flight directly with the airline. If you need to make a change or if there is a problem, it will be much easier going directly to them rather than a third party

## FLIGHTS IN & OUT OF LOS CABOS AIRPORT / VAN TRANSFERS

It is recommended that people fly into Los Cabo Airport (SJD) a day or more early in case of flight or luggage delays. The airport is located in San Jose del Cabo. The San Jose del Cabo hotels are about 20 minutes from the airport. The Cabo San Lucas hotels are about 40 minutes from the airport. If you would like, I can arrange Miguel Flores at Awesome Cabo / Faro Nuevo Transportation to pick you up. Meet him outside the terminal under **Sign #5**. He will be holding a sign with **ED STETSON GROUP** on it. For the return flight from the lagoon to Cabo, we "should" be back at the Los Cabos airport around 12:30 PM. For your return flight home, you should book a flight in the later afternoon if you want to fly home that same day. **The rate to Cabo San Lucas is \$30/person Cash and includes the tip.**

## HOTEL

See **CABO HOTELS Attachment** for a list of Baja Expedition Host Hotels.

## **LUGGAGE DELAYS INTO CABO**

If you have a tight connection, carry your luggage on the plane. If your luggage is delayed, it “should” arrive in Cabo on the next flight. Although the airline will deliver delayed luggage to the hotel, you should anticipate 1-2 days before it arrives. If your luggage is delayed, my strong recommendation is to return to the airport and personally pick it up. This will be your only guarantee that you get it in time.

## **COMPLIMENTARY HUMPBACK WHALE WATCH FROM CABO SAN LUCAS**

Baja Expeditions offers a free & optional Humpback Whale Watch trip the day before we fly to the lagoon. Guests will meet at the See Creatures Dive Shop at 3:00 PM. The van will bring you to the boat. The boat will return around 5:30 PM. Let Ed Stetson know if you would like to go.

## **CHARTER FLIGHT TO / FROM SAN IGNACIO LAGOON**

We will fly in two 13 passenger charter planes from the Cabo airport to San Ignacio Lagoon. It’s about a 2 hour flight. Everybody will meet in the lobby of the host hotels or the See Center Dive Shop at 6:30 AM to meet the Nautilus bus. Allow time to check out of your room. Both planes carrying all the guests will depart the Los Cabos Airport at approximately 8:00 AM. Everybody will return to the Los Cabos Airport around 12:30 PM on the return day. All planes have weight limitations, especially smaller planes. It is recommended that you keep your luggage weight to about 25 pounds, however this can change due to the number passengers & weight of each person on the plane.

## **MOBILITY, PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, WEATHER AND SAFETY**

This trip is open to all, including children and seniors. Guests will need to be able to climb up a few steps into the charter plane. The soil at the lagoon is hard packed, mud and rocky. To get into the pangas, passengers will sit on the low railing, then swing their legs over into the boat. There will be people to assist if anybody needs help in or out of the boats. The pangas never leave the shelter of the lagoon and head into the open ocean. The lagoon can be flat calm or a small wind chop, so the boat ride can get bumpy during windy days. If you are more prone to seasickness, bring medication. The Transderm-Scop patch works very well for most people. It’s a prescription medication, so contact your doctor. The calmest ride is toward the stern (back) of the boat. Everybody will be required to wear a lifejacket. When petting the whales, be careful not to get your hand between the whale and the panga to avoid getting your hand crushed. The barnacles on the adults are sharp, so use caution when petting the whales. Avoid petting near the eyes, pectoral fins, tail and the blowhole. During periods of very high winds, the “Park Sheriff” may close the whale zone to all boats. This is for everybody’s safety. If the zone is closed, alternate activities will be scheduled.

## **SAN IGNACIO LAGOON**

We will be staying in a very remote area. The City of San Ignacio is located a couple hours away on a rugged dirt road. There are no stores at the camp, so bring what you need. We will be on the Pacific side, so anticipate that it could be cold and windy. There are no lights, so bring a flashlight. Meals are provided and there is also a bar at the camp.

## **GLAMPING & LUXURY TENTS**

Baja Expeditions has 2 camps: The Premium and Glamping Camp. The camps are next to each other. There are not Premium tents in the Glamping Camp. Each tent will have either 1 or 2 beds. Whatever you prefer. There is also a Family Tent with 1 or 2 beds and 2 single beds. All tents have 24 hour electricity (standard 110V plugs), private bathrooms with flush toilets, hot water showers and heating. If you want to share pangas with friends, both need to stay at the same camp.

### **CLOTHING**

The lagoon area can get very cold and windy, so bring plenty of warm clothes. The pangas (small boats with outboard engines and a captain) do not have covers, so bring a hat, sunscreen, lip saver, sunglasses, etc. When interacting with the whales, you should anticipate getting wet. Most people wear rain pants & jacket or other waterproof clothing. You should also wear high, waterproof boots to walk out to the pangas. If you do not have boots, Baja Expeditions will provide you with a pair at no cost. The San Ignacio Lagoon park regulations requires that everybody wear a life jacket (PFD) while in the pangas. These will also be provided. Consider bringing a waterproof bag if you want to bring your camera on the boat. Do not leave your boots or any clothing outside your tent at night. The coyotes will steal them!

### **COMMUNICATIONS IN MEXICO & AT THE CAMP**

If you plan on using your cell phone or internet in Mexico, check with your carrier to add on a Mexico plan. It's only a couple of dollars per month and can be cancelled after the trip. Without a plan, it can be very expensive. One guest had a bill for over \$1000, primarily for internet use. The camp will have a satellite phone that you can use, however it's very expensive. Probably about \$2.00 or more / minute. Starlink Satellite Internet is now available at the camp.

### **TIPPING / GRATUITIES**

Tipping is an individual decision, so whatever you feel is appropriate is completely up to you. There are 2 tips: the boat captain and the camp staff. Here are some suggestions.

**BOAT CAPTAIN** The majority of the boat captain's annual income comes during the whale watch season. They are fishermen; however, they agree not to fish during the whale season so the whales won't get tangled in their fishing gear. Instead, they make their income by taking people out on their pangas to see the whales. We can make up to nine 90-minute whale watches per trip. \$100 per person CASH is a nice tip. That's about \$11 / trip. You give this directly to the boat captain after your last whale watch.

**CAMP STAFF** The tip for the camp staff is divided equally amongst the entire staff: naturalists, cooks, maintenance people etc. There are around 42 people working at the camp. You can put this tip on your credit card at the end of the trip. The trip costs \$3,300. 10% is \$330 and 15% is \$500. Whatever you feel is appropriate.

### **ADDITIONAL FEES**

There will be a \$35 San Ignacio Lagoon Airstrip Tax and Marine Biosphere Tax. Each person will pay this in cash at the end of the trip. There will be a bar at the camp where you can purchase alcoholic beverages, as well as a small gift shop (tent) to buy shirts, hats, etc.

### **SUDAFED**

It is illegal in Mexico to possess over-the-counter drugs that contain pseudoephedrine (such as Actifed, Sudafed, and Vicks inhalers). If you're caught entering with them, they will be confiscated and you may

be arrested (pseudoephedrine is meth's key ingredient). However, if you have a medical prescription, you may carry prescribed drugs in the original bottle with the information on the label.

### **TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Ed Stetson: 805-403-1439 cell / text in Mexico

Greg Gorga: 805-560-7230

Miguel Flores / Awesome Cabo Transportation: 011-52-624-141-6254

Baja Expeditions Cabo: 011-52-612-125-3828

Baja Expeditions Vancouver Office: 604-241-1918

Baja Expeditions After Hours Emergency Number: 778-846-0224

Divers Alert Network (DAN) Trip Insurance: 800-446-2671