

BAJA CALIFORNIA HOLIDAY VOYAGE: A LIVING SEA AND DESERT ISLES

Designated by UNESCO as a marine world heritage site and dubbed "the world's aquarium" by Jacques Cousteau, the waters and islands of the Sea of Cortez are places of legendary biodiversity. This is an expedition of pure discovery, sailing to islands that lie in close proximity to the peninsula but have a palpable feel of rugged isolation. This geographic isolation is the major contributing factor to the long list of endemic plants and animals. And the seas, roiling with productivity, beckon whales--this is, arguably, the best time and place in the world to see a vast variety of whale species plus massive pods of dolphins, leaping Mobula rays, and seabirds.



ITINERARY

DAY 1: Home / Loreto / Embark

Arrive into Loreto and transfer to National Geographic Venture to set sail on the Sea of Cortez. (D)

DAY 2-7: Exploring the Sea of Cortez

As writer and longtime Lindblad naturalist Stewart Aitchison describes it - "The Sea of Cortez--it's a romantic name that conjures up visions of fiery sunsets, leaping dolphins, and deserted beaches." It is all this and so much more. Our



routing is designed with flexibility in mind to maximize opportunities for wildlife sightings. It will most likely include the islands and activities listed below, although the order may vary. (B,L,D daily) Isla San Esteban and San Pedro Martir: Walk up a desert wash to search for desert songbirds such as the handsome black-throated sparrow, listen for the cascading song of the canyon wren, and search for the endemic pinto chuckwalla--a plump, harmless desert lizard. Later visit Isla San Pedro Martir, a 1,000-foot-high guano-covered island that is home to thousands of seabirds: brown pelicans, magnificent frigatebirds, Brandt's cormorants, and California sea lions. Isla San Marcos: At Isla San Marcos there is a beautiful shoreline for swimming, snorkeling, and kayaking. In the afternoon we are again in rich waters, near the mouth of Bahia Concepcion. Here we are on the lookout for pods of dolphins--with common and bottlenose dolphins being the most frequently encountered species. With luck these beautiful animals may join us as we go, riding the bow wave, sometimes twisting and turning, and sometimes leaping from the water. Isla San Jose: One of the larger islands in the Sea of Cortez, San Jose offers several landing possibilities depending on conditions and the whim of the moment. Photograph the ochre cliffs of the island's eastern shore, hike an enchanted, cactus-laden arroyo, and visit the abandoned salt works to the west. Snorkel with sea lions and discover rare wildlife among desert islands. Bahia Loreto Marine Park: This morning we'll search for the waters south of Isla Carmen, an area offering the possibility of encountering fin whales, which researchers have recently concluded may be part a resident population. Bottlenose and common dolphins are frequently encountered. In the afternoon we visit one of the islands of Bahia Loreto Marine Park, with ample time for kayaking, snorkeling, stand-up paddleboarding, and possibly hiking. In the evening, enjoy a beach barbecue under the desert sky. Los Islotes and Isla San Francisco: At Los Islotes, don flippers, a mask, and snorkel (which we'll gladly provide) and swim with curious sea lions. We have a leisurely afternoon to swim, kayak, or hike at Isla San Francisco. Look skyward for yellow-footed gulls, brown pelicans, and bluefooted boobies.

Itineraries are subject to change.

[DAY 8: Disembark / Loreto / Home](#)

Disembark and explore Loreto, where we will have the opportunity to visit the first mission in Baja California, as well as the nearby museum to learn more about what makes this town so special. Enjoy free time to explore quaint shops and vibrant side streets. After lunch, transfer to Loreto Airport for flights home. (B,L)

Please Note:

YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC VENTURE

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VESSEL TYPE:	Expedition Ship
LENGTH:	
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	100
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2017

National Geographic Venture is a purpose-built expedition vessel designed to follow the seasons and uncover the wild beauty of North America's west coast and Baja California. A sister ship to National Geographic Quest, she was constructed at the renowned Nichols Brothers shipyard in the Pacific Northwest, continuing a legacy of shipbuilding excellence that began with Sea Bird and Sea Lion in the 1970s. Carrying 100 guests in 50 comfortable cabins, Venture offers the perfect balance of modern amenities and expedition-ready design, with a shallow draught that allows for access to hidden coves, narrow inlets, and wildlife-rich waters.

On board, guests enjoy spacious public areas including a lounge with bar and presentation space, a dining room with open seating, a Global Gallery, fitness centre, and a furnished sundeck. A mudroom with lockers keeps expedition gear handy, while the open Bridge invites guests to learn from the Captain and crew. With twin Zodiac platforms for efficient embarkation, Venture is ideally suited for spontaneous wildlife encounters and exploration by paddleboard or kayak. Her design, informed by over 50 years of expedition expertise, ensures an immersive, flexible, and unforgettable experience at sea.



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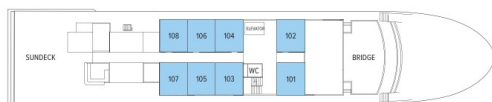
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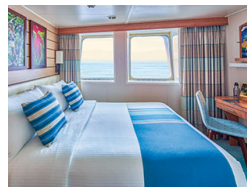
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