



Paddling South Baja Predeparture Packet

Welcome! 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.

Trip Payments

Your Baja trip is reserved with a non-refundable 20% deposit per person.

Balance of payment is due 60 days prior to the trip's start date, after which all current cancellation policies apply. Your balance will be **automatically charged** on this date to the credit card on file. If you prefer to pay by check or need payment accommodations, please inform us prior to the 60-day deadline. Trip deposits and balance of payments are non-refundable.

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 causes you to cancel your trip. Contact information for a reliable trip insurance supplier is below under Insurance.

Insurance

We strongly recommend you protect your vacation by purchasing a short-term traveler's insurance policy which covers baggage loss, accidents, 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 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 to ensure it is adequate.

There are many travel insurance companies to choose from. Our preferred travel planner, Jessica Entwisle Giannini, can help you choose a company and policy that will best meet your needs. Jessica can be contacted at jessica.eandetravelservices@gmail.com or 925-286-0811. We recommend purchasing travel insurance when you make your air and lodging reservations, but no later than the date of your final trip payment. Purchasing before your final payment will often provide you with a



waiver of pre-existing conditions. Insurance acquired after final payment typically does not provide protection for pre-existing conditions.

Tips for Getting to Loreto

Here are some recommendations for making your flights to and from Loreto as smooth as possible:

- Arrival: Anytime the day before Day One of your published tour itinerary
- Departure: Anytime during the first full day following the last published day of your tour, allowing two hours on your return to LAX to clear customs and reach your connecting flight
- Book early: The lowest fares and best seats sell out first
- Confirm: Confirm your flights directly with the airline 72 hours prior to departure
- Relax: We know the challenges of scheduling and traveling can be demanding and exhausting. We encourage you to relax and enjoy the ride!

Travel Documents

Valid passport: 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 United States or Canada, please check with a local consulate or tourist office for the necessary requirements. It's a great idea to have a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport for backup. Keep this copy in your luggage separate from where you keep your passport. You may also take a picture of the photo and signature pages with your cell phone.

Tourist card: If you are flying to Mexico, the form is free. However, most commercial airlines no longer hand out immigration forms. It's strongly recommended you fill out your form online in advance by going to <https://www.mexicotouristcard.com/>. 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 driving to Mexico from the United States, please contact us for current information on acquiring a tourist card at the border on your way down.

Missed Flights

If you miss your flight or are otherwise delayed, please contact our office immediately at 415-332-8494. Whether you speak with someone directly or leave a voice message, your guides will be advised of your delay and arrange to have you met upon arrival and transported to meet the group. There may be an additional charge for this (approximately \$100), and travel insurance will usually cover this charge—another good reason to purchase.

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 in advance of your driving plans. We recommend National Geographic Baja Adventure Maps. You will also need Mexican auto insurance. We recommend Baja Bound: <https://www.bajabound.com/> or 888-552-2252.



Arrival

The town of Loreto is a very short ride from the airport. Taxis are fast, sanitized, professional, and available just as you leave customs and enter the airport lobby. Official taxi drivers wear yellow shirts, and pricing is set and reasonable. Airport transportation at the beginning and end of our trip are not covered in the trip cost.

Loreto is on Mountain Standard Time (one hour later than California), but Daylight Savings Time begins and ends on different dates than the U.S. Be sure to check the local time upon arrival.

We will communicate and coordinate in advance with all guests the time and location for a comfortable outside pre-trip orientation at a convenient location in town. At this orientation session, our guides will explain the trip in more detail, and answer any questions that you may have. Afterward, you are free to explore Loreto and to enjoy a delicious Mexican dinner. Our guides will be happy to provide some recommendations.

Food, Water, and Other Beverages

If you are a vegetarian or have other dietary considerations, please notify us in advance so we can discuss your needs and plan accordingly. There is a place to list this on the online questionnaire you'll submit upon registration.

Over the years, we've developed a creative menu to please our guests and our food has received rave reviews. We carry plenty of snacks for breaks while paddling, typically consisting of fruit and nut mixes, and local energy bars such as peanut and amaranth bars. Should you have special/severe dietary restrictions, consider bringing any special dietary snacks that ensure your specific needs are met.

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.

There is available but limited space for bringing along alcoholic beverages such as beer or tequila. We do not provide alcoholic drinks as part of the tour, but you are welcome to purchase some in town before we leave to bring along. Your guide can give you advice on this during the pre-trip meeting 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 centrally located at Banco BBVA, the bank near Café Ole and the town plaza. Some places accept debit or credit cards but not all, so it is recommended to bring enough cash to comfortably cover the following:

- Several meals in town
- Transportation to/from airport/town
- Incidentals such as souvenirs, presents, forgotten items
- Cocktails or appetizers
- Expenses you may incur if arriving early or staying after the trip
- Tips for guides and other services

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 10-20% of the trip cost. All tips will be collected by the trip leader and equally dispersed amongst the guides at the end of the trip. **Please note at trip's end there is no immediate access to ATMs or banks. Plan ahead if you need cash.**

Besides guide services, tips for services that are included within the context of your trip—such as transportation and driver to Magdalena Bay on a whale trip—will be taken care of by Paddling South.

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 cafes, Wi-fi connections can be extremely slow. We recommend you think of this 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. If you do have critical business that must be performed using an internet connection, we recommend you try to complete it prior to your arrival.

Charging Electronics

In town, you will be able to charge your devices with standard (U.S./Canadian) electrical outlets. During the trip we invite you to slip into island time and limit the usage of electronics. We know many people use phones as cameras and use them heavily. If you'll need to recharge your electronic devices on the trip, bring a battery or solar-based charger sufficient to recharge your devices for the days out of town.

Medical and Health

Please completely fill out the Medical/Health section in the online questionnaire. It is vital that trip members with any medical problems or disabilities disclose them to us in advance.

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.



Most of our guides have CPR and advanced first aid training. We have a well-equipped first aid kit for emergencies and common problems. If you have any prescriptions or specific over-the-counter medications you require, remember to bring them with you. There will be a period of 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, regardless of age, we find that those in good physical condition 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/stand-up paddling, hiking, snorkeling, and camping they are pleasantly tired. Below are some guidelines for minimal physical requirements; if you feel comfortable with these types of activities, you are in a perfect position to enjoy your trip. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office so we can talk through them with you.

- Paddle 1 – 3 hours/day with breaks
- Enjoy a camping lifestyle including getting in/out of camp chairs and tents, squatting for a variety of activities, walking up/down rocky slopes or sandy dunes, some rock-hopping through intertidal zones.
- Getting in/out/off a kayak or paddleboard and help 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.

Air Temperature and Sun Protection



During February, March, and April, daytime air temperatures range from low-70s earlier in the season to the mid-80s later, with light afternoon breezes to sometimes strong northerly winds. Night temperatures can drop to the 50s early season and occasionally into the 40s, requiring warm layers. From mid-March on, layers are often unnecessary in the evenings.

October and November trips are typically warm and comfortable so lighter or fewer layers are sufficient. During the day we erect shade tarps, but light cotton clothing is extremely important as it provides comfort and protection from the strong Baja sun.

December and January trips can be much cooler than one thinks of when they imagine beaches in Mexico, so a warm puffy jacket and fleece pants are a good idea for the evenings and early mornings. Feel free to call or email at any time for more specific advice on layering during the dates for your trip.

Water Temperature and Snorkel Gear

Water temperatures range from 69 degrees earlier in the season to 77 degrees toward the end. Most people feel comfortable snorkeling in full wetsuits earlier in the spring when the water is cooler.

We have light wetsuits consisting of short Farmer Johns (sleeveless, to the knee) plus a wetsuit jacket to wear on top. Some guests may be more comfortable in a full-length 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 ensure a good fit beforehand (our sizes: XS – XXL), we recommend you bring your own.

We 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 should be comfortable throughout the trip. Feel free to adapt according to previous camping and kayaking experiences. The list is devised to ensure you have enough nighttime and morning layers for the earlier/cooler trip dates.

What PADDLING SOUTH Provides:

- All commissary gear: meals, non-alcoholic drinks, etc.
- Sunshade for use during the day and mealtimes.
- Small library bag consisting of books about birds, fish, and natural history books about the area
- Fiberglass doubles and fiberglass/plastic singles, lightweight Werner paddles, PFDs, spray skirts, pumps, paddle floats and paddling jackets.
- 1 or 2-person tents
 - o Sleeping bags are NOT included but can be rented from us for \$30/week
 - o 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 [such as this](#). **We highly recommend you consider bringing something like this down with you for your sleeping comfort.**

- Light wetsuits and snorkeling gear (you can bring your own)
 - We recommend bringing your own full suit for December - early March trips if you run on the cold side

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 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 seasons and still allow room for us in the boats.

Allowable trip gear:

- 1 medium clothing bag (approximately 20x13) or two small bags (10x6.5 each)
- 1 sleeping bag and pad
- 1 daypack
- personal snorkel gear (optional)

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-liter and one 10-liter are ideal (nothing larger than 20 – 30 liter). A small day or belt pack with plastic bag liner will allow you to keep a 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 are best for saltwater camping.

SEE PACKING LIST ON NEXT PAGE >>>>>



PADDLING SOUTH SEA KAYAK TRIP PACKING LIST

Items

with * are not necessary in October or May

IMPORTANT ITEMS

- € Passport
- € Travel card
- € Wallet, cash
- € Insurance card, travelers' insurance information
- € Copy of passport
- € Flight itinerary, confirmation numbers, tickets
- € Names and numbers of hotels and contacts pre/post-trip
- € Cell phone
- € Watch

CLOTHING

- € Capiline or similar synthetic long under, top and bottom (no cotton)
- € 1 waterproof jacket and pants
- € 1 warm layer (fleece or wool sweater or jacket)
- € 1 pair long pants
- € 1 lightweight long-sleeve shirt
- € 2 pair shorts (1 quick-dry)
- € 2 pair socks (1 synthetic or wool*)
- € Underclothes
- € 1 bathing suit
- € 1 wrap-around cloth (sarong) for beachwear
- € Hat with brim
- € Fleece or wool hat and gloves*

FOOTWEAR

- € 1 pair tennis shoes, sport sandals, or dive booties for paddling and loading/unloading kayaks in water
- € 1 pair sturdy walking shoes
 - o Some people are fine with day hikes in walking shoes, but if you are prone to weak ankles or think you'll take long hikes in the beautiful, rugged canyons, a high-topped, lightweight shoe would be a good choice

MISCELLANEOUS

- € Reef-safe sunscreen (15, 20, or 30+ SPF) and lip balm
- € Insect repellent
- € Small container of biodegradable soap (Sea Suds or Camp Suds)



- € Personal medications or prescriptions; motion sickness pills if needed
- € Headlamp (best) or flashlight and spare batteries
- € 1-quart water bottle per person
- € 1 small day pack or belt pack
- € 1 medium towel
- € 1 bandana
- € Sunglasses with retention strap
- € Toothbrush and toothpaste
- € Gloves for paddling
- € Washcloth/face wipes
- € 2 extra compactor bags for waterproofing duffel bags

SNORKELING

- € Mask and fins: PADDLING SOUTH will provide mask, snorkel, and fins, but you may bring your own.
- € Spare face masks

CAMPING EQUIPMENT

- € Sleeping bag with compression sack and trash bag liner. Synthetic fiberfill is best, approximately 35°F
- € Sleeping pad: closed-cell EnsoLite pad is included but we recommend you bring down a more comfortable Therm-a-Rest-type (no plastic air mattresses or non-waterproof foam pads)

OPTIONAL

- € Camp chair (Crazy Creek-type provided)
- € Pocket knife
- € Notebook and pencil
- € Camera and memory cards in a waterproof bag (hard suitcases or Pelican-type cases don't pack well)
- € Binoculars
- € Cards or travel games
- € Small musical instrument
- € Books
- € Fishing gear: saltwater rod and reel, 15-30lb. line, 06 hooks, wire leader, lures (broken back rapala, rebel, Kastmasters, squid...your favorites)
 - o Please inform us if you wish to fish. You will need to purchase a fishing license prior to the trip start. They can be bought at the marina each day at 5:30am.
 - o 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.

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

