Discovering Our Planet Together



Baja California: Among the Great Whales

Explore the Desert & Seas of Baja California & Meet Gray Whales Up Close

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Trip Details:

Days
8 Days / Jan–Mar

Price
From $7250

Physical Requirements
Easy to Moderate

Baja California: Among the Great Whales

Explore the Desert & Seas of Baja California & Meet Gray Whales Up Close

Each winter, gray whales migrate from their Arctic feeding grounds in the Bering Sea to breed and birth their young in the sheltered lagoons of Mexico's Baja Peninsula. The annual journey is the longest mammal migration on Earth, covering more than 10,000 miles roundtrip. In the protected waters of Magdalena Bay, cruise among the whales in expedition rafts, offering the rare privilege of a close-up, water-level perspective—these friendly mammals sometimes approach our boats directly! You'll also enjoy naturalist-guided walks on uninhabited islands, plus swimming, snorkeling and kayaking on the eastern side of the peninsula in the Gulf of California, also called the Sea of Cortez. Based aboard our expedition ship, discover all the natural treasures Baja California is famous for, including whales, dolphins, sea lions, blue-footed boobies and frigatebirds, huge cardon cacti, mangroves and rocky cliffs.

Trip Highlights

Intimate Gray Whale Encounters

Experience magical moments with gray whales—one of the world's largest mammals—and witness the start of the whale calves' life journey

An Immersion in the Marine Life of Baja

Swim, snorkel and embark on Zodiac safaris among uninhabited Sea of Cortez islands as we look for six whale species, bottlenose dolphins, sea lions and more

Explore Diverse Ecosystems on Land & Sea

Discover the varied habitats of Baja—lagoons, desert, dunes and mangroves home to frigatebirds, pelicans, cormorants, herons and endemic black jackrabbits



Baja California: Among the Great Whales Itinerary

Explore the Desert & Seas of Baja California & Meet Gray Whales Up Close

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Loreto
Day 2	Bahia Concepcion
Day 3	Gulf of California
Day 4	Boca de Soledad
Days 5–7	Southern Gulf of California
Day 8	Loreto



Day 1

Loreto

Board your expedition ship in historic Loreto

- Explore Loreto's compact Old Town and the first mission in Baja California, time permitting
- Settle aboard your expedition vessel and sail at sunset

Upon arrival at the airport in Loreto, transfer to the pier to embark the *National Geographic Venture*. Settle into your cabin and head up to the sundeck to admire the views as we prepare to sail at sunset. Should you arrive early, you may wish to explore the compact Old Town on your own. Founded in 1697 by Jesuit missionaries, Loreto's colonial architecture is well preserved, centered on the peaceful town plaza. Loreto is the site of the first mission in Baja California—the Mission of Our Lady of Loreto.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 2

Bahia Concepcion

Explore a wild bay where the desert meets the sea

- Search for whales and other marine life by Zodiac
- Kayak through mangroves and snorkel in clear turquoise water
- Hike among towering cacti with a member of the expedition team

Awake in Bahía Concepcion, one of the largest bays along the Baja Peninsula. More than 50 miles of pristine sandy beaches line the bay in this largely undeveloped region. Take your coffee up to the deck to witness the first of many luminous sunrises, with the dawn's rays turning the arid landscape burnished gold. This whole area is a biodiversity hotspot ripe for exploration. Board Zodiacs in search of whales and other marine life, kayak through lush mangrove systems, and snorkel in pure, clear turquoise waters. On land, join a member of the expedition team for a hike among towering cacti, or stroll the beach as you learn about local ecology with our naturalist guides.

Day 3

Gulf of California

Search the Sea of Cortez for whales, dolphins and rays

- Scan the water for whales, dolphins, sea turtles and rays from the deck
- Explore uninhabited islands by kayak, paddleboard or on foot, conditions permitting
- Refine your images with guidance from a National Geographic-certified photo instructor

The Gulf of California, which divides the east shore of the Baja Peninsula from the Mexico mainland, is also called the Sea of Cortez—so named in 1539 for the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez who explored it earlier that century. This narrow body of water holds tremendous biological diversity where temperate and tropical waters meet, nurturing an abundance of marine life. Jacques Cousteau called it the "world's aquarium," home to many species of whales, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, rays and fish, and sea lions. From the deck, we keep our eyes peeled for sightings. Our ship's course is flexible as we explore some of the uninhabited islands that dot these waters. Our Captain and Expedition Leader collaborate to choose the perfect combination of destinations and activities for the day. Conditions permitting, you may have the chance to hike, kayak or paddleboard. Learn about this rich ecosystem from our naturalist staff, and capture memorable photos with help from our National Geograhic-certified photo instructor.

Day 4

Boca de Soledad

Watch gray whale mothers and calves in a sheltered lagoon

- Explore Boca de Soledad by Zodiac with local fishermen who have guided visitors here for decades
- Look for mother-calf pairs at the end of the gray whales' long migration from Arctic waters
- Watch for frigatebirds, pelicans, cormorants, terns and great blue herons around Magdalena Bay

After breakfast, transfer by motorcoach from Puerto Escondido to Puerto Lopez Mateos on Baja's Pacific coast. From here we'll explore the tranquil waters of Boca de Soledad on the northern end of Magdalena Bay, a warm lagoon where gray whales give birth and nurture their young. Each winter, these massive whales make the world's longest mammal migration, swimming south from their Arctic feeding grounds off Alaska to breed and birth their calves in these sheltered waters. Accompanied by local fishermen who have taken guests to see the whales for decades and are integral to their conservation, we head out in Zodiacs to view numerous mother-calf pairs. With luck, we'll enjoy close-up interactions with these curious, gentle cetaceans. Birdwatching can be excellent here too, with magnificent frigatebirds, pelicans, cormorants, terns and great blue herons among the species we frequently see. We'll eat lunch at a traditional restaurant before returning to the ship by late afternoon.

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Days 5–7

Southern Gulf of California

Explore protected islands and reefs in the southern Sea of Cortez

- Snorkel with curious sea lions at Los Islotes
- Explore Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park and North America's only hard coral reef
- Hike a cactus-filled arroyo or visit abandoned salt works on Isla San Jose

Our ship continues south down the Baja Peninsula's east coast, bringing us into a realm of enticing islands and surrounding waters renowned for their prolific marine life, conservation achievements and exciting adventure opportunities. Some of the locations we may explore include:

Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park
In the East Cape region of Baja California Sur, snorkel the pristine reefs of Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park, one of the most successful national marine parks in the world. Surrounded by uninhabited desert and rugged mountains, Cabo Pulmo has successfully preserved pristine beaches along a shallow bay with the only hard coral reef in North America. The reef is approximately 20,000 years old, among the oldest in the American Pacific. Fishing is restricted, and the marine life in these waters is prolific. Chat with devoted locals whose advocacy drove the effort to persuade the Mexican government to protect this pristine place, including halting fishing to save the reef.

Isla Espiritu Santo
A national park as well as part of the UNESCO Espiritu Santo Biosphere Reserve, with volcanic rock formations, scenic beaches and coral reefs, this enticing island offers excellent hiking opportunities and crystal-clear waters for snorkeling. It's also an important location for researchers monitoring sea turtles.

Los Islotes
Located at the northern end of the Biosphere Reserve, where deeply indented shorelines meet dramatically eroded cliff faces, Los Islotes are some of the most beautiful islands in the Sea of Cortez. Anchoring off the coast, we swim and snorkel here, with equipment and instruction provided by the ship's expedition staff. A large colony of resident sea lions is at home here, and these curious creatures often swim right up to us, eager to play. You may wish to observe the islands' rich geological history from a kayak, observing massive amounts of compacted volcanic ash covered with solidified lava floods, just yards from the shore. Seabirds abound, and brown pelicans, yellow-footed gulls and blue-footed boobies dot the landscape, nesting on the rugged cliffs.

Isla San Jose
One of the larger islands in the Gulf of California, 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 a cactus-laden arroyo, or visit the abandoned salt works on the west side, keeping an eye out for rare wildlife as you go.

Day 8

Loreto

Disembark in Loreto for homeward flights or an extension

- Transfer to the airport or continue to Loreto's city center for a two-night history and whale-watching extension

After breakfast, disembark the ship and transfer to the Loreto airport for flights home or to the city center to begin a two-night history and whale-watching extension, opens in new tab.

Note: *This itinerary should serve as a guideline only; the actual stops are determined by weather, wildlife activity, and a host of factors in order to provide the best possible experience. This flexibility is what makes traveling on our nimble expedition ships so much more rewarding than on a large vessel with a locked-in voyage plan.*

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Baja California: Among the Great Whales Accommodations

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National Geographic Venture

Built in 2017, this sister ship to *Quest* incorporates state-of-the-art features and technology including a panoramic windows and an open bow for wildlife watching, and ample expedition tools.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/adventure-cruises/among-great-whales/ships.

Sail with the World Leader in Conservation-Focused Small Ship Cruising

Baja California: Among the Great Whales

We're proud to offer a worldwide slate of Expedition Cruises through our partner, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions. Nat Hab joined forces with National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions in 2016 to expand our mutual collection of nature adventures. Founded in 1958 by Lars-Eric Lindblad, the company pioneered eco-conscious expeditions for "citizen explorers" and today is the world leader in conservation-focused small-ship cruises. Our Adventure Specialists are intimately familiar with the ships and itineraries and are on call to answer any questions you might have.

1 **Travel with a Top Naturalist Expedition Team**

Gain a deep understanding of the natural history of Baja as you sail with a veteran expedition team. Each sailing includes an Expedition Leader and a team of naturalists, plus an undersea specialist, a National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions certified photo instructor, and a wellness specialist. Our Baja naturalists represent a diversity of specialties, including marine biology, evolutionary biology, ornithology and more. As you choose your daily activities, flexibility lets you gravitate to the naturalists whose interests mirror your own.

2 **Gain Unmatched Access to Whales**

Enjoy the rare privilege of entering the Pacific gray whale birthing lagoons for close encounters with these gentle giants. National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions is the only non-local company allowed to bring its own expedition landing craft into this area of Magdalena Bay. This is also the only itinerary that explores both the lagoons on the Pacific Ocean side plus the Sea of Cortez on the same voyage, offering more chances for whale sightings. While gray whales offer the most consistent interactions, the Sea of Cortez is home to a great variety of whales and dolphins: pods of hundreds of common and bottlenose dolphins; orcas and false killer whales; blue, fin, Bryde's, humpback, pilot and sperm whales; and more.

3 **Explore in Depth via Excursion Craft & Specialized Equipment**

The ship's fleet of tandem and single kayaks facilitates intimate water-level exploration of scenic coastlines with close proximity to nesting birds. Complete snorkel gear, including wetsuits, is at your disposal so you can swim with sea lions and schools of colorful reef fish. If you prefer to stay dry, observe the underwater world of the Sea of Cortez via HD video shot by our undersea specialist who shares footage from each day's dives on the plasma screens in the ship's lounge. Listen to whale communications via hydrophone, and observe the whales underwater in real time via a bow-mounted camera that sends a live feed to the onboard screens. Via expedition landing craft, explore with a naturalist's expert narration, and get great photos from this platform with tips from a National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions certified photo instructor.

4 **Be a Part of Citizen Science**

Witness research on board our ship that's supported by National Geographic. Watch our crew lower scientific instruments that measure various levels in the Sea of Cortez, with the goal of revealing changes in an ecologically important zone.

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5 **Help Support Local Communities**

In 2004, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions founded the Gulf of California Conservation Fund in partnership with the Mexican Nature Conservation Fund to raise funds for conservation projects. National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions's contributions support a range of programs in Baja's local towns, from promoting lower-impact fishing to seabird research, marine conservation, sustainable tourism and social marketing for sustainable seafood.

6 **Flexibility Keeps You Closer to Wildlife**

Flexibility is a hallmark of our expeditions, and our small ship is what makes that possible. Expedition landing craft get you close to whales and follow the shoreline for close-up photos of plunge-diving pelicans and blue-footed boobies. And the captain will change course to keep the ship among a pod of dolphins. A less-scripted voyage means more spontaneity to follow the wildlife.

7 **We're Committed to the Planet**

Natural Habitat Adventures is a standard-setter in eco-conscious travel. We have been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007. And we continue to break innovative ground in adopting practices that help to protect our global environment. Because of our concern for the environment, we are pleased to partner with National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions for our Expedition Cruises, a company that shares our values and commitment to the planet.

8 **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our environmental commitment and the outstanding quality of our adventures, World Wildlife Fund has chosen Natural Habitat Adventures as its worldwide travel partner, a designation we're very proud of! When you book your National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions cruise with us, a portion of your trip fee supports WWF.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $7250

Group Size
Limited to 100 Travelers

Physical Requirements
Easy to Moderate

Baja California: Among the Great Whales Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jan 9 - Jan 16, 2027	From $9500	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Jan 16 - Jan 23, 2027	From $9500	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Jan 23 - Jan 30, 2027	From $12000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Jan 30 - Feb 6, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 6 - Feb 13, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 13 - Feb 20, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 20 - Feb 27, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 27 - Mar 6, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Mar 6 - Mar 13, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Mar 13 - Mar 20, 2027	From $12250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Mar 20 - Mar 27, 2027	From $9500	Aboard National Geographic Venture

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jan 15 - Jan 22, 2028	From $8000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Jan 22 - Jan 29, 2028	From $8000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Jan 29 - Feb 5, 2028	From $9000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 5 - Feb 12, 2028	From $8000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 12 - Feb 19, 2028	From $11500	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 19 - Feb 26, 2028	From $11500	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Feb 26 - Mar 4, 2028	From $10250	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Mar 4 - Mar 11, 2028	From $10000	Aboard National Geographic Venture
Mar 11 - Mar 18, 2028	From $9750	Aboard National Geographic Venture

2029 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jan 12 - Jan 19, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Jan 19 - Jan 26, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Jan 26 - Feb 2, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Feb 2 - Feb 9, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Feb 9 - Feb 16, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Feb 16 - Feb 23, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Feb 23 - Mar 2, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Mar 2 - Mar 9, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Mar 9 - Mar 16, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest
Mar 16 - Mar 23, 2029	From $7250	Aboard National Geographic Quest

See https://www.nathab.com/adventure-cruises/among-great-whales/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations; meals indicated; excursions; services of National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions Leader; naturalist staff and expert guides; use of kayaks; snorkel gear; all port charges and service taxes.

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Not Included

Air transportation; voyage DVD; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, emails, etc.; discretionary tips to ship's crew; optional travel and/or medical evacuation insurance.

Recommended Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we strongly recommend that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. While this is not required, we make this strong suggestion in the interest of our guests' safety. We recommend that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Physical Requirements

Easy to Moderate

This adventure does not require a high degree of physical fitness. You must be able to walk up and down stairs, wade through shallow water to step in and out of the excursion skiffs, and sit on bench seats for long periods of time while whale watching. Depending on weather and sea conditions, boat excursions to the whales can be rough, bumpy and wet. Winds may be strong, water may spray into the boat, and temperatures may be cold. Optional hikes will also be available, and in order to participate, you should be able to walk unassisted on uneven terrain for at least one mile. All activities are completely optional, and travelers should only participate in those activities with which they feel comfortable.

Getting There & Getting Home

You will need to fly in and out of Loreto, Mexico.

We can best serve you by having National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions' air department book your flights, since National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions is most familiar with the special requirements of each trip. Please call National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions directly at 800-397-3348. Note that while National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions' air department will offer you its best available rates on airfare, you may find special web rates or better fares online.

Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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