



**Know Before You Go**



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November 13, 2024 - 2025 Season

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# **BAJA ULTIMATE WHALES**

The Most Majestic Whales on the Planet

# Typical Itinerary\*

## 8 Days / 7 Nights Trip

Welcome to Baja! We are excited to have you join us. We encourage you to fly in early and enhance your vacation with additional adventures. There is so much to do from hotel stay to adventures out of La Paz, sea kayaking, scuba diving, complimentary whale watching, guided overlanding and sailing. SJD Los Cabos is the best gateway airport and it's important to fly in at least one day early. Our concierges will be on standby to assist with transfers and hotel stay.

Please note: You can avoid our check-in procedures simply by using the convenient online pre-trip information link before you leave home. If it's easier, give us a call or email and we will help fill in the required information and any special requests. Or if you prefer to check-in, please be sure to come by SeeCreatures the day before your transfer to La Paz.

*\*Itinerary is subject to the vagaries of big animals, weather and mother ocean!*

### Day 1 - Cabo San Lucas & Ocean Safari

We invite you to join a photo and video workshop at 9:30 AM. Then, head out mid-day for humpback whale watching adventure off the southern tip of Baja before late afternoon transfer to La Paz for hotel stay (included) and dinner.

### Day 2 - La Paz

Today begins with an early breakfast, and weather permitting, we will head out to swim with whale sharks. We will head up to Espiritu Santo for lunch, and spend the afternoon relaxing on the beach in this UNESCO World Heritage Park, swim with sea lions or go for a hike. In the late afternoon, we will board our 116-ft expedition yacht for cocktail hour, sunset, dinner, and sail north towards Loreto to search for mama and baby blue whales.

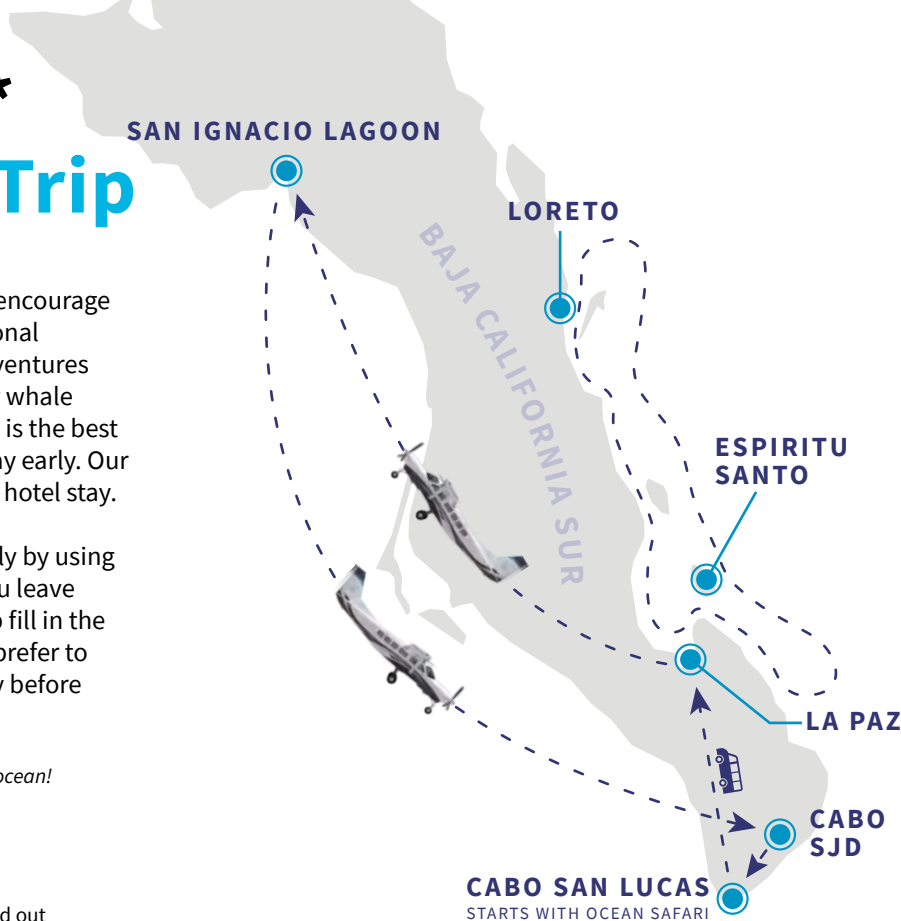
### Days 3-4 - At Sea in the Sea of Cortez

The exact itinerary will depend on the weather, but our primary objective is to take you out to observe mama and baby blue whales. They are in the area south of the rattle for several months every winter, and it is an awe-inspiring experience when these largest of all whales choose to approach our skiffs for an encounter. Over the next couple of days, we will also keep an eye out for large pods of dolphins, finback whales, mobula rays, and whatever other whales might be in the area which might include orcas, sperm whales, false killer whales, and more. The Sea of Cortez is teeming with animals at this time of year, and our crew will be vigilant in maximizing your experience. As well as, beach excursions, hiking opportunities, kayaking, and generally having a really great time.

### Day 5 - La Paz and Fly to Camp

Today starts with breakfast and disembarking your expedition yacht in La Paz. After disembarking, we will provide a transfer directly to the La Paz airport for a one hour and 40-minute flight directly to the airstrip at San Ignacio lagoon.

Upon arrival at camp, our staff will meet you at the airstrip with welcoming smiles, glasses of champagne and hot apple cider, and we will travel to camp for brunch with a welcome aboard briefing. After lunch, you will have the option of two whale watching encounters or simply enjoy camp. We invite you to relax and join us for cocktail hour, and watch the sunset around one of our fire pits. Enjoy dinner and a presentation by one of the naturalists in the dining tent along with the rest of the guests at camp.



### Days 6-7 - San Ignacio Gray Whales

All operators in the lagoon work together to maximize guest experience while ensuring no negative impact on the whales. For this reason, all whale encounters are in a small defined area of the lagoon with pangas taking turns entering the restricted area for a maximum of 90 minutes. The timing on this is worked out between the operators which means that we abide by scheduled departure times. For this reason, unfortunately, we can't just send a panga out to go whale watching whenever our guests want.

Option 1: 7 am breakfast after watching the sunrise over the sierras and then head out at 7:45 am for several whale watching encounters.

Option 2: Sleep in and relax. Breakfast when you are ready. 1 late morning whale watching encounter. Our camp manager can confirm the timing.

After lunch, enjoy another whale watching encounter in the afternoon. Or as long as the weather cooperates, enjoy kayaking or paddleboarding the mangroves across the lagoon or a leisurely walk, mountain biking, hiking, and bird watching with one of our naturalists or just kicking back, and relaxing. Cocktail hour, sunset viewing, making new friends around one of our fire pits, pickle ball or a game of billiards and an evening presentation by a naturalist are all fine ways to finish off your day in camp.

### Day 8 - Last Day

Early breakfast. One more whale watching encounter (always weather dependent) and then the beautiful flight back to SJD Los Cabos. Arriving 12:30 pm. If you are flying home this day, we recommend not booking a flight departure before 2:45 pm. Otherwise transfer back to SeeCreatures Cabo and more adventure!

## TRAVEL DETAILS

### What airport do I fly into?

SJD.

### When should I fly in?

At least one day early. Of course, this is Cabo in peak winter season and we encourage you to fly in well before that and enjoy Los Cabos and La Paz and the Sea of Cortez. There is so much to do and our concierges are on standby to help you with questions, recommendations and arrangements. Please note that there is a complimentary photo workshop at 9:30 AM in the morning the day before being transferred to La Paz as well as a 11 AM ocean safari with humpback whale watching.

### Why do your trips leave out of SJD?

Because the shortest flight to the Lagoon is from SJD which is super easy to get to with service from 15 different US cities, most of Mexico and even direct flights from overseas. Because Cabo San Lucas in the winter and spring is a really fun place to visit!! Because you won't have any border crossing hassles. And because we offer all sorts of other activities from our Cabo San Lucas base including swimming with whale sharks and other adventures in the Sea of Cortez, scuba diving including our Socorro giant manta liveboard trips, photography workshops and much more.

### What kind of airplane is used for flights to the lagoon?

Late model Cessna 208B Grand Caravan. These are 13 passenger airplanes with a jetprop engines, air con, leather seats, good soundproofing and a large cargo pod.



### Is there a baggage allowance on the airplane?

Yes, 22 pounds (10kg) per person. We ask that you please use soft-sided bags. We understand that you'll likely be travelling with more luggage on this trip. Our recommendation is to pack a smaller kit to take with you to the lagoon and leave your larger luggage with us for safekeeping in La Paz. We will move your luggage back to Cabo San Lucas to meet your return flight.

### What time does the flight arrive back in SJD?

Normally 12:30 pm. It's easy to fly home that same afternoon but we recommend booking your flight for 2:45 pm or later. It's our pleasure to transfer guests from the FBO private terminal directly over to terminal one or two at the airport when the flight gets in.

### How do I get from SJD into town?

Sealine Cabo Transfers is our recommended provider of airport transfers to and from Cabo San Lucas. For booking, please email Martin at [mmoreno@sealinecabotransfers.com](mailto:mmoreno@sealinecabotransfers.com)

We also recommend Miguel from Fara Nuevo as an alternative option.

**Email:** [mfc949@gmail.com](mailto:mfc949@gmail.com)

**Phone:** +52 (624) 141 6254

### When is the best time to visit?

We only operate in peak season when there are good numbers of interactive and friendly whales. January to April.

### Do you have hotel recommendations in Cabo San Lucas?

Yes, you have a number of options

We recommend the Casa Bella boutique hotel conveniently located next door to SeeCreatures Cabo. The property is beautiful. It's like an old Spanish hacienda that opens up to a beautiful interior courtyard. Please note that it is located in downtown Cabo which means that it's not perfectly quiet at night.

To book Casa Bella Hotel

<https://www.casabellahotel.com/>

[info@casabellahotel.com](mailto:info@casabellahotel.com)

+52 624-143-6400

We have a constantly evolving list of other approved hotels ranging from 3 to 5-star that we can recommend or book on your behalf. Sometimes it's cheaper to book directly online, but sometimes our contract rates are a better deal. It's always your choice. Please contact our concierges for more info.

### Where do we meet?

We request that you meet us at SeeCreatures Cabo San Lucas for the optional and complementary 9:30 AM photo seminar, or for the 11:00 AM departure for the humpback whale watching adventure.

### What will the weather be like?

It will likely be nice hot weather in Cabo San Lucas with temperatures in the low 80s°F during the day and generally sunny. La Paz and the Sea of Cortez will be a little bit cooler and there's often a gentle breeze. Rain is very unlikely. San Ignacio Lagoon is in the desert, which means it can be cold at night, dropping to low 40s°F. Low temperatures in the morning and then the clouds burn off by early afternoon, making it warmer. Some days are calm, while some days can be quite windy. We are very lucky to have our camp on the north side of the lagoon, where there's more protection from the elements than the camps on the south shore.

### Can you accommodate special dietary requirements?

Yes, with at least 30 days advance notice, we will be happy to accommodate your dietary needs, whether vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant, gluten-free or halal/kosher quasi-vegetarian.

### What's included with my trip?

Transportation from our recommended hotels or SeeCreatures to the private terminal, whale watching, accommodation, all activities, all meals and snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages.

### What is NOT included in my trip?

Park and airport landing fees totalling \$35 USD per person, alcoholic beverages, single occupancy (if available, surcharge applicable), internet access (\$50 USD per device), and if you think the service is deserving, crew gratuities - typically between USD\$350-450 per person. Please note that the panga captains are independent service providers from the local village and it would be appropriate to tip them directly if the service is deserving.

## ABOUT WHALES

### Will I see gray whales on this trip?

Yes! There are lots of whales in the lagoon and typically 300 to 400 are friendly and interactive with humans. Gray whales first arrive in the lagoon in December and are present through May. There is seasonality to the sightings. More mating activity happens at the beginning of the season and this is when we see newborn calves. The mamas and calves stay in the lagoon until the babies are big enough to safely make the 3000-mile northward trek to BC and Alaska. Towards the end of the season, the calves can be especially friendly.

### Why are we trying to touch the whales? Is this bad for them?

Encounters and interactions with them are entirely on the whales' terms. We only interact with the whales in a small designated area and are very careful to stay away from them in the rest of the lagoon. The whales who are interested in humans literally swim over to this area and approach the pangas. The encounters are not forced in any way. The local captains are very careful not to approach or harass the gray whales. One of the extraordinary things about this interaction is that the whales only approach humans in Baja lagoons. During the rest of the year they are quite shy and reclusive and maintain the normal distance that you would expect between whales and nearby boats.

Interesting to note that gray whales were known as "devil fish" because during the terrible days of industrial whaling, harpooned gray whales would turn around and attack the whalers. Sometimes managing to sink the whaling boats and kill the whalers. All of that changed in 1972 when whaling was outlawed virtually everywhere in the world, and a local fisherman named Pachico felt an irresistible urge to reach out and touch a whale that presented itself beside his boat. We suspect that both Pachico and the whale were astonished by the interaction. Within a year, four whales and a handful of fishermen were interacting with each other. The behaviour we are so lucky to enjoy now grew from those first encounters.

### How much whale watching is included in my trip?

A lot! We'll be spending half a day looking for humpback whales off Cabo San Lucas. We will spend two full days between La Paz and Loreto searching for blue whale mamas and calves. Plus, we will look for other whales that may be in the area, which may well include humpbacks, large pods of dolphins, finback whales, and if you're lucky, orcas, sperm whales or false killer whales.

At the lagoon, you can typically expect three whale watching encounters on each day. There will be the opportunity for two morning sessions and an afternoon session on day 6 and 7, and two sessions on day eight. Not all guests choose to do this much whale watching, it's entirely your option. It is important to know that it can be windy sometimes in the lagoon, which might limit the number of whale encounters that day. Rest assured that we will always do our very best for you.

It is important to note that the whale watching takes place entirely in one designated area with a maximum of 16 boats at one time. That means when the lagoon is at its busiest, each panga can stay in the reserve for 90 minutes maximum, and then needs to exit to allow another panga to enter.

### What kind of boats do you use for whale watching?

Whale watching excursions take place on "panga" boats typically 24 - 28-ft in length. While these boats can easily accommodate up to 12 guests, we do our best to run with just 6 to 7 guests plus a captain and a naturalist whenever possible. Please note that operational realities in the lagoon may mean that sometimes we have to run with more guests in the pangas. The operation of these boats is a joint venture with the local captains and fishermen which we see as eco-tourism at its finest. Some of our pangas are brand new, purchased by BajaEx, and leased back to local captains for one dollar per year to help them maximize their earnings with the nicest possible boats.

Pangas are widely used throughout Baja and known for their sea kindness and efficiency coupled with a good amount of speed. Interestingly, the design dates back to a 1970s project and joint venture between Yamaha outboards and the world bank. The design brief was to build a fast and efficient boat for the local fishermen. The name "panga" evolves from the panga fish that the boats were originally designed to fish for.

### My mobility is somewhat impaired. Will I have any trouble boarding the pangas?

No, we have wooden boarding ramps with handrails on both sides of the ramp which make the pangas quite accessible

### I have a bad back. Is this a problem?

No. Just please let us know ahead of time. We have a limited number of comfortable special chairs that we can rig up in your panga.

## WHAT TO BRING

### What should I pack?

Be sure to bring swim wear as you will have opportunities to get in the waters of the Sea of Cortez. We will have wetsuits ready for you onboard the ship.

We strongly recommend bringing layered clothing to San Ignacio Lagoon. It's not uncommon to be wearing a shirt, several sweaters and a windbreaker at 7am and then just a t-shirt by noon. Rain is very uncommon in this area, with the exception of one or two Pacific clouds that pass through every season. Rubber boots are an excellent idea. We have loaner boots and jackets available for everybody.

Comfortable clothes for camp: cotton T-shirts, long sleeve shirts, warm sweaters, shorts and pants, windbreaker, many people bring waterproof pants, a warm jacket, warm sleepwear, lots of extra warm socks, tennis or hiking shoes, water friendly sandals, dry bag, flashlight, sun hat, sea safe sunblock, personal medications, and a camera with loads of SD cards.

### Can I bring my own beer, wine or alcohol?

Sorry, no. For liability reasons, we are not able to allow any outside alcohol into camp. We stock one heck of a bar with a great selection of craft beer, wine, single malt scotch, fine vodkas and much more all at very reasonable prices. We know that you're on vacation. We want you to have a great time and that includes a great selection of drinks at lowest possible pricing.

### Do I need to bring my passport?

Entry into Mexico requires a passport that still has six months of validity

### Do I need a visa?

Mexico requires visas from a certain but small number of countries. Please double check your specific requirements online or contact us for assistance.

### Do I need medical evacuation insurance?

Yes. Because of the remote location of the camp, medical evacuation insurance is required for all guests. We can assist with a purchase of this insurance and it's very affordable. [Click here.](#)

### Should I buy travel interruption insurance?

Yes, highly recommended. We have seen too many guests with a cancelled or delayed flight or problems at work or some other reason for a trip being delayed or cancelled.

## CAMP DETAILS

### What are the tents like?

The short answer is pretty darn luxurious! Our luxury tents are considerably larger with adjustable twin beds or one king bed. As well as a sitting area with couches and chairs, a dresser, and a larger ensuite bathroom and shower even including twin vanities. 24-hour AC power. Lights. Heat. Hot and cold running water. Internet access. And of course, a chandelier over the bed.

We also have a limited number of family tents which are the same size as the luxury tents, except the sitting area is replaced with extra beds for kids and teens.

Double-size tents are used for the different dining areas and bar.

### Is there Internet access in camp?

WiFi is available for your convenience. Starting in 2025, there will be a charge of \$50 per device per trip. We use Starlink Internet and ask everyone to please be considerate of how much data you use so that everyone has reasonable access.

### Is there a 24 hour power in our tent?

Yes!

### How often can I shower?

Every tent has a full ensuite with hot and cold running water. There is ample water in camp for everyone to take a hot shower every day. But we do ask you to limit it to one shower because water is a very precious commodity in the desert.

### Is there anything to do in camp other than whale watching?

Yes! Of course! Our camp is located beachfront right on the lagoon in the Vizcaino desert and biosphere reserve. It's a gorgeous setting. Watching the sun come up over the Sierras, the mountains, in the morning is stunning. Watching the sunset over the desert at the end of the day is good for the soul and very beautiful. The desert is a quiet and still place but there is lots to do from kayaking, paddle boarding, star gazing under the spectacular Mexican night sky to the billiards table and volleyball court that we set up in camp.

### Will it be quiet in camp or will a generator be droning away?

Our eco-experience camp is silent but don't be fooled! We have 24-hour AC power.

### Are kids and teens welcome in camp?

Yes! One of our luxury camps and our salty dog bar is reserved for adults only. Kids and teens are welcome everywhere else. We do have special family tents with convertible futons in lieu of a sitting area.

### Are mosquitoes and bugs a problem?

Spiders, black widows, and scorpions can be found in the area. If you are allergic to any of these, please bring your epipen. While they aren't typically a problem, it's a good idea to keep your tent zipped up at all times—to keep out both critters and coyotes!

### What happens in the case of an emergency?

Our camp operates with the same emergency preparedness and protocols as our ocean-going liveaboard ships. You can be sure that our camp will be stocked with an AED, emergency oxygen and extensive first-aid equipment and that we have trained "first responders" on site. In the very unlikely event of a medical emergency, medevac flights are available to an acute care hospital in Cabo.

## MORE ADVENTURE

### What can I do in Cabo San Lucas before or after my visit to the Lagoon?

Plenty!!! Take a day trip to the Sea of Cortez with us and spend a day kayaking around the Unesco World Heritage site, Isla Espiritu Santo, or a day at Balandra Beach or a couple of days in our eco-experience camp. For divers, we have daily departures for 2 and 3 tankers out of cabo, day trips to Cabo Pulmo and for more experienced divers, the sea mounts at Gordo Banks. For non-divers, ask about our Discover Scuba intro. Of course, the ultimate activity is to charter our 45-ft luxury sailing catamaran in the Sea of Cortez or join one of our liveaboard trips.

### Can I make this a longer trip? What activities are available if I fly in early?

We have loads of different activities on offer as pre-and post trip extensions. Day trips that might include an Introduction to Scuba, snorkelling with whale sharks, kayaking adventures, lots of different options for certified scuba divers, Mobula and Orca Ocean Safaris, multi-day sailing, or eco-experience camp, and to our extremely popular expeditions to Socorro Island.



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# Pre-Trip Extensions & Adventures



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Pre-trip extensions. Come and take advantage of us! Whether it's a day of diving or a four day mobula rays & ocean safari adventure before you board a trip to Socorro. We do it all, from Cabo Pulmo or La Paz excursions to our new 48-ft fast boats to the Mexico sardine run.

Loads of options, [click here for details!](#)



## **PASSENGER GUEST WAIVER, RELEASE AND INDEMNITY (the "Waiver")**

In consideration of you allowing me to participate in your camping and/or whale watching and/or excursion (the "Excursion"):

I voluntarily waive, release and forever discharge NAUTILUS DIVE ADVENTURES AND/OR all its related entities: ICARUS AVIATION LTD also doing business as "Lever Diving" AND/OR NAUTILUS EXPLORER MEXICO, S. DE R.L DE C.V. AND/OR BAJA EXPEDITIONS AND/OR BSK, S.A. DE C.V. AND/OR SEECREATURES AND/OR CABO DIVE CENTRE, S. DE R.L. DE C.V (collectively the "Company") and its employees, directors, officers, agents and contractors (collectively the "Operators") from any and all liability, including but not limited to liability arising from the negligence (including gross negligence) or fault of the Operators or any of them for personal injury or death, property loss or damage or any other claims of any kind which may occur to me during or in connection with the Excursion and/or the use or misuse of any equipment, vessels or vehicles.

I agree that all agreements made between the Operators and myself (including this Waiver) shall be governed by the laws of Mexico and the courts of Mexico City, shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any matter relating to the said agreements or this Waiver.

I agree that this Waiver shall be binding upon my heirs, executors, administrators, successors, assigns and my estate and I agree that in the event that a claim is made against the Operators or any one of them in respect of any cause of action relating to me, I will indemnify the Operator(s) for their losses, damage and expenses arising from such claim.

I confirm that I have both read and fully understood the description of the risks involved in participating in the Excursion as set forth in the Company's disclosure information entitled "DIVING EXCURSION RISKS" published on the Company web site (<https://nautilusliveboards.com/diving-excursion-risks/>) and in the pre-trip information package provided to me.

I also confirm that I:

- (a) am physically fit; without any health related reasons that would otherwise preclude my;
- (b) have had sufficient instruction, preparation and/or training for; and
- (c) have not been advised by any medical professional to avoid participation in the Excursion.

Finally, I confirm that I read and fully understood this Waiver before signing and, that I had the opportunity to do so before making any commitment of whatsoever kind or nature to the Company.

**Please note that you will be required to sign this waiver form upon the arrival at the hospitality suite.**

# Our Responsibilities, Your Responsibilities

## Our Responsibilities

- To ensure your safety.
- To give you the best possible experience.
- To treat you with respect and consideration and to provide excellence in service.
- To be responsive to special requests and needs.
- To plan each trip with respect to weather, sea conditions and animal behavior in order to maximize your experience.

## Your Responsibilities

### 1. Animals

We love Mother Ocean! Unfortunately, sometimes guests will demonstrate unsafe or irresponsible behavior towards animals that impedes other guests' experiences and/or may cause harm to the animals. It is your responsibility to follow the staff's directions and recommendations with respect to interaction with the animals. In the unlikely event that an individual is impeding other guests and/or causing harm to the animals, the camp manager/ship captain will speak to that person and give them a formal warning. If the guest continues the same behavior, the camp manager/ship captain has the authority to hold that guest off the water for the remainder of the trip.

### 2. Alcohol

With over 30 years of operational experience, we have learned the safest alcohol policy is to restrict guests from bringing their own alcohol to the campsite and ship. We provide a wide selection of beer, wine and alcohol at our bar at reasonable prices. We are also happy to hold your duty-free purchases or local purchases of alcohol in bond with your luggage in Cabo San Lucas until the end of your trip.

### 3. Government Rules

You must comply with all Mexican government rules and regulations. Please note that government regulations and laws may change without notice. Our contract with you is subject to "force majeure" without compensation.

### 4. Marijuana

Marijuana is illegal in Mexico including medicinal prescription marijuana. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding guests bringing marijuana to our camp and ship.

### 5. Illegal Substances

We maintain a zero tolerance for illegal narcotics or substances. We're required under Mexican law to report any problems to the Mexican Federal Police.

### 6. Staff

Treating our staff with courtesy and respect.

### 7. Getting Sick

We sincerely hope that you stay healthy and don't get sick during your trip. Please let the crew know if you are not feeling well so that we can give you extra love and attention and also do our best to prevent anyone else in the camp and ship from getting sick.





# Mexico Customs and Cameras

We have received reports of isolated incidents in which Mexican Customs (Aduanes) has charged taxes cameras and housings being brought into the country by divers. While this is a violation of both Mexican and international law, local officials have continued with this illegal behaviour. We are fighting it in every way that we can with the help of our lawyers and the tourism boards.

In the meantime, the easiest way to avoid problems with customs is to pack cameras and equipment in regular looking suitcases. NOT in pelican cases. No dive stickers. No destination stickers. Just plain old carry-in suitcases. Mexican customs seems to focus on luggage that looks like it contains dive or photography gear.

We are very sorry for this hassle. It's not fair. We sincerely hope that things will revert back to normal with the newly elected government in 2024.

## Other steps that you can take in case your luggage is identified as dive gear

1. Carry invoices for the used depreciated value of your camera and housing. The lower the dollar amount, the less illegal duty you will be assessed.
2. If you do get assessed duty, make contemporaneous notes. Including the identification of the customs officer. They likely won't let you take their photo but they do have to show their badge number. Be sure you note the time, place, badge number and the amount you were assessed.
3. Use your credit card to pay any duties or taxes. That way you can dispute the charge with your credit company. This is where your contemporaneous notes will be very valuable.
4. Please let our concierges know what happened. We will fight hard on your behalf.