



SPIRIT
OF THE WEST
ADVENTURES

KAYAK ISLA ESPIRITU SANTO TOUR GUEST HANDBOOK

9 DAY / 8 NIGHT SEA KAYAK EXPEDITION



TOUR OVERVIEW

This expedition-style kayaking adventure takes you to Isla Espiritu Santo, the crown jewel of the Gulf of California Islands Flora and Fauna Protected Area. Established in 1978, this spectacular 48,000-hectare marine national park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2007 due to its ecological and scenic significance. Explore the stunning coastline from the unique vantage point of a kayak. You will travel between several stunning campsites while our dedicated support vessel handles the logistics. This allows us to set up a comfortable camp, keep your drinks ice-cold, and have a private chef prepare delicious meals throughout the trip so you can focus entirely on the adventure. Beyond paddling, your days will be filled with a variety of ways to experience the magic of Baja, Mexico including, snorkelling, hiking, bird watching, and immersion into the breathtaking natural beauty of Baja.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE	Sea kayak expedition & comfortable beach camping (boat-supported camp-to-camp style)
LENGTH	9 days and 8 nights
GROUP SIZE	Maximum 16 guests
ACTIVITY LEVEL	Easy to moderate (depends on the winds), suitable for most paddlers with some kayaking experience, through experienced kayakers
HIGHLIGHTS	Paddling along the towering cliffs of Espiritu Santo National Park, wildlife, warm water snorkelling, beachcombing, and fresh local food
WILDLIFE	Opportunities to see sea lions, stingrays, sea turtles, reef fish and more
INCLUDES	Group airport transfers, hotel accommodation for the first and last nights, camping-based accommodation for other nights, kayaking & safety equipment, camping equipment, qualified and personable guides, delicious food, alcoholic drinks at happy hour, and served with dinner as outlined in the itinerary
NOT INCLUDED	Items of a personal nature, insurance, gratuities, transportation outside of group transfer times



TRAVEL DETAILS

MEETING LOCATIONS

Day One: between 12-2 pm at San Jose Del Cabo Airport (SJD), outside the glass doors at transportation umbrella no. 10 (look for a sign with Spirit of the West on it). If you choose your own transportation, please let us know so we aren't waiting for you.

If you find your own way to La Paz, please meet in the hotel lobby at 5 pm for your welcome dinner and orientation.

GETTING TO AND FROM BAJA MEXICO

For this trip, you need to get to San Jose Del Cabo (there are several towns with similar names in Mexico - the airport code you are looking for is SJD). Please plan flights that arrive between 12-2 pm on day one of the tour and depart after 1 pm on the last day if you are planning on using our group shuttle service (which is included in the tour price).

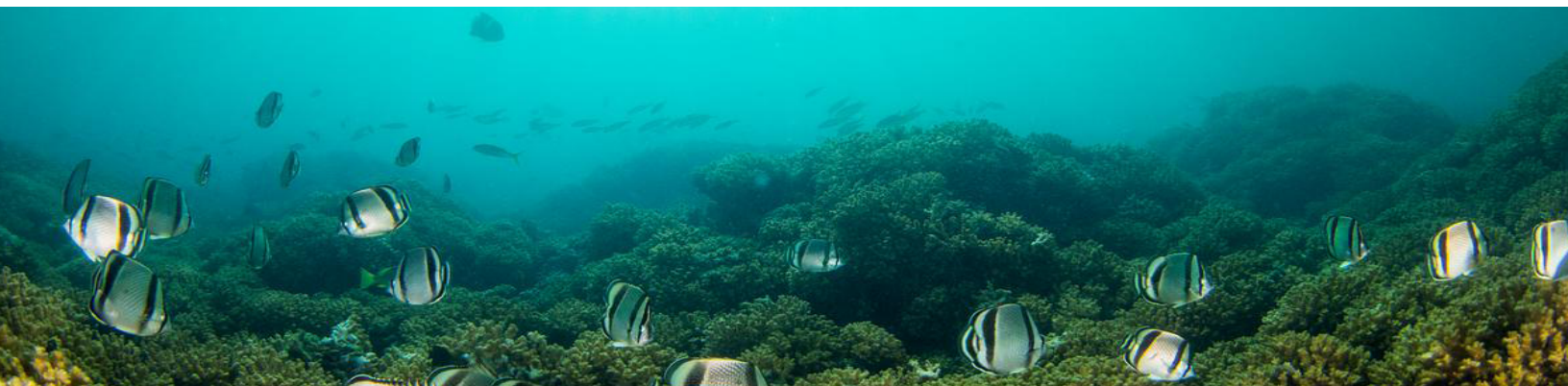
Arrival Details: Tourist immigration is done electronically. You place your passport on a scanner, which captures your information and takes a photograph for identity verification. The scanner will issue a receipt that you should retain for the duration of your stay in Mexico. You will need to present this receipt anytime you are asked for it and upon your departure, so keep it safe!

You will then go through baggage claim, and after that, customs. Here, you will present your completed customs form that you (most likely) received during your flight. You will then be asked to push a button. If you push the button and the light glows green, you are free to go and exit the secure area. If the light glows red, you will be required to subject your luggage to further inspection before exiting the secure customs area.

Guides and drivers are not allowed into the waiting area, so you must exit to the outside by heading right through the sliding glass doors and then go to transportation umbrella 10. If your adventure includes airport transfers, you will see your driver holding a sign with Spirit of the West Adventures on it. Go with them and let the adventure begin!

WHERE WE STAY

Accommodation is provided as listed in your itinerary. If you require additional nights of accommodation and/or to arrange private shuttles, please contact Bryan at tsecoadventures@gmail.com and mention you are travelling with Spirit of the West and could use some help with additional reservations.





SAMPLE ITINERARY

DAY 1: Welcome to Baja California Sur!

Today you'll arrive at the airport in San Jose del Cabo (SJD), where you'll be met by your guides between 12-2 pm for the 3-hour drive to La Paz and Hotel Catedral. We'll get you settled in your rooms, then head out on the town for a welcome dinner and trip briefing. Let the fun begin!

La Paz is the capital of Baja California Sur and a great jumping-off point for all the adventures that the Sea of Cortez holds. It is a waterfront town with a charming malecon (boardwalk) along the sea, marinas full of sailboats and yachts, and terrific local eateries.

Hotel Catedral La Paz is located in La Paz, Mexico, close to La Paz Malecon Beach. The hotel features comfortably furnished guest rooms equipped with modern amenities, including a TV, safety deposit box, work area, coffeemaker, hairdryer, and a private bathroom. Additional facilities and services include a bar, restaurant, Wi-Fi access, an outdoor swimming pool, and parking facilities.

DAY 2: Transfer to Isla Espiritu Santo and Intro to Kayaking

We're off for our sea kayaking exploration of Isla Espiritu Santo! We'll drive to our bodega (gear warehouse) in La Paz to get our gear, then it's into the boats and out into the Sea of Cortez! Your kayaks will be waiting for you at the first beach on the island, where your guides will conduct a training session and safety briefing. Then it's time to start paddling!

DAYS 3-7: Sea of Cortez Kayaking Adventure

Explore Isla Espiritu Santo National Marine Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site by kayak. Enjoy one of the best marine life viewing destinations in the world. Whales, dolphins, sea turtles, manta rays and plenty of beautiful tropical fish call the surrounding

waters home, while a terrific range of bird species. The island itself is stunning, with magnificent towering cliffs, spectacular sandy bays, amazing lava rock formations, and rock art left by the Guaycura and Pericú peoples. There's even an endemic ring-tailed cat, the *babisuri*. It's a remarkable place to explore.

We'll spend our days exploring the bays and inlets of Isla Espiritu Santo, travelling from beach to beach with full panga support. We'll go snorkelling with sea lions, visit the magnificent Frigate-birds, do some hiking and enjoy all the spectacular island beauty. Our chef will be on hand to prepare great meals and a daily happy hour.

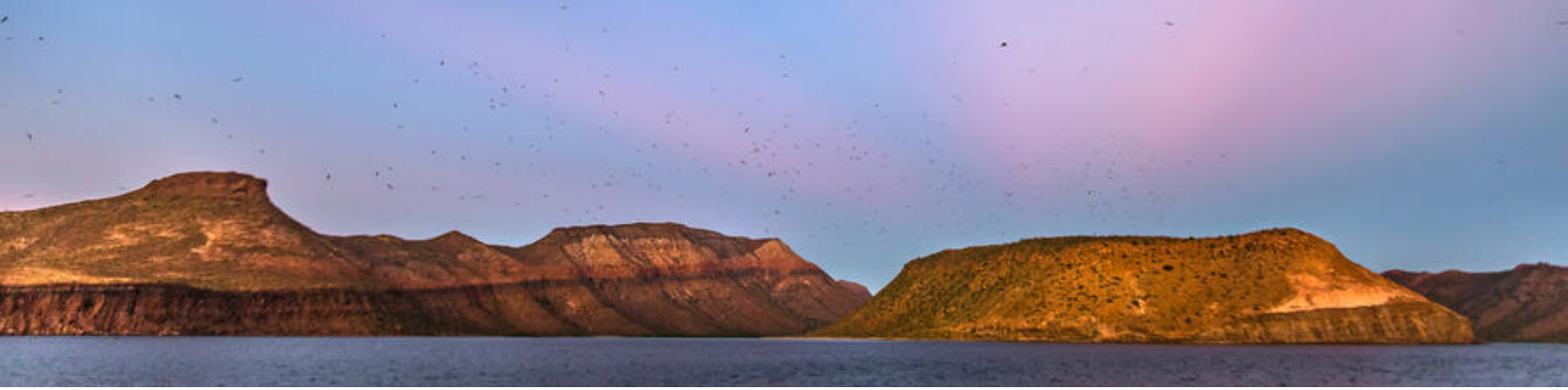
DAY 8: Transfer to Todos Santos / Mexican Cooking Class / Farewell Dinner

Today, we'll depart Isla Espiritu Santo around 10am and head to Todos Santos to check into our hotel for midday. We'll have the afternoon to explore the shops and art galleries of Todos Santos, before settling into our hotel, Los Colibris Casitas. Each of the casas and casitas has magnificent views of the Pacific Ocean, a freshwater estuary and a palm grove oasis to the front, and the Laguna mountains to the side and back.

This evening, Chef Iker Algorri will lead a wonderful Mexican Cooking Class. The emphasis is on having as much fun as possible, learning to make the perfect margarita, and gaining the skill to make some truly delicious Mexican dishes. You'll also probably learn about some great Latin music you've never heard before. Dancing is often known to follow this class!

DAY 9: Departure Day

After the included breakfast, transfer to SJD airport for flights departing after 1 pm



TRAVEL TIPS FOR BAJA

Travel to Baja Mexico is fairly simple, quick, and straightforward. At Spirit of the West Adventures, we aim to make your travel experience as relaxed and comfortable as possible, and below we have outlined a few of the tips and tricks we've learned over the years, as well as the basic information to help you plan your journey and get the most out of your time in Baja.

BEFORE YOU GO

It is important to take a few easy precautions that will help to make your trip run smoothly. Do the following before leaving, and your trip will be that much more relaxed knowing that you're prepared:

- Ensure your passport is current and will remain valid for 6 months after your return date.
- Please note that visitors from most countries, including Canada, the USA, the United Kingdom and countries of the Schengen Area, do not require a visa for entry. Permanent residents of Canada must present their Permanent Resident Card and one of the following documents: a valid Passport or Refugee Travel Document.
- For more details about entry requirements, please visit www.inm.gob.mx/gobmx/word/index.php/paises-requieren-visa-para-mexico/. Please check this website periodically to stay up to date on any changes.
- Spirit of the West Adventures requires you to purchase travel and medical insurance. This helps cover you in the event you need medical help while abroad and will help cover any expenses incurred from unexpected changes in travel plans or circumstances beyond your control (e.g., missed flights due to weather, lost baggage, family illness, or illness or injury). There are various levels of travel insurance for sale, and it is often worth reading the fine print to ensure it is the right coverage for you. Caution: Insurance offered by credit cards is often minimal. Ensuring adequate coverage is your responsibility.
- Make sure your inoculations are current and carry a copy of your vaccination record with you when travelling.
- Check in with your credit/debit card provider to ensure your cards can be used internationally.
- Cash can be very helpful to have on hand, but can also be found at ATMs in the airport.
- Foreigners leaving the Baja region pay \$470 MXN (approx. \$25 USD) Embrace It Tax. This is usually included in airline fares, but if not, you will pay on your exit from the country.
- Send yourself an email with a scanned copy of your passport, immunization record, flight details, and important numbers, including travel insurance policy numbers, credit card numbers (make sure you leave out a few numbers you will easily remember in case someone else accesses your email), as well as contact details for the company in case of loss or theft. This way, if you happen to lose your bags, you can go to the internet and have all the information handy. It is also a good idea to leave all of the above with a trusted friend or relative at home who could help you out in a pinch.
- Invest in some good sunglasses, complete with a strap, as well as a sunhat with a strap that will help you enjoy each day on the water and protect you from overexposure to the sun.
- Please do not bring any fresh fruit or veggies or animal products. You can bring most packaged foods (your favourite granola bar, etc.), just remember to tell customs that you have them.
- Please don't travel if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness.



THE BASICS

TIME

The Baja area is on Pacific Daylight Time (GMT-7)

LANGUAGE

The official language is Spanish, with many folks in tourism able to speak English. We highly recommend downloading Google Translate and Google Lens as helpful tools for your travels.

ELECTRICITY

The electrical current is 120 volts and 60 Hz. The pin shape is the same as North America: 2 flat and a rounded ground. If your device works in Canada or the US, it will work in Mexico. Once on tour, there will be limited solar charging, so please plan accordingly with a battery pack.

GRATUITIES

Gratuities are never expected, but always welcomed if you think your team has provided excellent service. Tipping is completely at your discretion, and these numbers are suggestions only.

Here are a few suggested amounts:

- Hotel housekeeping staff: US\$2 per day per room
- Guides: US\$20/day from each guest
- Camp Staff (this is shared amongst all camp staff): \$45/day from each guest
- Boat Captain: US \$5/day from each guest
- Restaurant Meals outside of the tour plan, on 10-20% of your bill total

Please note that only cash (USD or MXN Pesos) is accepted for tips for tour staff.

*Some restaurants include a gratuity charge in your bill, so double-check to ensure it isn't already included.

INTERNET & PHONE

Wi-Fi is plentiful at hotels and shops, but there is no wifi once out on tour/camping. Cell coverage is quite good in towns and cities. The country code for Mexico is +52. To make calls to outside the country from Mexico, you need to dial 00, then the applicable country code, and then the number. The mobile (cellular) coverage is also quite good, but beware of high roaming charges. You can purchase local SIM cards if you have an unlocked phone or an eSIM in advance.

CURRENCY & MONEY

The official currency is the Mexican Peso (MXN). It is largely a cash-based economy, so we do advise travelling with some cash. You can also use USD cash in some locations, but it is recommended to use MXN to receive the best rates. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are available in the airport (use the machines behind the secure areas, not in the public areas of the airport, for added security). There are also many ATMs in the cities of San Jose Del Cabo and La Paz, where you land and spend time on your tours. They are not available on the islands we visit as part of the tours. If you have a bank card from a major network such as Cirrus or Plus and a 4-digit PIN code, it should work in the ATM's here. Visa, MasterCard and to a lesser extent American Express credit cards are accepted at most hotels, larger restaurants and shops. Credit cards can also come in handy for cash advances from ATMs in case you have any problems with your debit/ bank card.

TRANSPORTATION

If you are arriving and departing on the days and times as outlined in the itinerary, you will be met by our group shuttle and will not need to think about transportation.

If you are arriving in advance of our shuttles, it is your responsibility to arrange and pay for your

transportation to our starting location. Private transfer options are available through our Mexican partners (we can put you in touch with them), or there are shared shuttles available at the airport, and some of these can be booked online in advance.

There are car rentals available. Please just ensure you have the proper license documents needed and spend a little time learning about driving in Baja Sur. Taxis are plentiful and usually well signed with bright colour paint jobs; they usually only take cash and ask for your rate before departure. Only travel in official and well signed taxis.

Uber is not welcomed by many taxi drivers, and some tourists have had problems when using this service. We would recommend pre-booked shuttles with reputable shuttle companies or taxis for shorter trips.

SAFETY

Baja Mexico Sur enjoys a great deal more safety and security than other parts of the country. However, the usual petty crime of any city in the world can be found in the major centers, including San Jose Del Cabo and La Paz, but if using common sense and keeping your wits about you, you are unlikely to have any problems.

Where we will be kayaking and exploring in the Islands, crime is almost unheard of. Being discreet about your wealth will go a long way in keeping you out of trouble – minimize your risks by not wearing flashy jewelry, carrying a wallet full of cash or having a giant camera dangling around your neck at night. A money wallet for carrying your passport and valuables close to your body helps give you a sense of comfort when transiting in busy places (and makes it virtually impossible for pickpockets to take your important documents). Carrying only the money you will need for the day in your wallet or pocket helps make you a less desirable target for theft.

After dark, when in doubt, take a cab. Most restaurants, etc., can call you a cab, or they are readily found on most streets- agree on a rate before departing. While on the tour, your guides will help you navigate.

To reach the police, fire or ambulances, dial 911 or 066 from any phone, mobile or payphone.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

Ensure you have adequate travel medical insurance (mandatory for this trip). No one ever plans to get sick, but it sometimes happens and having good coverage, including the option of returning to your home country for continued treatment, is comforting to say the least. Credit cards often offer some coverage, but often have low limits or only partial coverage for a limited number of days.

HEALTH

We ask that if you are feeling ill, you don't travel and/or tell your guide immediately so steps can be taken to ensure your safety and that of the group. Please ensure you have adequate travel coverage in case you have to cancel, have your tour interrupted or need medical assistance. Entry requirements to Mexico are evolving, so be sure to check the Mexican Government website <https://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/montreal/index.php/en/> for more details. While not required, we strongly recommend vaccination for COVID, measles, rubella, polio, hepatitis A & B and tetanus (you need a tetanus booster every 10 years). Spirit of the West asks all guests to have a current tetanus/polio/diphtheria shot.

SANITATION

We will be using a portable toilet set up in a private place on this tour to pack out our waste for safe disposal. Your guides will go over these details before the tour, and if you have any concerns while on tour, please do not be shy to ask your guide. All paper and sanitary products will be taken out with us.

Once on the kayaking portion of the tour, there is limited fresh water. The solar-warmed shower bags help give you a quick, fresh water rinse at the end of the day. The ocean temperatures are also quite inviting and make it easy to stay feeling fresh.

DRUGS

Please remember that Cannabis, CBD and many other drugs that are legal in Canada are not legal in Mexico. Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. It is illegal to bring, sell or distribute electronic cigarettes, vaping devices or vaping solutions. Please be aware of all entry requirements.

PACKING LIST

The following is a list of suggested items recommended for your safety and comfort while on your Baja adventure. If you have any concerns or questions about this list, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The average day in Baja sees highs during the day in the 21-26°C range (mid to upper 70s°F) and lows at night between 14-18°C (upper 50's to mid-60's F). There is the occasional rainy day, and we do often see afternoon winds, known as the Nortes. Most storms happen from August to mid-October, with hurricane season officially running from June to November, so outside of our window for our trips. To learn more about the weather during your tour, check weather forecasts for Todos Santos [here](#). Ocean temperatures are between 17-22°C (64-69° F). However, we always find it best to come prepared for any type of weather. Remember, there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad gear!

WE PROVIDE:

- Snorkelling gear (masks, fins, snorkel and wetsuit)
- Tents with pillows and plush pillow-top mattresses
- Bedding, chairs and towels for beach and bath
- All kayaking equipment (including kayaks, PFDs, paddles, pumps, ropes and sponges)
- Selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Alcohol will be available during happy hour and served during dinner. You are welcome to bring your own drinks if you have a particular favourite or wish for more. Please remember we only consume alcohol when we are done paddling/snorkelling/swimming for the day, for safety reasons.

If you have some of your own gear and would prefer to use it on your tour, please contact our office in advance of the tour to let us know, to ensure it is appropriate and to avoid us bringing duplicates.

WHAT TO BRING: GENERAL

- Passport & money belt – ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return flight. A money belt helps to keep your important documents and money close to your body and takes away the worry of travel.
- Copies of all your important documents – a simple photocopy of your passport and travel insurance details can save you a lot of hassle if you ever lose the originals.
- Earplugs – just in case your friends snore!
- Shoes that can get wet – we highly recommend Crocs or similar, as you can rinse the sand out easily, the strap protects your heels from chafing against the sand on the bottom of your kayak, and they dry quickly, so you can wear socks in them at night / around camp or if you get blisters. Neoprene booties are not recommended because of the sand.
- Shoes suitable for light hiking – these do not need to be hiking boots, but should be closed-toe and comfortable to walk on rocks and amongst cactus.
- Hat – a wide-brimmed sun hat, baseball cap, or visor is essential in the sun of Baja. Ideally, with a strap for securing in the wind.
- High SPF sunscreen & lip balm with sunscreen – a must for protection from the sun and glare off the water.
- Sunglasses – a safety cord on your glasses is a good idea.
- Bathing suit – for snorkelling and enjoying the underwater life!
- Medication – if you are bringing medication, please pack it in a waterproof container/bags and bring extra in case of unexpected travel delays. **Important: Please carry medications in your carry-on luggage in case of lost or delayed baggage.**
- Personal items – toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable and saltwater-friendly soap, washcloth, feminine hygiene products, hairbrush, etc.
- Spare eye glasses & contact lenses
- Wet wipes and hand sanitizer – good for sanitizing or a quick wash.
- Bug repellent – for mosquitoes and no-see-ums, along with long pants and long sleeves as needed.
- Ziploc bags – these and a large garbage bag are always handy when travelling - especially for taking home dirty laundry at the end of the trip.
- Small flashlight or headlamp – don't forget spare batteries. Headlamps are preferable as they allow for hands-free use.
- Camera – waterproof is best (great for snorkelling) or packed in a waterproof bag or case.
- Book and/or journal, cards or small games – for enjoying on the beach.
- Cash for souvenirs, drinks, gratuities (tips) – US dollars are accepted on par with local currency.
- Water bottle with a clip, such as a carabiner – this will help with securing your water bottle to the deck of your kayak. We recommend a bottle of at least 1 litre in size, as we tend to drink lots in the heat.

CLOTHING

- Lightweight pants – quick-drying, non-cotton, light colours are nice in the sun.
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt – quick drying, non-cotton.
- T-shirts and or tank tops (2) – can be a combination of cotton and non-cotton.
- Down or synthetic packable vest or jacket – after being in the warm sun for the day, the evenings can feel chilly
- Camp clothes – one set of clothes to keep dry for wearing around camp. Lightweight cotton is nice to put on at the end of the day and sleep in.
- Long underwear or base layer – while you are unlikely to need this warmer layer, it is always nice to have for cooler evenings, etc
- Undergarments – as you see fit. A couple of pairs of synthetic underwear for paddling can be comfortable even when wet. Cotton underwear is good for evenings.
- Shorts – one quick-dry nylon pair.
- Fleece or similar socks – one pair you don't mind getting wet and one pair to keep dry.
- Raincoat – something lightweight and breathable will make you a happy camper on cooler days or if we see some rain or wind.
- Toque/beanie – as evenings can sometimes feel cool after being in the sun all day.
- Clothing for before/after tour – any clothing you want for before or after the tour can be stored with your hotel or us while you are paddling. For

your time off the water, long pants or a skirt and a button-up shirt are about as fancy as most of Baja gets!

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Binoculars – so much to see and great birdlife!
- Personal snacks – snacks will be provided, but if you have a favourite that you just can't live without, please feel free to bring it (remember entry restrictions into Mexico).
- Bandana/Buff – to cover your neck from the sun.
- Gloves – for kayaking. Biking gloves or light neoprene gloves work well to protect your hands from blisters and sunburn.
- Kula Cloth – some of our guests love these for mid-day bathroom breaks, but toilet paper is also provided.
- Battery bank – while charging is available, we also recommend bringing a backup battery for charging just in case.
- Sleep mask – the moon is often quite bright, and we sleep without the fly on the tent most nights if it's nice. Then you can enjoy the stars!

PLANNING CHECKLIST

- Read our [Terms and Conditions](#)
 - Reserve your trip & pay deposit
 - Discuss any dietary or medical requirements with Spirit of the West
 - Provide contact details for other members of your group
 - Purchase trip cancellation, interruption and medical insurance
 - Review entry requirements for travel to Mexico
 - Make sure your vaccinations are current, and you have copies of that paperwork
 - Ensure your passport is current and valid for 6 months past your return date
 - Book flights to San Jose Del Cabo (SJD)
 - Complete all Spirit of the West paperwork
- Follow the instructions in your reservation email or click on the big blue 'Complete Guest Details' button on your invoice. This includes a medical information form, 2 liability waivers (one for Spirit of the West Adventures and one for our Mexican Partners, and 1 travel details form, which shares important details with us regarding your arrival and departure times, insurance details, etc.
- Make final payment
 - Review the packing list above
 - Embrace the excitement for your adventure!



THE FINE PRINT

Please review the details below for a realistic picture of what to expect on our Baja tours and to answer some questions you may have about travelling in Baja with Spirit of the West. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any other questions you may have.

- This tour is operated by a trusted local partner who has been operating tours in Baja for over 25 years. They have also joined our tours in Canada and know the level of quality and service that Spirit of the West provides.
- The degree of difficulty of each tour depends a great deal on the wind and weather conditions presented. This, of course, cannot be determined in advance, so please be prepared for anything, including wind.
- We will have boat support on this tour, which can help transport guests if needed and assist with transporting group gear.
- This tour may involve exposure to some open water, which can present waves and swell. We, of course, only kayak when we determine the conditions are deemed appropriate, but please be advised that we may encounter dynamic water conditions. If you are concerned about your paddling ability, please contact us to discuss the conditions you might encounter, but also remember that we have a boat at our disposal at all times, and it is always an option to travel by motorboat.
- Our tours are all designed to provide opportunities for relaxing, including time for snorkelling, beach-combing, as well as kayaking.
- Alcoholic drinks are provided at happy hour as well as served with dinner. They are limited to 2 drinks with dinner. You are also more than welcome to bring your own.
- Fresh water is limited. Showers are for quick rinses and are done with water warmed by the sun in a black portable shower bag.
- Basic dietary restrictions or allergies can likely be accommodated by the removal of items. I.e. if you are a vegetarian, your taco would have beans versus meat, but there may not be an additional meat substitute like you may find in Canada. The chef will do their best to work with dietary needs that are disclosed in advance of the tour, but please note that it may be more basic accommodations than we were able to provide on our tours in Canada, if you have travelled with us before. You may be asked to bring some items with you if your dietary needs are complex or severe.
- Meals, transportation, and accommodation outside of the itinerary are at your own expense.
- All flights and baggage charges are at your own expense. If you leave the tour after departure, there are no refunds. Any expenses associated with the departure or additional accommodation are at your own expense. We require all guests to purchase trip cancellation, interruption and medical insurance to cover any unexpected costs that may be incurred due to circumstances beyond our control. This is your own responsibility, and it is up to you to ensure you have proper coverage. Please see our Terms and Conditions for more details.
- If you show signs of illness on your tour, you may be isolated and removed from the trip. If you are unable to participate in the tour or need to be removed from the tour due to sickness, you will be responsible for any costs associated with not attending the tour or leaving the tour (e.g. hotel rooms, meals, car rentals, etc.)

Please review our full Terms and Conditions

[Terms and Conditions](#)

We're looking forward to exploring Baja with you!