



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Explore an island paradise with open turquoise waters, incredible marine life, and warm sunsets over the bay on this unique and unforgettable swimming holiday in Baja, Mexico. With water temperatures of around 26°C, this late-season getaway provides the perfect opportunity to discover the unspoilt beauty of one of Mexico's natural wonders.

We start with a comfortable hotel night then head to the white sand beaches and dramatic cliff faces to the countless hidden bays that we'll explore throughout the week; this is a swimming adventure like no other. The area is part of the UNESCO-protected Biosphere Reserve and offers the opportunity to discover this pristine natural environment.

Based on the uninhabited island of Espiritu Santo, our base camps are located right on the beach, just a few steps from the inviting waters we'll spend our days exploring. The camp is completely 'off the grid' and includes tents with camp beds and solar heated showers. It also offers kayaks and stand-up paddle boards which can be borrowed for your own use between our scheduled swims.

Our camp food is prepared by our very own chef and is eaten al fresco then watch the sun go down at the end of each unforgettable day. Your last night is back at the hotel with for a farewell dinner so you can reflect on the past week's adventures.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for swimmers who are looking for a remote escape from everyday life and experience a combination of coastal swims, crossings, and circumnavigations. Guests should be comfortable being 'off the grid' throughout the duration of the trip, with no access to wifi or mobile reception on the island.

Swimmers should also have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of around 3km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 6km (split over a minimum of two swims).

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

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## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Isla Espiritu Santo

This uninhabited protected island area is an important eco-tourism destination. It was declared part of a Biosphere Reserve by the UNESCO in 1995 and is the only known habitat of the black jackrabbit. The surrounding reefs are home to parrotfish, angelfish, trumpetfish, and rainbow wrasse, while many other species pass nearby including rays, turtles, dolphins, and even whales. Bird species



include magnificent frigate birds, brown pelicans, great blue herons, snowy egrets, turkey vultures, and hummingbirds.

## Isla Partida

Ensenada Grande beach on Isla Partida is one of Mexico's most beautiful beaches and is consistently rated as one of the top beaches on TripAdvisor. Sea kayaking is a popular activity in this area and if you're lucky, you may catch sight of the large sea lion colony that resides on Isla Lobos off the northern tip of the island.

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## TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	<a href="#">Hotel Catedral, La Paz</a>
Start Time	16:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	<a href="#">Hotel Catedral, La Paz</a>
Finish Time	11:00 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

### Day 1

After arriving into La Paz, Baja you will be able to check-in into the Hotel Catedral. We then meet for a short safety briefing and an acclimatisation swim before returning to the hotel. After a welcome meeting and drink, you'll have a chance to pick up any extras that you might need for the week ahead before an optional group dinner.

### Day 2

After meeting in the hotel lobby early in the morning, we set off on our boat for the first swim and then on to our beachfront camp on Espiritu Santo Island. Once there, we have a chance to get set up for the week, including a brief camp orientation, followed by lunch. After lunch, you have some free time to explore the camp, kayak or have a siesta before a swim along the shoreline to neighbouring Ensenada el Mezteno.

At the end of the first day on Isla Espiritu Santo, we enjoy a beautiful sunset over the Sea of Cortez while our very own chef prepares our first delicious dinner on the island.

### Day 3

We start the morning with a swim in the beautiful Bahia San Gabriel (former home of the pearl beds made famous by John Steinbeck in "The Pearl") where we swim directly past a breeding ground of magnificent frigate birds.

After lunch, we head to Las Calaveritas for our second swim of the day which takes us all the way



back to base camp. Once we arrive, the rest of the afternoon is yours to enjoy before settling in for an evening cocktail as the sun dips below the horizon once again.

#### **Day 4**

Our first swim of the day will begin at El Erizoso Punto, where we'll swim from point to point to point, ending at Ensenada del Raza.

We return to the new base camp and enjoy a wonderful lunch before setting off for our afternoon crossing from Isla Espiritu Santo to the sister island of Isla Partida. On our way back to camp, there may be time for some snorkelling off El Cardoncito.

#### **Day 5**

This morning we circumnavigate Isla Ballena. The incredible water quality here is clear enough to spot the many beautiful types of fish that play in the underwater rocks and nooks.

After lunch, it's time to swim along the dramatic bluffs in Ensenada el Cardoncito. Along the way, you'll swim over an abandoned pearl farm and end at a gorgeous sandy beach. As always, our day finishes with another delicious local dinner and a chance to relax and soak in the atmosphere of the island paradise.

#### **Day 6**

This morning we swim in the long bay of Ensenada el Cardonal, a bowl shaped cove of rocky red outcrops. We then make our way to Los Islotes, home to a colony of friendly and curious sea lions. After having the chance to swim and snorkel with these amazing creatures, we'll make our way back to base camp for lunch.

We then head to the beautiful Ensenada Grande for our final afternoon swim. Our last night is back at our hotel in La Paz and includes a farewell dinner and the chance to enjoy an evening enjoying la Paz.

#### **Day 7**

After a great week of swimming, we've got time for a last morning swim. Following our swim and breakfast we say goodbye to the Sea of Cortez.

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## **TRIP GRADING**

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.



## Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Ensenada El Mezteno	3 km	Bahia San Gabriel	4 km
Las Calaveritas	2 km	El Erizoso Punto – Ensenada Del Raza	4 km
Isla Espiritu Santo – Isla Partida	2 km	Isla Ballena	3 km
Ensenada El Cardoncito	2 km	Ensenada El Cardonal	3½ km
Ensenada Grande	2 km		

## Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as sea lice, jellyfish, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however if you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

## Walking Conditions

There are no roads on the island. Most walks take place on unsealed surfaces and care should be taken in these areas.

## Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	DAYTIME AIR TEMPERATURE*	EVENING AIR TEMPERATURE*
May	19-23°C / 80-85°F	26-32°C / 82-90°F	18-20°C / 64-68°F
October	27-30°C / 81-86°F	28-31°C / 82-88°F	21-25°C / 70-77°F
November	25-28°C / 77-82°F	26-28°C / 79-82°F	18-20°C / 64-68°F
December	22-26°C / 72-79°F	23-26°C / 73-79°F	17-19°C / 63-66°F

\*Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

## Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. As a consequence, open water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.



## TRIP INFORMATION

### Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 16. The group will be split into a maximum of three groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

### Boat Support

Boat support on this trip includes two support boats crewed by SwimTrek guides or safety crew and a local boat pilot. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

### Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Torch (incl. spare batteries)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2) *	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack/ Dry Bag**
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes/Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream (Factor 30+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Biodegradable</b> Shampoo
<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trousers ( <i>for the cooler evenings</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweater/Fleece ( <i>for the cooler evenings</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes/Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rash Vest, Swim Leggings or Shorts***	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Drink Bottle (x2)

For more information please visit: [www.swimtrek.com/packing-list](http://www.swimtrek.com/packing-list)

\*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

\*\*To protect your personal belongings during the crossing between La Paz and Espiritu Santo.

\*\*\*Due to the nature of the location, the sun can be very strong, and we strongly advise that you bring a rash vest and swim leggings or shorts with you.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water, and electrolyte drinks. The guides will fill your personal drink bottles. Please ensure these are clearly marked to help our coaches identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel, or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

## GETTING THERE

To reach Hotel Catedral in La Paz you can fly into La Paz International Airport (LAP) and take a local taxi to the hotel. Alternatively, you can also fly into Los Cabos International Airport (SJD), which is



approximately a 2-hour transfer away.

As SwimTrekkers come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out [SwimTrek's tips to help you get the best deals for your flights](#) page on the website.

### **Taxi from La Paz International Airport to Hotel Catedral**

The easiest way to get to the hotel is via taxi directly from the airport. The journey takes approximately 25 minutes. Please note that the taxis in La Paz are **not** metered, so we recommend that you agree on a fare with your driver before your journey.

### **Private Transfer from Los Cabos International Airport to Hotel Catedral**

Once you arrive into Los Cabos, the easiest way to travel to your hotel in La Paz is via private transfer. This takes approximately 2-3 hours each way and prices vary depending on the number of people in your group. For more information, please contact our partners at Red Travel Mexico [red@redtravelmexico.com](mailto:red@redtravelmexico.com)

### **Shuttle Bus Transfer from Los Cabos International Airport**

From Los Cabos International Airport, you can catch an air-conditioned shuttle directly to La Paz. The journey takes approximately 3-4 hours. For information, please visit the [Los Cabos Airport](#) site.

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## **ACCOMODATION**

The first and last night's stay of the trip will be at the Hotel Catedral in La Paz. For the rest of the trip, we will stay at Base Camp on Espiritu Santo Island. Here you have tents for 2 guests sharing with a separate communal dining tent. Our accommodation is based on twin-share tent, however there are a limited number of single supplement tents which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

Base Camp is clean and comfortable and consists of dry toilets and shared solar-powered showers. Swimmers often choose to wash in the sea using biodegradable soap or shampoo and then rinse off in the freshwater shower. Inline with rules of the National Park and to minimise negative impacts on the delicate ecosystem Espiritu Santo Island we move base camp mid-way through our stay. The camp crew make the move whilst we swim, you just need to ensure your bags are packed before leaving for swimming.

### **Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options**

If you would like to extend your stay in La Paz and need to book additional nights' accommodation before or after your trip, please contact our partners at Red Travel Mexico [red@redtravelmexico.com](mailto:red@redtravelmexico.com)



## Food and Drink

Dinner is not included on Day 1 of your trip, however, breakfast will be provided at the Hotel on Day 2 prior to your journey to the island.

Three meals per day are included on Espiritu Santo Island after your arrival there. Camp food is prepared on site by our very own chef and meals typically include wraps, salads and freshly caught fish.

Non-alcoholic drinks (water, soda, coffee, tea, Gatorade, juice, etc.) are included. Any additional alcohol that you might want with you should be purchased in La Paz and taken to the camp. Drinks can be stored in a cool box at the campsite. In compliance with national park permits and liability insurance guests are no longer allowed to purchase drinks on the island.

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## TRAVEL ADVICE

For more information on any of the following sections please visit the [Travel Advice](#) page of our website

### Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You will need to bring enough cash to cover hotel environmental bed tax which is MXD\$33.68 for the nights in the hotel. Please ensure you have the correct amount to avoid the need for change. You should bring extra money with you to cover dinner on Day 1, souvenirs, and your time in La Paz. The local currency is the Mexican Peso. SwimTrek include the National Park fee in the cost of your holiday.

In some countries tipping (gratuities) is not part of the culture. In others, it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is done entirely at your discretion. If you have been provided with excellent service, it may be something you wish to do. Your SwimTrek guides can advise on local norms for service providers like boat crew, waiters, or taxis. Nothing is expected for your SwimTrek guides, but many groups like to present something to the guides at the end of the trip.

### Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.

For more information please visit: [www.swimtrek.com/sustainable-travel](http://www.swimtrek.com/sustainable-travel)



## Passports and Visas

Non-residents of Mexico require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of all EU member states, the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand will not require a visa but will be required to fill out an immigration form to enter Mexico as a tourist for a time period of less than 180 days. Please note that visa regulations are subject to change, and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

## Travel Insurance

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage, and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information about travel insurance, please visit: [www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance](http://www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance).

At the Welcome meeting our local partners will collect details of your travel insurance including company/insurance provider, policy number, and date of expiry they will also require all guests to sign a standard liability release.

## Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations

Here at SwimTrek we pride ourselves on our focus on safety and the well-being of all our guests. As we operate in some beautiful and remote locations medical facilities are not always easily accessible. SwimTrek Guides, and many staff working for our local partners, are first aid trained. However, we ask that you read our [www.swimtrek.com/travel-health](http://www.swimtrek.com/travel-health) page to ensure that you are informed about general Travel and Swim Health precautions.

## Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs

Isla Espiritu Santo is entirely off the grid, with no wifi or mobile reception. In the event of an emergency and if someone needs to contact you, please inform them to contact the SwimTrek office. Please note that there are very limited charging facilities at the Camp on the island. These operate off a solar panel and small inverter which charge at 100V using a standard North American plug. Please note that charging can be intermittent and slow and may not be always available. You will, however, be able to charge electrical devices in the hotel prior to departing for the island.

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit <https://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/>.