

Mexico's Sea of Cortez

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



March 21 – 28, 2020

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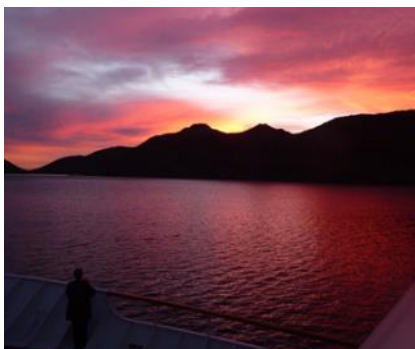
Stocked with supplies and a bountiful sense of adventure, follow Steinbeck's path into the protected waters of Cousteau's "world's aquarium" in Mexico's Sea of Cortez. Crystal clear water abounds near the shorelines, fringed by red desert bluffs. Sail among the islands, once explored by the conquistadors searching for black pearls. Learn about the impressive geologic forces that created these picturesque islands. Explore by kayak and paddleboard, keeping your eyes peeled for sea life, or enjoy leisurely beachcombing with the sand between your toes.

Islands of the Sea of Cortez are much like the Galapagos, a textbook for the study of speciation, which we see in lizards, plant life, and right from the start at Cabo, with some of Baja's endemic birds including Belding's Yellowthroat, Gray Thrasher, and Xantus's Hummingbird.

Active exploration, turquoise water and snorkeling, and a menagerie of seabirds and other wildlife await you on this exciting Sea of Cortez nature cruise!

Tour Highlights

- Watch for whales, mobula rays, dolphins, and birds
- Witness courtship rituals of nesting Brown and Blue-footed Boobies
- Hike, kayak, paddle board, and explore by skiff
- Burro ride into arroyos with local rancheros
- Search for Gray Whales at Baja Magdalena
- Snorkel with Sea Lion pups and colorful reef fish; on land be dazzled by Xantus's Hummingbird
- Enjoy the convenience of flying in and out of Los Cabos International Airport



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Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Sea of Cortez Cruise with Greg Smith

\$4795, from Cabo San Lucas

Airport is Los Cabos International (SJD)

Itinerary

Sat., Mar. 21

San José del Cabo | La Paz—Embarkation

Welcome to Baja, Mexico! You are met today upon arrival at the Los Cabos International Airport in San José del Cabo and transferred to our hospitality area. We are then joined by the cruise's expedition team for an overland orientation transfer to La Paz, getting our group acquainted with the dramatically beautiful Baja landscape and the week of adventure that lies ahead. As we board our ship, the *Safari Endeavor*, the captain and crew welcome you aboard with a cocktail before a kick-off dinner with your new mates.

Sun., Mar. 22 Isla San Francisco

Today we begin our explorations in a playground of steep red bluffs and sweeping desert beach. What a treat to kick off your adventure with a day of play—this is a vacation, after all. Don a snorkel and some flippers and get to know the colorful and bountiful sea life, put on your walking shoes for an exploratory hike along the red bluffs, grab a paddle and explore by kayak, or just relax on the beach with the sand between your toes ... the choice is yours! The rugged beauty of Isla San Francisco makes it an ideal spot for escapades.

Today, and throughout the duration of the cruise, we are on the lookout for the different whale species that call this sea home. Fin, Bryde's, Pilot, Gray, and Sperm Whales are some of the larger whales we hope to see, while large numbers of different dolphin species make their presence known, riding the bow waves. If you choose to go ashore, we look for the Isla San Francisco Whiptail Lizard, found no other place in the world! Tonight, we enjoy a delicious dinner as we watch the sun set.



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Mon., Mar. 23 Bahía Agua Verde

At Bahía Agua Verde, stunningly clear waters are bordered by sparse craggy mountains hemmed in green. Today we explore the coast by small skiff, keeping our eyes peeled for wildlife, the ever-present Osprey nesting on sea stacks, and different species of cormorants and terns. Mobula Rays may be taking that leap of faith as they rocket out of the water, landing belly first back into the sea. We then visit with a local ranchero and his family before we take to the canyons and mountains on a mule ride to experience the “real Baja.” Today’s scenic vistas, outstanding exploration by boat and by hoof, excellent birding, and unmatched camaraderie make for a perfect day.

Tues., Mar. 24 Captain’s Choice

While it’s unlikely we find any black pearls, today we sail amongst islands once explored by early conquistadors. What fun to imagine what they thought of this stunning land and sea. Our boat’s expedition team is at the ready with more adventurous options to choose from today—kayaking, hiking, paddle boarding, or beachcombing. We keep watch during our transit for Brown and Blue-footed Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebird, and the endemic Yellow-footed Gull. Discover nature’s diversity and learn about the geologic forces that formed these islands.

Wed., Mar. 25 Marine Life Search in Magdalena Bay

We defer to our on-board naturalists today, and depending on conditions and recent activity, we either

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visit Magdalena Bay for Gray Whales or Bahía de la Paz for Whale Sharks. The Gray Whales arrive each year on Baja's west coast—migrating more than 12,000 miles—to calve in Bahía Magdalena. If Gray Whales are the day's excursion, we dock in Puerto Escondido, then drive across the peninsula to ride in a panga and witness these remarkable mammals and their babies in the lagoon. Those going ashore watch for wintering warblers, vireos, and sparrows use these islands as winter retreats.

Thurs., Mar. 26 Los Islotes | Isla Partida

At Los Islotes, a steep craggy seamount leaping straight from the sea, we observe a Sea Lion colony from the boat and skiff, or slip into a wetsuit for an early morning snorkel with curious, agile young Sea Lion pups. After a lively morning, we heave anchor and set sail for Isla Partida for an afternoon of water play or island hikes along desert beaches or into rocky arroyos.

Fri., Mar. 27 Isla Espíritu Santo

Today we quietly tuck into a secluded cove surrounded by long fingers of red rock and a golden beach. We spend our last full day enjoying the feel of warm sand under our feet on a beach walk, investigating nooks and crannies in the rocks by kayak, or exploring a little further afield on a guided hike. We are accompanied by the ever-present frigatebirds patrolling the skies. Watching these pirates of the air sometimes gives us an alert to the presence of flying fish or maybe a feeding frenzy replete with dolphins, whales, and seabirds. The Sea of Cortez is one of the world's best for marine mammals and we should have plenty of photographic opportunities. Sea Lions are abundant here and snorkeling with these agile swimmers gives you ample and up close views as they blast through their watery home. Tonight we celebrate our lovely week at this evening's special farewell dinner with an entertaining slideshow by your expedition team.

Sat., Mar. 28 La Paz | San José — Disembark

After breakfast, it's "adios" La Paz, as you disembark the vessel and transfer back to San José del Cabo for flights home.

About the *Safari Endeavor*

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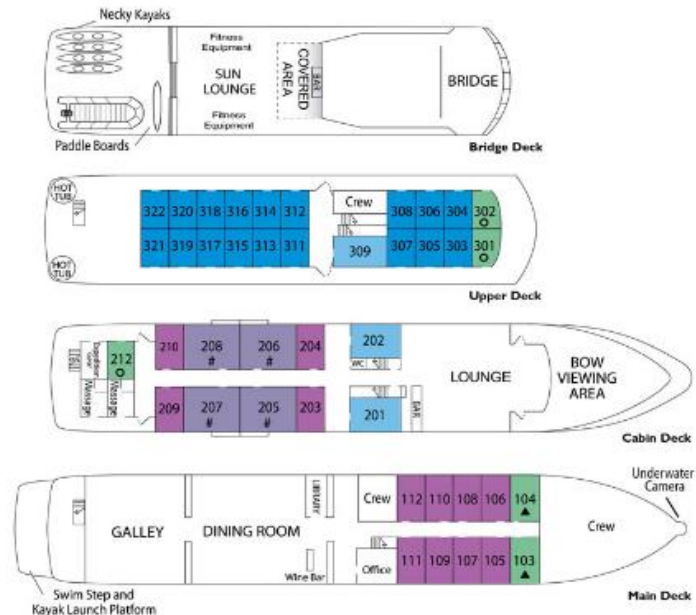
Aboard this spacious expedition vessel, three decks offer ample outside vantage points for taking in daytime sights and the sparkling night sky with new friends. Interior spaces including the intimate lounge, cask wine bar, and cozy library provide comfortable and relaxing spaces to sit back with a book and glass of wine, gather for presentations, or to share experiences from the day. The fully-stocked, marble-topped bar in the lounge is a magnet for activity and mingling.

Ready for adventure at a moment's notice, the *Safari Endeavour* is fully loaded with adventure equipment: kayaks; paddle boards; inflatable skiffs; hiking poles; and snorkel gear and wetsuits; plus, a hydrophone for listening to below-surface sounds and a bow-mounted underwater camera. For those moments when attention turns to relaxation, the vessel comes equipped with two hot tubs, fitness equipment, yoga mats, and a massage suite.

Common to all cabins are: Flat-screen TV/DVD; iPod docking station; air conditioning; desk and chair; private bath with shower; generous storage; and closet space.

Commander Cabins

We have booked Commander Cabins for our group. In the diagram above, these are the blue cabins on the upper deck.



All Cabins are Above Deck with View Windows or portholes
 # Double or Triple Accommodation ▲ Fixed Queen Bed ○ Fixed Twin Beds



Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

The cost of the cruise is \$4795 per person based on double occupancy / \$8395 single occupancy, plus a

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\$300 port tax/fee per person. This price is for Commander Cabins; other cabin types may be available—please inquire. The tour cost includes 7 nights aboard the *Safari Endeavor*, all meals onboard the voyage including alcoholic beverages, all excursions with professional guides, and miscellaneous program expenses, transfers and baggage handling between airport/vessel on embark/disembark days; entry fees to national parks/preserves; all from-the-ship adventure activities and equipment; wellness amenities: fitness equipment and yoga mats.

Not included is the round-trip flight to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The tour cost does not include items of a personal nature such as telephone charges or optional activities.

We recommend a gratuity for local guides and the ship crew, which is left to the discretion of each participant; guidelines will be provided.

Travel Information

For the cruise, plan to arrive Saturday, March 21 no later than 2:30 PM. Please plan flights out after 1:00 PM on Saturday, March 28. We STRONGLY recommend you arrive the night before—you don't want to miss the boat!

Naturalist Journeys, LLC is an equal opportunity service provider and committed to the goal of ensuring equal opportunity for all in employment and program delivery.

Photo Credits

Cactus and Ship, Jocelyn Pride courtesy UnCruise Adventures (UCA); Baja Spineytail Iguana, Narca Moore-Craig (NMC); Kayaking in Baja, Greg Smith (GS); Brown Booby, Peg Abbott (PA); Gray Whale, UCA; Burro Ride, UCA; Surf Bird, PA; Sunset, UCA; Sea Lion, UCA; Cactus, UCA; Brown Pelican, PA; UnCruise Ship, UCA; Kayaking, NJS; Whale, GS; Yellow-footed Gull, PA; Verdin, NMC; Beachwalk, NJS.