



Going forward, all new HDI 90-day tourist policies will now cover full territory for all of Mexico. You'll be covered throughout all of Baja and mainland Mexico. Please call the office at 800-727-2252 if you have any questions about Mexican auto insurance.



Download the gift guide at
www.discoverbaja.com/pdf/2014-Gift-Guide.pdf

or shop online at www.squareup.com/market/discover-baja

Kick off the holiday shopping season by taking care of gifts for all the Baja lovers in your life in one place! We've gathered up the best Baja books, field guides, calendars, maps, DVDs, collector's items and Discover Baja essentials. And for the first time in DBTC history, we're offering lifetime memberships to Discover Baja. Don't miss out!

**¡Feliz
Navidad!**
from Discover Baja

Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanza, Christmas, New Years, all of the above, or none of the above, we hope you have a blessed holiday season spent with family and loved ones.

*Wishing you a feliz
navidad, próspero año
nuevo and safe travels.*

*The DBTC Staff,
Hugh, Carol, Maythé,
Monica & Jen*

PESO EXCHANGE RATE:
\$13 to \$1 U.S. dollar

PEMEX PRICES:
Magna: \$3.54/gal
Premium: \$3.70/gal
Diesel: \$3.58/gal

The Pueblos Magicos of Baja

Although we think that every part of Baja is magical for it's own special reason, Mexico's Secretary of Tourism has put together an official list of Pueblos Mágicos (Magical Towns) that offer visitors a "magical" experience – by reason of natural beauty, cultural riches or historical relevance. The Baja peninsula is home to three of these Pueblos Mágicos: Tecate, Loreto and Todos Santos. With all of the old-world charisma and natural beauty these cities offer, it's not hard to see why they've been designated for their magical charm.

TECATE

Located just across the border from the U.S., Tecate is a beautiful gateway to Baja that makes for an easy weekend or day trip. But Tecate isn't your typical border town. Instead of touristy souvenir shops and a seedy downtown area that people have come to expect from border towns, Tecate is full of colonial architecture surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery. It's a visit deep into the heart of "real" Mexico without having to travel more than an hour from downtown San Diego.

What to do

- ♦Take a free tour of the Tecate brewery where you can learn how the beer is brewed and spend some time in the beer garden. You must call ahead to make a reservation and specify whether you would like a tour in Spanish or English. 011-52-665-654-9490
- ♦Visit La Rumorosa, an area between Tecate and Mexicali where you'll find giant rocks with incredible viewing points. La Rumorosa is also home to the Vallecitos cave paintings specifically "El Diablito" which is magically lit up over the winter solstice (Dec. 21-22).

Where to stay

- ♦Situated on 3,000 acres, Rancho La Puerta has gardens, hiking trails, an organic farm, several pools and world-famous spas. With three health and beauty centers, the possibilities are endless for rejuvenation and relaxation. www.rancholapuerta.com
- ♦For a more affordable option, Estancia Inn offers clean and comfortable accommodations.. www.estanciainn.com.mx

What to eat

- ♦You can't go to Tecate without visiting the famous panaderia (bakery), El Mejor Pan de Tecate,

and trying the warm rolls and delicious pastries.

www.elmejorpandetecate.com

- ♦Asao offers a fine dining experience of contemporary Mexican cuisine with local ingredients, complete with views of the Guadalupe Valley. www.santuariodiegueno.com/english/



LEFT: The famous rocks of La Rumorosa. ABOVE TOP: The grounds of Rancho La Puerta. ABOVE BOTTOM: The rock art of Vallecitos.



LORETO

Loreto is the oldest settlement in Baja. It is home to the first mission of all of California, which was established in 1697. With the quaint little town, the beautiful waters of the Sea of Cortez, and the Coronado islands right off shore, Loreto draws tourists who come to fish, dive, snorkel and relax.



What to do

- ♦ Loreto is a great spot for fishing. Yellowtail, sailfish, marlin and dorado are just some of the catches you'll find.
- ♦ The Coronado Islands, right off the coast of Loreto are a part of the largest marine natural reserve in Mexico. They're a wonderful spot to take a boat out for the day to enjoy snorkeling or diving as sea life abounds and the waters are clear and beautiful.
- ♦ Catch up on your history and visit the Loreto mission, the oldest mission in all of California, established in 1697.

Where to stay

- ♦ With a great location, wi-fi and poolside hammocks, you can't go wrong staying at Cabanas de Loreto.

www.lascabanasdeloreto.com

- ♦ Villa del Palmar is another option if you're looking for a resort experience. Outside of town and right on the Sea of Cortez, the service and luxury rooms are worth the splurge.

www.villadelpalmarloreto.com

What to eat

- ♦ Orlando's Mexican Cocina is a great place for breakfast, lunch or dinner. With the casual atmosphere and great Mexican food, this is true Baja dining.
- ♦ Mita Gourmet is a little bar & grill right on the plaza with a variety of options and a friendly and accommodating staff. Chef Juan Carlos is happy to make custom dishes based on your preferences and requests.

www.mitagourmet.com



TOP LEFT: The pool at Cabanas de Loreto. TOP RIGHT: The Mita Gourmet. ABOVE: The Loreto mission. BELOW: The clear waters of the Coronado Islands, just off the coast of Loreto.





TODOS SANTOS

This little colonial artist town oozes the charm and charisma of an older, more traditional Mexico. The beautiful, vast beaches right outside town attract surfers who enjoy the relatively uncrowded waves. Todos Santos is unspoiled Baja at its best.

What to do

- ♦Take a stroll through the colonial downtown and wander into shops and art galleries. There are a number of galleries in town that showcase the works of the many talented local Mexican and ex-pat artists. You can wander through the quaint streets of downtown Todos Santos to find most of them.
- ♦The Leatherback turtles that once lived in the Cabo San Lucas area have been pushed out by the big resorts and crowds and sought refuge in Todos Santos. Join a

nightly patrol to help rehabilitate them with Leatherback Turtle Restoration.
www.todostortugeros.org

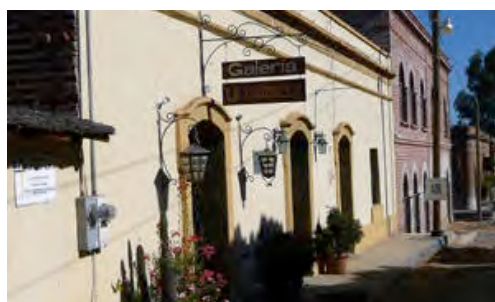
Where to stay

- ♦Rancho Pescadero, seven miles south of Todos Santos, is a magical luxury boutique hotel with a beachfront location.
www.ranchopescadero.com
- ♦The Todos Santos Inn is conveniently located in the center of town and as the only historic hacienda hotel in Todos Santos,

has a charming colonial feel.
www.todossantosinn.com

What to eat

While you wouldn't normally think of going for Italian while in Baja, you won't be disappointed by Café Santa Fe. It's worth every peso for the atmosphere and the savory lobster ravioli.
www.cafesantafetodossantos.com



TOP: Bird's eye view of Todos Santos. ABOVE TOP: Café Santa Fe. ABOVE BOTTOM: Galleries in downtown Todos Santos. LEFT: The beach at Rancho Pescadero.

THE SPANISH MISSIONS ON THE CALIFORNIA PENINSULA: #4, *Santa Rosalía de Mulegé (1705-1828)*



By David Kier

Traveling north from Loreto in November of 1705, the Jesuit Padre Manuel de Basaldúa founded the mission of Santa Rosalía at the Cochimí settlement of Mulegé. Santa Rosalía de Mulegé mission is located on a rare desert river, about 2 miles from the gulf coast. The mission and its farmlands were nearly destroyed by flash floods in 1717, and again in 1770.

The stone church overlooks the river from a high ledge and was constructed in 1766. This was less than two years before the Jesuits were expelled from the New World. Spain's King Carlos III had been convinced that the Jesuits were amassing treasures and not paying the Crown its due. When

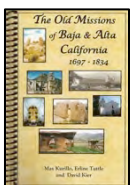
inventoried, the true nature of the mission's poverty was confirmed, there were no treasures.

The Franciscans replaced the Jesuits in California in 1768. Fr. Francisco Palóu wrote that he considered having the mission moved following the 1770 flood. A proposed new location was a place called 'Magdalena'. Magdalena is just 15 miles north of Mulegé and today, building ruins, an aqueduct, and a pila (reservoir) are seen, but no record of who built it is known. An old church about 5 miles further to the west, and close to the village of San José de Magdalena, is sometimes referred to as a Dominican mission visita ruin.

Even though mission activities ceased in 1828, the church at Mulegé continued to serve the

new Mexican population that replaced the vanishing Indian population. Activities at the mission church continued to be documented through much of the mid to late 1800's. Priests assigned to Mulegé often were placed in charge of the other mission churches of the region (Loreto, Comondú, San Ignacio) as was noted in the government book of 1873.

Each of the Old (Baja) California missions has an interesting story and these short history notes may inspire further research and discovery. In the book, 'The Old Missions of Baja & Alta California, 1697-1834', we hope to inspire both visits to the missions and further research. A reference list of mission history books is included in the back.



David Kier is co-author of 'The Old Missions of Baja & Alta California, 1697-1834'. The book is available for purchase at the DBTC offices (call 800-727-2252). You can follow along with the series to learn about the history of all of the Baja California missions on the DBTC blog and in future newsletters.

DBTC STAFF PENINSULA PICKS: WINTER WEEKEND TRIPS

Whether you're looking for a cozy cabin in the woods experience or a true beach escape, Baja has you covered for your next winter weekend trip. Here's where we're off to (even if only in our dreams)!



Adobe Guadalupe in the wine country of Guadalupe Valley is the perfect spot for a winter retreat. With the authentic hacienda experience, family-style meals and no TV, it's a true escape. On a chilly day there's nothing better than sipping wine by the fireplace in the living room. -Maythé



With direct flights from San Diego to Los Cabos, I can go from real life to paradise in about two hours. There's nowhere I'd rather be in the middle of winter than lying on the beach with a margarita in my hand. -Jen

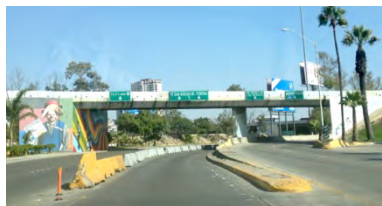
I'd head to the San Pedro Martir. A trip to the observatory would be mandatory with possible views to the Sea of Cortez in one direction and the Pacific Ocean in the other. Then again it could be snowing--- YES in BAJA!!! The weekend would include a one-night stay at the legendary Meling Ranch and another night at Baja Dark Skies Inn with their emphasis on astronomy and marveling at the night sky through their giant telescope. -Carol



I'm dreaming about drinking Mexican coffee while sitting next to the fireplace and looking out at the ocean at Las Rosas Hotel & Spa in Ensenada. -Monica



Whisk me off to Todos Santos for a winter weekend. With accommodations ranging from hacienda-style to ultimate luxury, you can spend your time checking out the chic galleries, strolling the colorful shops, or enjoying the nearby pristine beaches. And, oh yes, dozens of top-rated restaurants and cafes serve great fare and memories in this historic, old sugarcane town. -Hugh



How to Get to the San Ysidro Border Crossing

We know that trying to find your way to the San Ysidro border in Tijuana to return to the U.S. is challenging for even the most experienced Baja veterans. We've put together a PDF of directions on how to reach the border via the newly reopened Via Internacional. To download and print the PDF: www.discoverbaja.com/pdf/San-Ysidro-directions.pdf

DBTC Insider Tip: Cross the Border Faster!

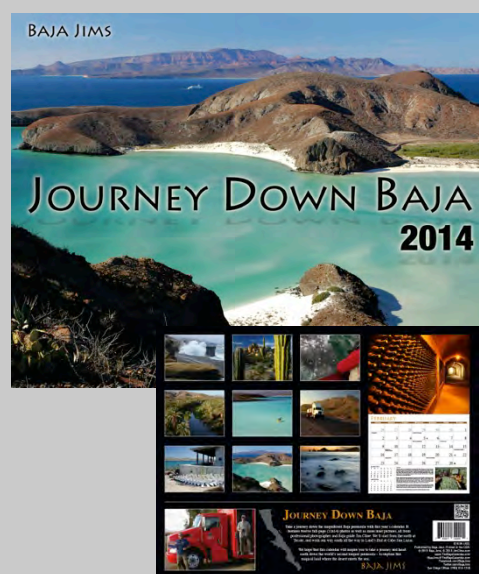
If you're looking to shave some time off of your border wait, there are currently two options available to you:

1. The **Ready Lane** is available for use by anyone with an RFID-enabled ID. This includes drivers licenses from the U.S. states of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Washington as well as the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec (currently California driver licenses are NOT RFID-enabled, but they are working on a bill to change that). Your other option for the Ready Lane is to get a passport card, aka a PASS Card (a regular passport book will NOT work). A passport card only costs \$30 if you already have a passport.

http://travel.state.gov/passport/ppt_card/ppt_card_3926.html

2. The fastest way to get across the border is to apply for a SENTRI card which will enable you to use the **SENTRI Lane**. The application process is time-consuming and expensive but most people find it to be worthwhile. You'll need to apply online, pass a background check, and go through an in-person interview process and car inspection (if you'll be using your car to drive across the border). Expect the process to take about three months and cost around \$125 (for an individual plus a car). The SENTRI pass is valid for five years.

<http://goes-app.cbp.dhs.gov/main/goes>



JOURNEY DOWN BAJA 2014 CALENDAR!

The Baja Calendar is back and it is a treasure! The Baja Jims, Jim Hendricks and Jim Cline, have teamed up again to bring you a gorgeous, visual journey down the peninsula. Featuring twelve full page photographs and more inset photos, the calendar begins in Tecate and takes you all the way down the Baja peninsula to Land's End in Cabo. When you can't be traveling in Baja, this calendar will remind you of what you're missing. Perfect for your home or office and an absolute winner as a gift. *Softcover, 14" X 11", \$16.95*

Call 800-727-2252 to order yours today!

CASITA IN TRIPUI - Beautiful, completely-furnished, turn-key house available in Tripui, south of Loreto. Space A-19, with parking and patio in front and cactus garden in the back. Living area has two-ton air conditioner and four ceiling fans. Includes TV-VCR, Telmex telephone, landline with internet connection.

Bedroom has walk-in closet, and full bathroom with tub. Lots of storage, drawers, bookcase, leather sofa with end tables. Kitchen area has two refrigerators, chest freezer and gas stove top. Dining area has tile table with six chairs. Mexican dishes and pots and pans included. Detached brick bodega with hot water heater, washer and dryer, sink, toilet and plenty of storage space. Just \$69,000 USD. Local phone 133-0504, or US phone 619 467-5958.



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