

Baja California Sur

“An Ecotourists Dream Come True”



Mexico’s State of Baja California Sur is a wonderful place to vacation or retire. Living is easy and stress-free. There numerous small, friendly, towns and countless lovely places to visit or live, including: the historic “City of peace” — **La Paz**; the **East Cape** area; the Pacific Ocean area, with the famous town of **Todos Santos**; and the tourist city of **Los Cabos** (Cabo San Lucas) and sister city of San Jose del Cabo.

La Paz

La Paz is the oldest, and by far the largest city (200,000 population) in Baja Sur. Hernan Cortez discovered the bay, on which this sleepy port city now sits over, 470 years ago in the year 1535. Since then it has continued to grow into a major modern city that has not forgotten its cultural roots. La Paz is well planned for local enjoyment, but is also conveniently located for international travel or trips to mainland Mexico via sea or air.



With its great climate; fantastic beaches; friendly services; planned infrastructure; practically nonexistent crime rate; zero unemployment; and, its beautiful surroundings along the Sea of Cortez – La Paz is a very unique place. Even so, it was not until as late as 2003 that the attributes of La Paz began to be recognized (and re-recognized) as a worldwide vacation and retirement destination.



La Paz was mentioned in a *Money Magazine* article on June 9, 2003 as **“one of the best retirement places in the world.”** Today, seldom does a week go by that some writer is “rediscovering” the city and the region – AARP; The New York Times; Conde Nast Travel, to mention a few. Typical articles marvel at the friendly, graceful nature of the City, the multitude of recreations available; and, its people.

The numerous beaches, coves; waterways and the variety of water related activities available are always at the forefront. Consequently, there is an increased population growth and an increase in real estate prices that always accompany such growth.



La Paz is a city serving the everyday life of its citizens. As such, it is not a tourist-built municipality; however, there are many interesting and charming things to see and do in La Paz. There is the beautiful Cathedral, the ever-active city park, countless statues commemorating local historic events and the marvels of nature and its role on La Paz; and, the museum of anthropology. Perhaps one of the most unique attractions is La Paz’s waterfront walkway, the Malecon.

The Malecon is truly one of the most beautiful “boardwalks” in all of Mexico and perhaps the world; it is anticipated that by the year 2015, this magic walkway will extend along the bay in excess of ten miles. The visionaries’ design allow this amenity to easily accommodate families or individuals who love walking, biking, roller-blading, running or just sitting on a bench watching the sunsets.



The Malecon in La Paz has become the heart of the city’s center of activities year around: The Awards Day for the Baja 1000 Race; Carnival; Revolution Day Parade; School Parades; Christmas Celebrations; and, weekend “car-cruising” reminiscent of the 1950’s, but in today’s cars -- it is fast becoming recognized world wide as a “must-see, must-experience” attraction.



La Paz is wonderful; but, from time to time one wants to “get away” for a day or two for a short or medium-sized “vacation” from you vacation. You can hop on a plane and go anywhere in the world; or, you may choose to visit La Paz’s sister towns and the regions located in Baja Sur. After all, tourists come from all over the world to enjoy that which is only 15 minutes to an hour or so’s drive from you. The area offers many days of great getaways when one heads south. If you choose to drive south, the “East Cape” region is awaiting your discovery.

The East Cape



There is no Spanish name for the “East Cape” area of Baja Sur that stretches (approximately) from a short distance east of San Jose del Cabo to the Sea of Cortez towns of Los Barriles and Rancho Buena Vista -- approximately 60 miles south of La Paz. For as long as one can remember, the area has been popular for fishing enthusiasts – however, it has only been within the past few years that “others” have begun to find the area, simply called the “East Cape” by these sea-lovers. The East Cape is great for that one, two or three-day getaway trip!



The East Cape is the home of *Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park*, which protects the only living reef in North America – what a nature lover’s treat! To get there, you need only a minimum amount of Dundee-Outback in you; but, even so you will have to experience approximately 20 miles of dirt road to reach the Cabo Pulmo community. When you get there, you will find about 100 to 200 permanent residents, depending upon the time of the year you arrive.



Then, of course, there are the East Cape’s beautiful mountains, with gushing waterfalls and hot springs. During your travels, traces of early settlements and numerous plantations will seemingly appear from nowhere. You may choose to take a step back in time – say 15,000 years or more — and experience Indian cave paintings or see the prehistoric–“boulder paintings.” When done, traveling a bit further south, there is San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas.

San Jose del Cabo



San Jose del Cabo (San Jose) is “next door” to Cabo San Lucas and, like Cabo, was first visited by Europeans in 1542. Only home to a few Indians for centuries, San Jose was hardly known to the world until recently. Development has moved east, from Cabo and into San Jose, resulting in a recent, rapid, growth in restaurants, typical US-type businesses and destination resort hotels, with accompanying golf courses. With the diversification of life-style choices, real estate values have risen accordingly!



The same airport that serves San Jose serves Cabo San Lucas, although it is closer to San Jose. Coupled with Cabo’s growth, San Jose has become a major world-force in the recreation industry and choice location for high-end retirement communities. When comparing San Jose to Cabo, there is a very noticeable difference in pace; San Jose is far more tranquil than Cabo yet offers all (or more) of what one expects in a seaside, oceanfront resort destination.

Authentic in its Mexican atmosphere, San Jose del Cabo has a more modern flavor that may not be considered as “traditional” as other Baja Sur locations. When you tire of great food and fantastic service, just drive just a few more miles and head for



the southern-most-tip of Baja Sur, you will find “Cabo” with more great food, more great views; great shopping and ...

Cabo San Lucas

Although sport fishers came and went, as late as the mid 1970’s the population did not exceed 2,000. Today, it is the home of the renowned “Bisbee Sport Fishing Tournament” and sport fishing ranks as one of the major attractions for Cabo. However, Cabo has also evolved into a golfing mecca and is considered to be the resort capital of the Baja. Complementing world-class independent hotels, restaurants and spas, many of the world famous hotels are found here, such as the Marriott and Westin Regina. Within the past 30 years, Cabo San Lucas has become a major retirement and tourist destination for people from all over the globe.



Estimated population in 2006 was approximately 60,000; but, Cabo takes on the air of a much larger city, hosting millions of tourists on an annual basis. Cabo has the reputation of being an “Americanized” city where English is almost as commonly spoken as is Spanish. Costco and Home Depot (just to mention two) are here and one would envy their locations overlooking the Pacific Ocean.



Although the retail businesses are convenient, people come here to dive in the beautiful deep canyons of the ocean; to enjoy 350 days of sunshine; to fish (estimated 30,000 to 50,000 bill fish are hooked up here annually); to golf, to kickback on the beach; or, to PARTY – PARTY!! Just in case you have not heard, Cabo is considered to be one of the great “party-towns” of the world! How about a change of pace? Let’s head north ...



Todos Santos

Completing the southernmost leg of our “vacation,” we turn north and return home to La Paz. About halfway between Cabo and La Paz we find the artist community of Todos Santos. Although once populated by ancient inhabitants, the region grew in population because of its abundant fresh water resources. The availability of water gave growth to a thriving sugar cane industry in the 1800’s; but, unexplainable, the water table dropped and the sugar industry died. Although the water “returned” just as unexpectedly as it went away, the sugar industry did not return.



In recent years, the town has become a haven for artists, primarily from the United States; but, the numerous events are beginning to attract Mexican and worldwide artists too. The *El Calendario de Todos Santo* is a magazine/tourist guide publications that provides updates regarding the numerous art shows and festivals that is making Todos Santo famous again. In addition to the historic mission, the best known attraction is the “Hotel California.” Great food; beautiful ambiance! A place of recent legend!! Ahhhhhh .. a great trip, but ...



Maravia Country Club Estates

It is nice to get back to La Paz and home in Maravia Country Club Estates. Wondering why we left in the first place, perhaps it is time to “download” our photos; organize and title them -- and call over a few friends to compare experiences. Or, maybe we will just watch the sunset at home a think about sharing photos tomorrow ...

... after a round of golf?