

# Paddle World

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Point Beach, a secluded beach with wild horses and beautiful sunsets.



A humpback whale gives her "tail-walk" sign that she's diving deep below the surface.

## BAJA PADDLING IN THE "AQUARIUM OF THE WORLD"

Baja is the second longest peninsula in the world, extending 1,247 kilometers (775 mi) from Mexicali, Baja California in the north to Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur in the south. Split down the middle by the Sierra de Baja California and with the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Sea of Cortez to the east, Baja is a desert surrounded by a kaleidoscope of blues and greens. The quality waves and lively waters of the Pacific are complemented by the quieter and more protected Sea of Cortez, which means that if a paddlesport exists, there is a place to enjoy it in Baja. An abundance of sea life lives or migrates along the Baja coastline, including humpback and gray whales, sea turtles, sea lions, and whale sharks.

Our trip started in Todos Santos, a small, artsy town located on the Pacific side of Baja, approximately 90km north of San Jose del Cabo, home to the closest international airport. On our short drive north to Todos Santos, we spotted flowering cacti, roadrunners, and dozens of whale spouts immediately off the Pacific Coast. Although home to more dirt roads than paved, some recent

Stand-up paddleboarding is the perfect way to access the remote beaches of Bahahito Bay.

By the end of our fourth day in Baja, we had swum with sea lions, surfed in the Pacific Ocean, paddled the clear turquoise waters of the Sea of Cortez, and watched humpback whales next to our boats. Now, dangling my fanned feet over the edge of the boat, looking down at the white spots of the biggest species of fish on earth, I wondered if the whale shark really was as docile as claimed or if my adventures in Baja were about to end. Taking my chances, I dipped below the surface as the shark passed below me, thankfully indifferent to my rapid kicking as I struggled to keep up with this remarkable creature.

Words: Erika Peteman Photos: Erika Peteman and Colin Ruggiano

construction on Baja's major highways makes transportation easy. Just don't forget to take the "TOPE" signs seriously and slow down or you'll be flying instead of driving.

We stayed at Los Colibris, a group of small casitas located on the southern hill above Todos Santos. Los Colibris is the headquarters of Todos Santos Eco Adventures (TOSEA), our guides while in Baja, and offers stunning views of the Pacific Ocean, including a custom yoga deck with 360 degree views. Los Colibris is also home to the rare and mystical beer fairy, or hadia caravazera, who keeps your casita fridge stocked with Mexican brews. Although never seen, her presence is certainly felt, especially during the sunset hour. The morning after our arrival we opened our door to breakfast on our patio made by Iker Algorta, the resident chef at Los Colibris and the owner of Café Brown, a restaurant in Todos Santos. Algorta left the practice of law to pursue his passion as a chef, and his meals, including our morning breakfast burrito made with fresh fish, were the culinary highlight of our trip.