



## General Information for Expedition: Baja

**Location:** The San Quintin Valley, Baja California Norte, Mexico, approximately 180 miles south of the U.S. border on Mexico Highway 1.

**Accommodations:** Dorm-style enclosed cabins, tent cabins or modest Motel accommodations are provided. Hot showers (usually), flush toilets (a luxury in rural Baja) and filtered water on site are included.

**Activities:** During our free time, activities will include going to the beach, hiking and trips to the best taco stands on the planet! Surfing, boogie boarding, fishing, snorkeling, hiking, and other related activities are available. Please feel free to bring the items needed to engage in these activities.

**Trip Length:** 7 days including travel in and out of Baja.

**Travel:** In most cases, participants will arrange their own travel to San Diego International airport and be picked up by uReach Staff for ground transportation down the Baja coast. Travel to San Diego International airport can be arranged by Air, bus, or personal car. Free parking can be arranged by uReach with advanced notice. Flights should arrive in time for a noon pickup by uReach staff and departure flights should be scheduled for after 4PM on the day of departure. We cannot guarantee an early pickup on the day of arrival if the flight arrives before noon. uReach staff can assist you with travel arrangement or special needs.

**Currency:** American dollars are accepted everywhere and small bills are most useful, nothing larger than a \$20 will be accepted at most places - one's and five's are much better. All change will be received in pesos. Please be conservative about the amount of money brought on the trip. Tacos cost \$1.25, soft drinks are \$1 and Mexican ponchos cost about \$10 just as a point of reference. Some places are starting to take Credit cards and one ATM is available. Individuals are encouraged to bring spending money for extra meals, snacks, shopping, etc. \$50-100 is usually about right.

**Language:** Spanish is the official language and very few people speak English. You can learn some key Spanish phrases at <https://www.rocketlanguages.com/spanish/phrases/common-spanish-phrases>

**Climate:** The climate is very Mediterranean with warm days and cool nights. Summer temperatures average 80°/70°, winter is 65°/50°. It's frequently cool at the beach and the Pacific Ocean water temperature is about 60-70°.

**Travel Documents:** At the time of this writing, the requirements for entering Mexico and coming back into the U.S. are: ALL trip participants MUST have a U.S. **valid passport** (or passport from another country and a valid U.S. travel visa), a **US passport card** or an **Enhanced Security Driver's license** (currently issued by Michigan, New York, Vermont and Washington – and some Canadian states).

In addition, all minors must carry a letter of permission: *"Mexican law requires that any non-Mexican citizen under the age of 18 departing Mexico must carry notarized written permission from any parent or guardian not traveling with the child to or from Mexico. This permission must include the name of the parent, the name of the child, the name of anyone traveling with the child, and the notarized signature(s) of the absent parent(s). The State Department recommends that the permission should include travel dates, destinations, airlines and a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding the travel. The child must be carrying the original letter – not a facsimile or scanned copy – as well as proof of the parent/child relationship (usually a birth certificate or court document) – and an original custody decree, if applicable."*

uReach will keep all documents in safe keeping for unaccompanied minor travelers.

**What's included in the price of the trip:** Your trip cost includes ground transport from San Diego (unless otherwise specified), all meals, purified water, construction materials/tools for house build, trip leaders, recreational activities and leadership training.

# What to Bring

Please pack in a carry-on suitcase. If you want to bring gifts or other supplies, team up with some other people. The weather is not varied, you don't need a lot of different kinds of clothing for this trip and space can be limited in our vehicles.

## General –

- Sunscreen
- Spending money (see "currency" section for guidelines)
- Toilet paper (for times away from the base)
- A backpack (normal kind)
- A water bottle (you will refill with purified water)
- Toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, etc)
- A package of wet wipes for the job site
- More Sunscreen
- Beach towel
- Sunglasses
- More sunscreen
- A hammer
- Gloves
- A hat (something with a wide brim is recommended)

## Clothing

- Work shoes (boots or sturdy sport/tennis shoes), walking shoes, sandals
- Your regular casual clothes
- A modest swimsuit (this is a humanitarian trip) in case of swimming opportunity.
- Light shorts/t-shirt/pajamas to sleep in
- Sweatshirt or light jacket
- Rain poncho (it is very unlikely to rain during the summer months, so skip it then)
- Work clothes (you will get dirty) and painting clothes that can get "ruined"
- Please bring long (in length, not long sleeved) shirts for the work site that don't bare your skin when you bend over. Shorts for the work site should be at least mid-thigh. Tank tops should be modest - the Mexican people are very modest. We don't want to be a freak show.

## Do not bring:

- Any illegal substance
- Non-prescribed pharmaceuticals
- Illegal drugs
- Marijuana-even with prescription or firearms of any kind are illegal in Mexico and carry serious penalties
- Alcohol, fireworks and other potentially dangerous items are not allowed on the expedition.

## Optional

- Snacks if you want
- Ear plugs (for sleeping with people who snore)
- Your own pillow
- Basic OTC meds (Advil, Pepto Bismol, etc)
- Giveaways for children
- Housewarming gifts (items can be purchased in Baja so you don't need to travel with them)

## Notes:

- Sleeping bags, sheets, etc. are *not* needed unless you are notified otherwise.
- Vegetarians and people with allergies should let us know so we can try to accommodate food needs and preferences.

## Medical Information

**Insurance:** All participants are required to purchase insurance through Mission Assure. uReach will assist in that purchase. The cost is \$4.50/day and includes medical insurance, evacuation coverage and more.

**Pre-check:** Individuals are encouraged to make an appointment with the travel department of your medical provider or your primary care physician.

**Medications Needed for Nicaragua:** Make sure you are up to date on routine vaccines.

- **All participants: All participants:** Every participant should be up to date on measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), and polio vaccine (and your yearly flu shot).
- **Optional:** The following are for highly cautious participants who want maximum protection.
  - Hepatitis A - CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Nicaragua, regardless of where you are eating or staying.
  - *Hepatitis B:* You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so CDC recommends this vaccine if you might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures
  - Typhoid You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Nicaragua. CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.
- **Rabies:** Rabies can be found in dogs, bats, and other mammals in Nicaragua, so CDC recommends this vaccine for the following groups:
  - Travelers involved in outdoor and other that put them at risk for animal bites.
  - People who are taking long trips
  - Children, because they tend to play with animals, might not report bites, and are more likely to have animal bites on their head and neck.

More information can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/mexico>