

BAJA AND THE SEA OF CORTEZ: IN SEARCH OF THE GREAT WHALES – WITH SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS

In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys. _This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travelers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture._ This 11-day voyage aboard _Le Bellot_ to the peninsula of Baja California and the Sea of Cortez is an extraordinary opportunity to explore a part of the world that Jacques Cousteau famously called "the world's aquarium." Few places on earth can rival the abundance and variety of marine life to be found on this itinerary: playful sea lions, dolphins, sea turtles, dozens of different species of fish, and above all, whales. Nor is the rich profusion of species confined to the sea. The ibis, cormorants, and great blue herons that inhabit the dense mangroves of the peninsula's Pacific Coast, as well as the pelicans, gulls, and boobies living in the Sea of Cortez--all these, and more, make for a birder's paradise. Setting sail from Cabo San Lucas , Mexico, enjoy a relaxing day at sea as you cruise along the Pacific Coast of the peninsula to reach Bahia Tortugas about halfway between Cabo San Lucas and San Diego. The following morning, a drive across the rugged, arid landscape of the Vizcaino Desert brings you to Guerrero Negro , a breeding area for grey whales, where you will enjoy extraordinary whale watching aboard a local boat. After another day at sea, find yourself in Magdalena Bay , where the morning is spent in search of grey whales, humpbacks, and



dolphins , and visiting Bird Island , while the afternoon is devoted to exploring on foot amid the amazing sand dunes of this unbelievably beautiful area. Rounding the southern tip of the peninsula, _Le Bellot_ enters the Sea of Cortez--the primary object of Cousteau's fascination--to call at Cabo Pulmo National Park , where you may do some more whale watching (with the possibility of sighting an orca) or snorkel on the park's extensive reef, estimated to be around 20,000 years old and home to an incredible variety of marine life. Holders of appropriate PADI certification may choose to SCUBA dive here. Heading north, deeper into the Sea of Cortez, arrive at Loreto Bay , which was christened a National Park in 1996 and designated a UNESCO World Heritage site a decade later. Spend two days here, exploring a region that is home to more than 800 species of marine life. Possible activities include hikes ashore,swimming, snorkeling , and an overnight in port in the charming Mexican town of Loreto. Coronado Island , the focus of the second day in Loreto Bay, is known for its startlingly white beaches and marine-life-rich reefs, where those who snorkel or SCUBA dive encounter colorful parrot fish, angel fish, rainbow wrasses, and puffer fish. The final two days of your voyage are spent in the area around La Paz, calling first at Pichilingue to spend time at Balandra Beach ("the most beautiful beach of Baja California"). An overnight in port in La Paz is followed by a day exploring the group of islands just north of the city--swimming with sea lions at Los Islotes or taking advantage of more opportunities for snorkeling and



SCUBA diving.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - Cabo San Lucas

A seaside resort located at the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula in Mexico, where the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean come together, Cabo San Lucas has much to offer. Famous for its rock formation emerging from the ocean and its magnificent white sand beaches, the small town also has lively nightlife. Surrounded by charming landscapes, between arid deserts dotted with cacti and spectacular rocky pinnacles, this very popular destination will certainly win you over.

Day 2 - At sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation



in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 3 - Guerrero Negro

Surrounded by dunes and salt pans, Guerrero Negro offers an unparalleled natural spectacle between the aridity of the desert and the rich marine life. Its bay is a huge expanse of calm and crystal-clear water, providing sanctuary for the grey whales that come here to breed each winter, preserving their ancient migratory cycle, the longest of all mammals. And with good reason, as the survival of the whale calves is always guaranteed by the large quantities of salt that come from Mexico's largest salt mine and make the density of the water higher, thus enabling the new born calves to rise to the surface.

Day 4 - At sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 5 - Magdalena Bay

Magdalena Bay, a wild setting on the western coast of Baja California Sur, inspires contemplation. Famous for its protected bay and its exceptional ecosystem, it will fully immerse you in nature, with its landscapes of rare beauty and incomparable tranquillity. Its peaceful waters welcome grey whales and schools of bottlenose dolphins, while the islands of sand sheltered by the bay are home to thousands of birds: cormorants and large pelicans. Finally, you will be captivated by the majestic sand dunes on Magdalena Island. A timeless moment...

Day 6 - Cabo Pulmo National Park

Cabo Pulmo National Park, at the southeastern point of Baja California, is home to one of North America's oldest coral reefs. This exceptional ecosystem, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a real paradise for diving and snorkelling fans. Its turquoise waters, teeming with marine life, from shoals of trevallies and colourful fish to majestic devil rays, earned this place the recognition of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who described it as "the world's most beautiful aquarium" in 1970. It is here that the first Baja California community initiated the protection of its area by creating a national marine park. With the help of scientists and local NGOs, these people have abandoned fishing, which was once their main activity, to embrace eco-tourism and transform the region into a model of marine conservation.



Day 7 - Loreto Bay National Park

Bahia de Loreto National Park, a jewel of the Sea of Cortez, is a sanctuary where the horizon dances with the turquoise waters. Its volcanic islands rise up, mysterious, like guardians of a rare biodiversity. Here, bottlenose dolphins play, blue whales glide, and seabirds, such as large pelicans, draw arabesques in the sky.

Days 7 - 8 - Loreto

Seated on the eastern coast of Baja California Sur, the secluded stopover of Loreto offers a blend of culture and spectacular nature. Quiet little streets are edged by colonial buildings such as the Mission de Notre-Dame de Loreto, which bears witness to the town s status as an 18th-century Californian capital. Hiking paths lead to the impressive mountains of the Sierra de la Giganta and there are lots of stunning beaches, where. kayaking is a great way to explore the region s rich marine life.

Day 8 - Coronado Island

In the heart of the Gulf of California, Coronado, the main island of the eponymous archipelago, will delight wilderness fans. Uninhabited and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site among the islands and protected areas of the Gulf of California, the island is home to extremely rich biodiversity. During a snorkelling trip, you'll be able to admire the exceptional underwater fauna that lives in these turquoise waters: sea lions, sea turtles and multi-coloured fish will provide moving encounters. During a walk with your expedition team, don't miss out on discovering the ancient volcano buried inland.

Day 9 - Los Islotes

Los Islotes are rocky islets located to the south west of the California Bay: the site is famous for sheltering a large colony of California sea lions. Used to humans, these sea lions are not shy and can be easily approached. An excursion on a Zodiac® dinghy will provide you with a fantastic opportunity to admire these playful animals, and you will have the possibility of swimming alongside them: a moving experience.

Day 10 - La Paz (Pichilingue)

Located on the shores of the Sea of Cortez, nestling between golden deserts and turquoise waters, La Paz will invite you to escape from it all. In this oasis combining a fascinating past with natural beauty, fall under the spell of Balandra, considered to be Baja California's most beautiful beach, or admire the stunning scenery during a walk along the Malecon boardwalk. Its turquoise waters shelter abundant marine life and are ideal for swimming or kayaking in the mangrove.

Day 11 - Cabo San Lucas

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Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: LE BELLOT

YOUR SHIP: **Le Bellot**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Featuring innovative and environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed staterooms, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside, this new limited-capacity yacht boasting just 92 staterooms and suites will offer you a truly unique cruising experience. As the first ship in a new series, Le Bellot will embody the unique atmosphere of a subtle blend of exploration, refinement, intimacy and comfort. Aboard this ship that flies the French flag, you will experience the incomparable pleasure of an intimate cruise, with the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic-chic ambiance with luxury service. Experience a luxurious setting where the accent is on authenticity and passion for travel. RESTAURANTS As it is an essential part of French culture, gastronomy will naturally have pride of place aboard this new ship. To the back of Deck 4, you will find a 260 m² panoramic restaurant which can accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. In a relaxed atmosphere, an outdoor grill on Deck 3 will serve grilled meats with a variety of salads and desserts. PUBLIC AREAS Le Bellot has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m² reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m² boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m² main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant

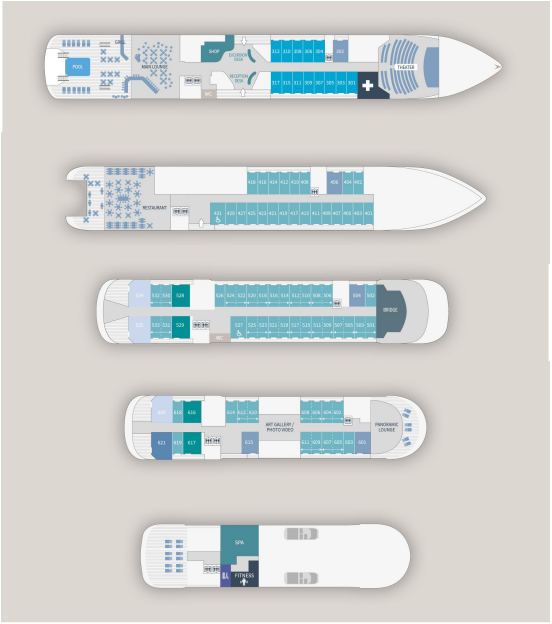




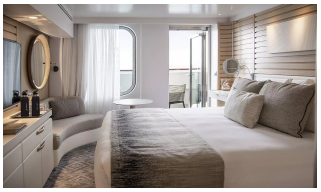
cruise ships.



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Deluxe Stateroom



Deluxe Suite Deck 3



Deluxe Suite Deck 4



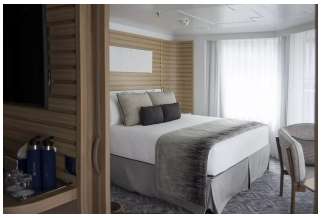
Deluxe Suite Deck 5



Deluxe Suite Deck 6



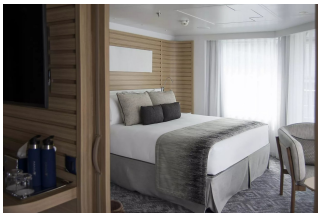
Grand Deluxe Suite



Grand Deluxe Suite Deck 5



Grand Deluxe Suite Deck 6





Owner's Suite



Prestige Deck 4



Prestige Stateroom Deck 6



Prestige Suite Deck 5



Prestige Deck 5



Prestige Deck 5 Suite



Prestige Suite Deck 6



Privilege Suite Deck 5



Prestige Deck 6



Prestige Deck 6 Suite



Privilege Suite Deck 6



Prestige Stateroom Deck 4



Prestige Stateroom Deck 5





PRICING

10-Feb-2027 to 20-Feb-2027

Prestige Deck 6 Suite	£20855 GBP pp
Prestige Deck 4	£9585 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 4	£15045 GBP pp
Grand Deluxe Suite Deck 6	£23945 GBP pp
Deluxe Stateroom	£8315 GBP pp
Grand Deluxe Suite Deck 5	£22525 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 5	£15045 GBP pp
Prestige Deck 5 Suite	£19855 GBP pp
Privilege Suite Deck 5	£21855 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 6	£15045 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 3	£15045 GBP pp
Prestige Deck 6	£11045 GBP pp
Privilege Suite Deck 6	£21855 GBP pp
Prestige Deck 5	£10495 GBP pp

14-Feb-2028 to 24-Feb-2028

Deluxe Suite Deck 5	£13415 GBP pp
Prestige Stateroom Deck 5	£9255 GBP pp
Prestige Suite Deck 5	£17995 GBP pp
Prestige Suite Deck 6	£18905 GBP pp
Deluxe Stateroom	£8015 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 6	£13415 GBP pp
Privilege Suite Deck 6	£19825 GBP pp
Prestige Stateroom Deck 6	£9755 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 4	£13415 GBP pp
Prestige Stateroom Deck 4	£8845 GBP pp
Owner's Suite	£26685 GBP pp
Grand Deluxe Suite	£21735 GBP pp
Deluxe Suite Deck 3	£13415 GBP pp
Privilege Suite Deck 5	£19825 GBP pp