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## Baja's Gray Whales with Oscar Frey

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- **Trip Highlights:** Observe friendly gray whales in San Ignacio Lagoon alongside a whale researcher, explore Baja's diverse habitats, and travel back in time with visits to the region's caves to see ancient paintings and petroglyphs
  - **When:** March 19 – 26, 2010
  - **Duration:** 7 Nights
  - **Accommodations:** Hotels and Kuyima Cabins
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### **El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve ~**

Mexico's largest protected in area. El Vizcaíno was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 due to its ecological and cultural importance. The reserve is home to three gray whale sanctuaries, diverse wetlands, and over 200 caves with paintings dating back 10,000 years.

**San Ignacio Lagoon ~** located 35 miles south of San Ignacio town and rated as one of the most pristine whale sanctuaries in the world. Each year gray whales use the lagoon to raise calves. The gray whales of San Ignacio are famous for their friendly encounters, swimming curiously alongside small boats carrying enthusiastic whale watchers.

**Gray Whales~** baleen whales that inhabit shallow coastal waters of the eastern north Pacific. The gray whale makes one of the longest of all mammalian annual migrations, traveling 10,000 – 14,000 miles round-trip. Their southward journey to mating and calving lagoons in Baja California, Mexico can take 2-3 months.

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## Reefs to Rockies



### **Day 1 (March 19) – Arrival in Loreto**

Transfer to hotel in Loreto. The rest of the evening is on your own. Posada de las Flores or similar.

### **Day 2 (March 20) – San Ignacio Town**

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll start our journey through the heart of the Baja California Peninsula. We will drive by Bahía Concepción and its exhilarating scenery of the Sea of Cortez, stopping in El Palmarito to see the rupestrian paintings of Santa Marta. After lunch, we'll hike to see ancient cave paintings in the area. Continue to San Ignacio town, located in a luscious oasis in the middle of the desert, where we will spend the night. Overnight in San Ignacio town. (B,L,D)

### **Day 3 (March 21) – San Ignacio Lagoon**

Depart early in the morning after breakfast to the cave painting of El Ratón, return to San Ignacio, visit the Mission of San Ignacio and the museum of rupestrian paintings, lunch and transfer to San Ignacio Lagoon. Overnight at Kuyima Cabins Campsite. (B,L,D)



### **Day 4 (March 22) – San Ignacio Lagoon**

This morning, we'll board a panga for our first whale watching excursion in the lagoon. After lunch, you have the option of going out on a second whale watching tour or you may choose to explore the neighboring salt flats where photography opportunities abound. Overnight at Kuyima Cabins Campsite. (B,L,D)

**Optional overnight turtle project with SEE Turtles** for those wanting a hands-on experience with an ongoing marine turtle conservation project in San Ignacio Lagoon.



### **Day 5 (March 23) – San Ignacio Lagoon**

Today brings another opportunity to observe Baja's gray whales. We'll also visit North Beach and Pelicano and Garza Islands, important nesting sanctuaries for birds including the osprey. Overnight at Kuyima Cabins Campsite. (B,L,D)

### **Day 6 (March 24) – San Ignacio Lagoon**

This is our last day at the lagoon. You have your choice of one or two whale watching excursions or you can explore the surrounding areas on your own or with a local guide. The nearby tide pools are a great place to observe resident marine life. This afternoon, we'll gather for a group photo using Kite Aerial Photography before our farewell dinner at camp. Overnight at Kuyima Cabins Campsite. (B,L,D)

### **Day 7 (March 25) – Transfer to Loreto**

After breakfast, we'll depart for Loreto with lunch en route. The evening is on your own to explore the town of Loreto. Overnight at Posada de las Flores or similar. (B,L)

### **Day 8 (March 26) – Return home**

Transfer to the airport for your flight back to the U.S.

**Price: \$2300/ person based on double occupancy. Add \$150/ person for the overnight project with SEE Turtles.** Package includes guide services of Oscar Frey (whale expert in Mexico), local guides at Kuyima, private transportation between Loreto and San Ignacio Lagoon, accommodations, meals, and activities as listed in the itinerary.