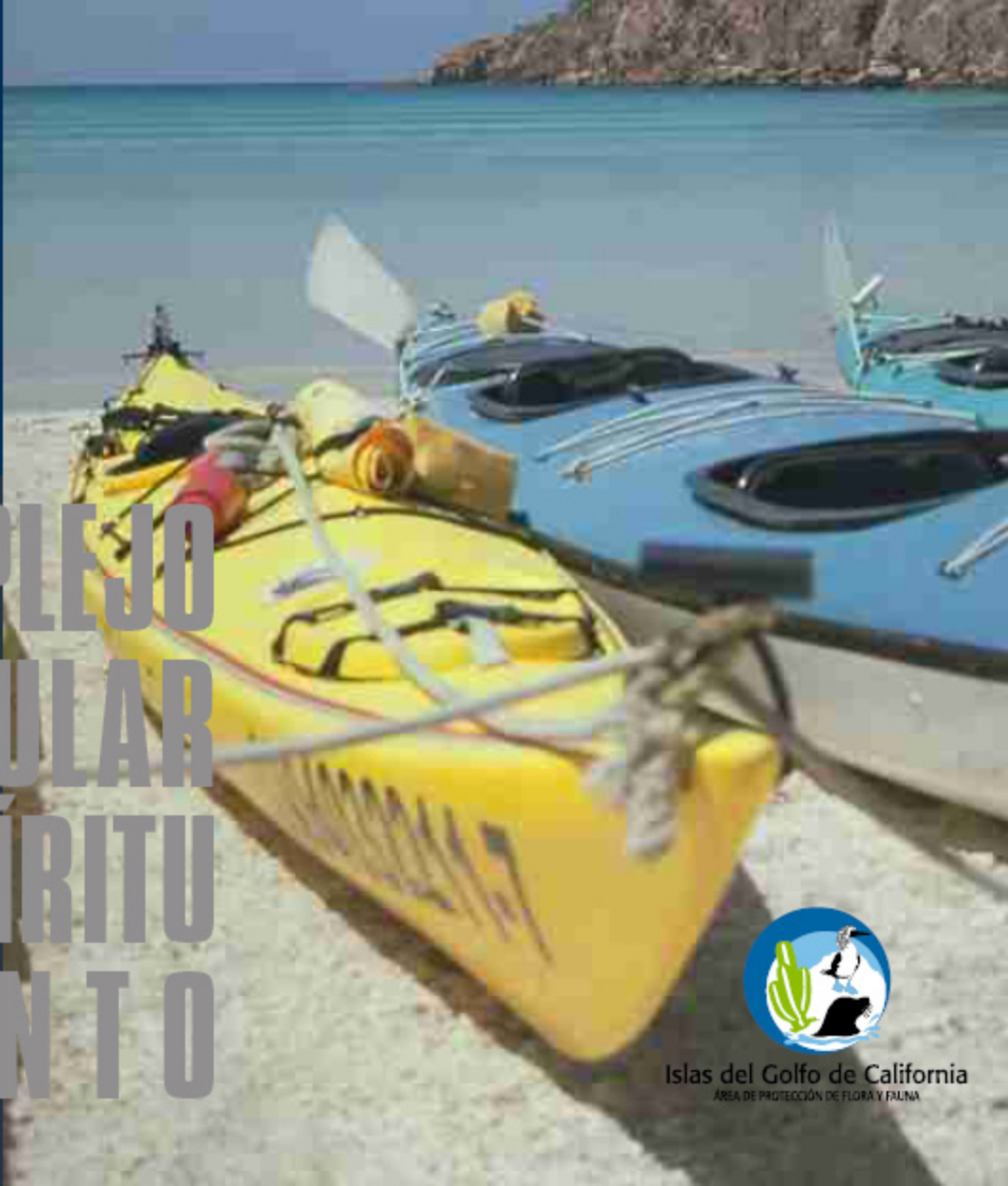



CAMPING AND SEA
KAYAKING GUIDE

C OMPLEJO INSULAR ESPÍRITU SANTO



Islas del Golfo de California
ÁREA DE PROTECCIÓN DE FLORA Y FAUNA



Campsites

1. “El Embudo”

The most northern of the campsites, “El Embudo”, is the perfect place to access Los Islotes, the sea lion rookery. This sandy beach is about 150 feet long, has an easy access and it is well protected from the north winds. Moreover, it rarely has bugs and it has a great hike to a “dry lake”. This beach recently was restored so it is an excellent campsite. Even though it does not get crowded, researchers occasionally occupy it.

2. “Ensenada Grande”

Within Ensenada Grande there are four beaches well protected from the north winds. The northern, on the left hand side (Ensenada Grande 1), is a little white-sand beach about 60 yards long; it has an easy access and rarely has bugs. It is recommended during the peak tourism season.

The next beach towards the south is **Ensenada Grande 2**, a big white sandy beach about 200 yards long. This beach is the most popular place on the island, visited by charters and divers that spend lunch time on the beach. Therefore it tends to be crowded, plus it is forbidden to camp on this beach.

Next towards the south and set further back is Ensenada Grande 3, a large white sandy beach about 200 yards long. Although, has excellent conditions for camping, it gets crowded by large camping groups. If so, take the right corner (south) if there is no space on other beaches within Ensenada Grande. It gets quite buggy after the rainy season.

The last one of the campsites in Ensenada Grande is Ensenada Grande 4, a little beach at the south end, about 100 feet long, shady and a little damp seeming. Not good option during high spring tides.

3. “La Cueva”

This little cove, next to Ensenada Grande, has a little beach about

90 feet long. Even though it is protected, the access is quite difficult due to the rocky bottom and shallow water. Fishermen traditionally used this beach.

4. “El Cardonal”

El Cardonal is a large white sandy beach located on the north side of a big and shallow bay. It is well protected from north winds, but susceptible to bugs due to the large mangrove near it. On the plus side, it is located on the flat and narrowest part of Partida Island that make an easy hike to the east side of the island.

5. “El Cardoncito”

Within big cliffs a narrow entrance leads to “El Cardoncito”, a sandy little beach about 150 feet long. It is well protected from north winds but the space for camping is limited during spring tides. This beach is often used for a lunch stop. At the back of the beach there is a fresh water (brackish) well. Not safe for drinking!

6. “El Rincón”

El Rincón is located within Partida’s cove, set back on the north side of the bay. The access to the beach is susceptible to low tides, but it is very well protected from almost all wind directions (except south-west). The west side of this beach makes a good campsite. At the back of the beach there is a canyon with a series of dry waterfalls that make one of the most beautiful hikes on the island. This beach is subject to bugs after the rainy season.

7. “La Partida”

In the Partida cove there are two long sand bars that are in the gap between Partida island and Espiritu Santo, and normally the route for kayakers paddling south along the east side of the island. Permanent fishing camps occupy the central part, but the northeastern bar, close to the rocks, makes a good camp spot. This place is very exposed

Leave "No Trace" guidelines for camping

Before and while you are camping

- Get your permit and pay your camping fee
- Camp only on designated campsites and do not clear areas for camping. It is forbidden to camp on "Ballena Beach" and Ensenada Grande 2. It is not permitted to land on Los Islotes, Ballena, Gallo and Gallina islands, all are nesting areas for sea birds.
- Do not disturb or destroy any flora and fauna. Keep noise at a minimum and respect the privacy of other groups. The minimum distance to anchor at the sea lion rookery and bird colonies is 90 feet
- Use only authorised nature trails. Do not create new ones
- Before arriving to the islands check that all your equipment is clean from seeds, plants, insects or any other animals. Do not take pets to the island
- Do not use driftwood for firewood, campfires are NOT allowed. You should use propane or gas stoves
- If you use soap for dish washing, make sure it is biodegradable
- Do not take natural souvenirs with you. Removal of shells, seeds or rocks is not allowed. Let others enjoy the same you are enjoying.

Litter

- Take litter back with you. Some biodegradable litter (i.e. food waste) can be sunk at sea at least 2 miles off shore. Do not dig garbage pits and never leave plastic on the islands
- If possible, leave the area cleaner than you find it.

Human waste

- You must pack out all human waste. If you carry a portable-potty, throw the waste in open ocean. As a last resource, dig a 6" hole in the intertidal zone, away from streams and campsites and cover it back
- Collect all toilet paper and take it back or burn it carefully away from vegetation. Do not leave toilet paper in holes or sea.

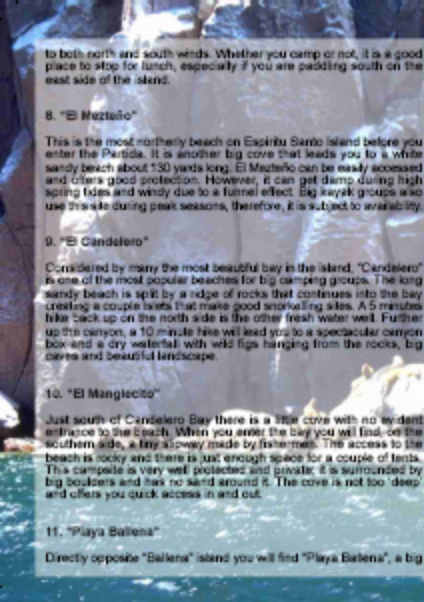
Food

- Pack it carefully so that mice, ringtail cats, and antelope squirrels do not get in there. Do not feed native animals.

Be prepared!

Sea and desert are an astonishing combination but dangerous as well. We strongly recommend that you plan your trip and check the following safety points, in order to camp and travel around the island safely.

- Remember that there is no drinkable water on the island. Make sure you bring enough, especially during summer months. The recommended amount is 1 gallon per person/day
- There are no palms or trees that offer good shade in campsites, but some beaches offer good caves as shelter. However, it is a good idea to get your own shade and lot of sun block
- Bring the appropriate equipment and clothes. You can get very warm, cold and wet depending on the season
- Going out during a strong wind can be extremely challenging. Assess the weather, as well as your skills. Respect the sea
- Landing on some of the campsites during extremely low tides will imply a long carry of your equipment and kayak to get to the beach
- Most of the accidents happen during hiking. Do not attempt to rock climb, since ALL the rock are loose. Get the appropriate foot wear and clothes that protect you from thorny bushes and low lying cactus
- The only poisonous and dangerous animals on the islands are the rattlesnakes and scorpions. Be aware of snakes during morning and sunset hikes along the "arroyos", especially during summer months. Do not leave clothes or bags open out of your tent, which makes a perfect "home" for scorpions.
- During the warmer months (April-November) and especially after rain (July-September) the mosquitoes and no-see-ums can present a challenge. At sunset and sunrise in particular you may be forced to take refuge in your tent to escape the "flying teeth". Even the best bug repellents become ineffective and face net and long sleeves are highly recommended.
- Snorkelling is completely safe if you do not touch anything. There are sharp shells, coral and scorpion fish that can easily wound you. Also, when going into the water you should watch for stingrays. To avoid them "shuffle" your feet and float as soon as you can
- In case of an emergency channel 16 on VHF radio is the international emergency channel. Most of the time there are camping groups at Candelero or Ensenada Grande and diving and other recreational boats travelling daily from La Paz to Los Islotes that carry VHF radios.



to both north and south winds. Whether you camp or not, it is a good place to stop for lunch, especially if you are paddling south on the east side of the island.

8. "El Mezcalo"

This is the most northerly beach on Espiritu Santo Island before you enter the Partida. It is another big cove that leads you to a white sandy beach about 130 yards long. El Mezcalo can be easily accessed and offers good protection. However, it can get damp during high spring tides and windy due to a funnel effect. Big kayak groups also use this site during peak seasons, therefore, it is subject to availability.

9. "El Candelero"

Considered by many the most beautiful bay in the island, "Candelero" is one of the most popular beaches for big camping groups. The long sandy beach is split by a ridge of rocks that continues into the bay creating a couple islets that make good snorkeling sites. A 5 minutes hike back up on the north side is the other fresh water well. Further up the canyon, a 10 minute hike will lead you to a spectacular canyon box and a dry waterfall with wild figs hanging from the rocks, big caves and beautiful landscape.

10. "El Manglicito"

Just south of Candelero Bay there is a little cove with no evident entrance to the beach. When you enter the bay you will find, on the southern side, a tiny slipway made by fishermen. The access to the beach is rocky and there is just enough space for a couple of tents. This campsite is very well protected and private, it is surrounded by big boulders and has no sand around it. The cove is not too 'deep' and offers you quick access in and out.

11. "Playa Ballena"

Directly opposite "Ballena" island you will find "Playa Ballena", a big

bay with a beautiful white-sand beach of several hundred yards long. The access to the beach is easy and offers good shelter. However, it is forbidden to camp on this beach due to the special historical importance of the site.

12. "Playa Gallo" (Los Muertitos)

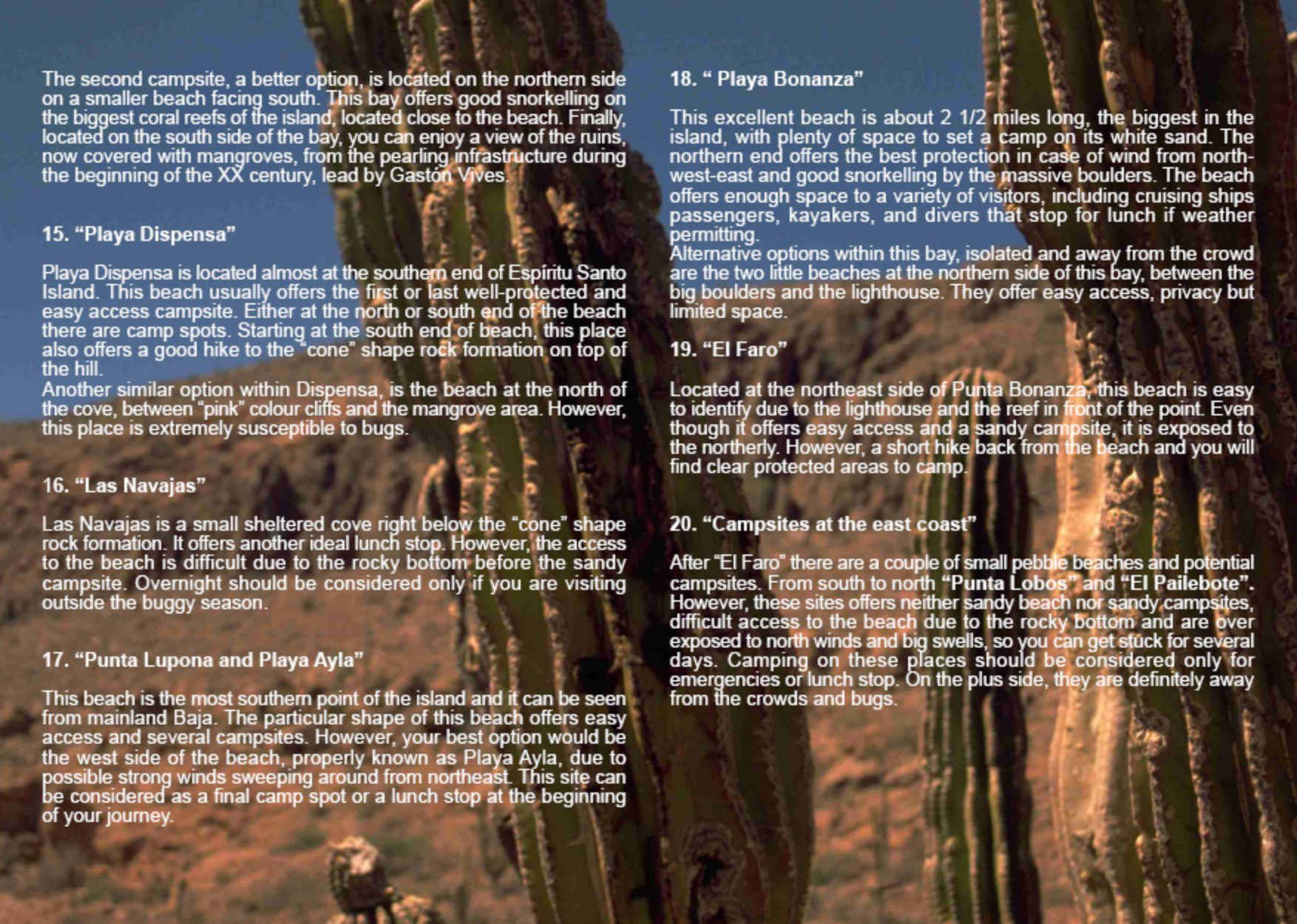
Between Ensenada el Gallo and la Galina there is "Playa Gallo", a small white-sand-beach facing towards Gallo and Galina islands. The northern side of the beach, underneath the rocks, offers a good shelter. On the southern side there is a small coral reef that offer good snorkelling. Even though the beach is exposed to northerly wind, the orientation of Espiritu Santo, Gallo and Galina islands protect this campsite. Groups of kayakers occasionally stop at this beach for lunch.

13. "El Empachado"

El Empachado is a pretty white sandy beach located between two cliffs, very well protected from the wind. The southern side of the beach has an excellent campsite. On both sides of the beach, a bit apart, there are two fishing camps with their own sheltered slipway. The coral reef along the northern coast of the cove offer a great snorkelling. Also, starting on the south side of the hill, there is a good hike that runs along the edge, following the contour of the cove. On the top you will have a nice view of the mangroves and lagoon.

14. "San Gabriel Bay"

San Gabriel Bay is the biggest bay in the whole Archipelago. It has a pretty beach about 1 - miles long but low tides can make the access difficult. San Gabriel has two potential campsites. The first one anywhere on the biggest beach above the reach of high spring tides. However, this represents a buggy area due to the mangroves behind the beach. This campsite, it is also located on the tallest and narrowest area in Espiritu Santo Island. A beautiful hike, 2 hours (2.7M) long, into the desert will lead you to Bonanza Beach on the east side of the island.



The second campsite, a better option, is located on the northern side on a smaller beach facing south. This bay offers good snorkelling on the biggest coral reefs of the island, located close to the beach. Finally, located on the south side of the bay, you can enjoy a view of the ruins, now covered with mangroves, from the pearling infrastructure during the beginning of the XX century, lead by Gastón Vives.

15. “Playa Dispensa”

Playa Dispensa is located almost at the southern end of Espíritu Santo Island. This beach usually offers the first or last well-protected and easy access campsite. Either at the north or south end of the beach there are camp spots. Starting at the south end of beach, this place also offers a good hike to the “cone” shape rock formation on top of the hill.

Another similar option within Dispensa, is the beach at the north of the cove, between “pink” colour cliffs and the mangrove area. However, this place is extremely susceptible to bugs.

16. “Las Navajas”

Las Navajas is a small sheltered cove right below the “cone” shape rock formation. It offers another ideal lunch stop. However, the access to the beach is difficult due to the rocky bottom before the sandy campsite. Overnight should be considered only if you are visiting outside the buggy season.

17. “Punta Lupona and Playa Ayla”

This beach is the most southern point of the island and it can be seen from mainland Baja. The particular shape of this beach offers easy access and several campsites. However, your best option would be the west side of the beach, properly known as Playa Ayla, due to possible strong winds sweeping around from northeast. This site can be considered as a final camp spot or a lunch stop at the beginning of your journey.

18. “Playa Bonanza”

This excellent beach is about 2 1/2 miles long, the biggest in the island, with plenty of space to set a camp on its white sand. The northern end offers the best protection in case of wind from north-west-east and good snorkelling by the massive boulders. The beach offers enough space to a variety of visitors, including cruising ships passengers, kayakers, and divers that stop for lunch if weather permitting.

Alternative options within this bay, isolated and away from the crowd are the two little beaches at the northern side of this bay, between the big boulders and the lighthouse. They offer easy access, privacy but limited space.

19. “El Faro”

Located at the northeast side of Punta Bonanza, this beach is easy to identify due to the lighthouse and the reef in front of the point. Even though it offers easy access and a sandy campsite, it is exposed to the northerly. However, a short hike back from the beach and you will find clear protected areas to camp.

20. “Campsites at the east coast”

After “El Faro” there are a couple of small pebble beaches and potential campsites. From south to north “Punta Lobos” and “El Pailebote”. However, these sites offers neither sandy beach nor sandy campsites, difficult access to the beach due to the rocky bottom and are over exposed to north winds and big swells, so you can get stuck for several days. Camping on these places should be considered only for emergencies or lunch stop. On the plus side, they are definitely away from the crowds and bugs.

KAYAKING ROUTES COMPLEJO INSULAR DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO



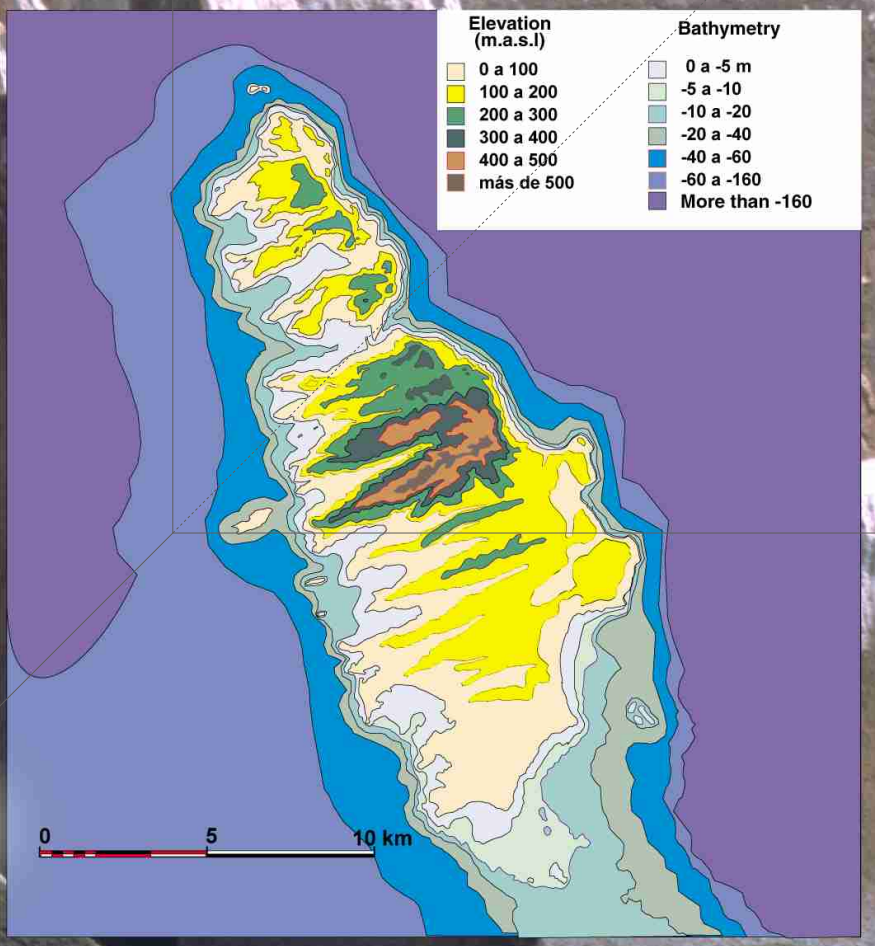
COMMON KAYAKING ROUTES

75 km / 46 nm ———
 70 km / 43 nm ———
 100 km / 62 nm ———
 45 km / 25 nm ———

*Approximated distances

SYMBOLY

Camp sites
 Snorkelling
 Authorized trails



Camping and kayaking Guide Espíritu Santo Archipelago

The Flora and Fauna Protection Area "Islas del Golfo de California" has developed this camping and kayaking guide as a source of information for independent visitors who arrive and camp on Espíritu Santo Island, either by kayak or boat. It briefly describes authorised campsites (beaches), their accessibility and general conditions, in terms of crowdedness and attractiveness. Further more, we provide you with a guideline for low impact camping techniques, in order that your visit "Leave No Trace" on the environment and the animals and plants living there. We hope you find this information useful and welcome you to enjoy these beautiful islands.

General Information

The islands in the Gulf of California or Sea of Cortés are part of a protected area known as Gulf of California Islands (Flora and Fauna Protection Area "Islas del Golfo de California"). Espíritu Santo Island is probably the most visited island in the Sea of Cortés both for its closeness to La Paz and its attractiveness for diving, kayaking, sailing and cruising. Espíritu Santo Island is part of an Archipelago that also includes Partida Island, Los Islotes (the sea lion rookery) and Gallina, Gallo and Ballena islands located on the west side of Espíritu Santo. None of these islands are inhabited, although permanent fishing camps can be found on many beaches.

The Archipelago of Espíritu Santo and its marine surroundings shelter an incredible amount of wildlife species. Examples of its biodiversity include the blue, humpback and fin whales, dolphins, sea lions, whale sharks and colourful fishes. Animals and plants not found elsewhere in the world, the so-called endemic species, inhabit it, especially reptiles and mammals like the *Juancito* (antelope squirrel), the *Babisuri* (ring tail cat) the black hare and sand snake. Moreover, the Archipelago offers astonishing landscapes and geologic formations.

Tourism activities on the island vary over the year. However, Espíritu Santo is one of the most favourite destinations for Sea kayaking in the northwest. Kayaking activities run from October through April with two periods when camping activities increase. The first one during December (holidays) and the second one from March to April, especially over Spring Break and Easter. Diving is another of the most popular activities around the island through out the year around, but especially from June to November. During these months some diving companies establish "base camps" at Ensenada Grande 3, Mezteño or Candeleró. Finally, yacht cruising takes place mainly from December to April. Cruising boats (over 180 feet and 70 passengers) anchor at Ensenada Grande 3, El Gallo Cove and Bonanza Beach. Most of our visitors are from the U.S. and Canada although Japanese and European tourists are increasing rapidly.

Wind patterns in La Paz Bay and, in general, southern Baja, are remarkably seasonal. Most of the campsites at Espíritu Santo are located on the west side of the island in deep coves and bays. Therefore, they are well protected from most of the wind directions, especially the northerly. This is the strongest and most constant wind from November to March. The southerly wind or "Cormuells" are common during the night and mornings of summer months (March-October). However most sites do not offer protection from westerly winds usually found during the same period as the southerly.

The rainy season takes place mainly from July to September (associated to monsoon and hurricane season), although it is not unusual to get a few light rain days from December to March.

Temperatures in the desert are very extreme. While in the summer temperatures can get over 110° F (42° C), during the winter temperatures can drop down to 40°-50° F (5-10° C). Water temperatures range from 68° F during the winter and spring and up to 82° F (28° C) in the summer and autumn.

Tide and wind are the main sources of currents around Espíritu Santo. The strongest movements of water occur in the San Lorenzo Channel and around Los Islotes. Tide range is in average 5 feet (1.5m). Although, during December and January it is common to get up to 7 feet (2 m), producing a 2 knots current in the San Lorenzo Channel and potentially hazardous currents for swimmers in the east end of Los Islotes.

Production: Dirección de Comunicación Estratégica e Identidad • Foto credits: Baja California Sur Office • Graphic Design: Alembin Garrido & asociados



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Acknowledgements
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