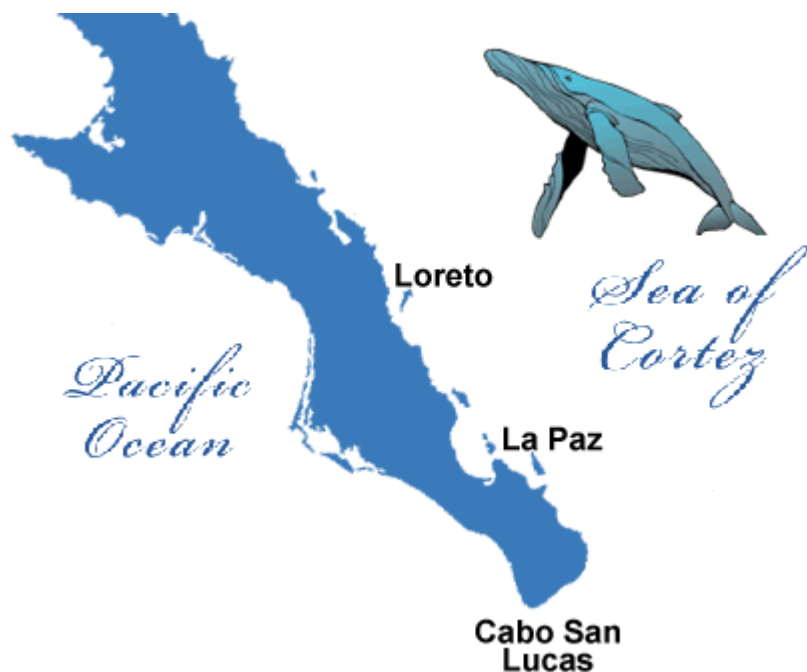


Sea of Cortez, Baja & Gray Whales

Aboard Historic Wooden Yacht from Loreto to La Paz, Baja



A 12-day/11-night expedition among the scattered islands along the shore of the Baja peninsula. Snorkel with young sea lions, walk along desert island ridges and palm-lined arroyos. Cruising aboard this historic 1924 wooden yacht will be reminiscent of John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts 1940 voyage aboard the "Western Flyer", but with modern comforts!



DATES: 2019 –

Jan 18-29; Feb 08-19 **Sold Out**;

Mar 01-12 **Sold Out**

DURATION: 12 DAYS/11 NIGHTS

EMBARK: LORETO, BCS

DISEMBARK: LA PAZ, BCS

SHIP: WESTWARD

FROM: \$6,550

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Sailing aboard a beautifully restored 1924 yacht, with original Atlas Diesel engine**
- **Kayak, hike, nature walks**
- **Blue Whales**
- **Snorkel with Sea Lions**
- **Dolphins**
- **Frigate Birds**
- **Sea Turtles**
- **Visit Loreto and La Paz, the capital of Baja California Sur**



Loreto Cathedral

hotel, or in nearby restaurants., and a welcome night's rest after a day filled with fresh sea air (and perhaps whale breath!).

ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Arrive Loreto

Plan to arrive in Loreto via the Alaska/Horizon Air flight from LAX. Our crew will meet you as you emerge from Customs and Immigration and escort you to our hotel in old Loreto. You will have a couple of hours to explore the many shops and sights, including the first mission church in the Californias, and milepost zero of El Camino Real, which was built to link the missions. We will have a group dinner in a garden restaurant near the old square.

Day 2 – Loreto to Bahia Magdalena

After breakfast at a small cafe, you will meet your van transportation to Bahia Magdalena, which is a gray whale birthing and breeding lagoon on Baja's west coast. Bring an overnight bag.

It is about three hours from Loreto to Bahia Magdalena. There will be stretching stops along the way. In Bahia Magdalena, the van will drop you off at the panga landing site. This is a lot of time in a van, but the payoff is extraordinary! Also, your route will be through some of the most scenic country in Baja.

For your visit in the lagoons, a video, or short lens is recommended, as the whales typically come to you. It is an extraordinary experience to make eye contact with a 30-ton animal that has seemingly approached your panga solely for the purpose of exchanging winks!

You will return to your overnight accommodations in a small beach-front hotel. Your meals will either be at the

Day 3 – Bahia Magdalena to Loreto

Breakfast will be at the hotel, after which you will make your second visit to whale waters. The seas and winds are typically calmer for these morning trips, so you may be better able to get that picture that will inspire envy among your friends back home.



Bahia Bonanza

Lunch will be back in the hotel prior to taking the van to Loreto. Here you will check back into your hotel, take a nap in a cushy bed, and meet us all for another group dinner in Loreto.

Day 4 – Loreto – Board Westward

After a final hotel breakfast, you will take the short ride to Westward's moorage. You will have time to settle into your stateroom before joining us on the aft deck for a short safety orientation, following which we will raise the anchor and begin winding our way out of the

harbor. Our anchorage in Puerto Escondido was one of Steinbeck and Ricketts collection sites during their 1940 voyage to the Sea of Cortez.

Days 5 through 8 - Cruising Sea of Cortes

We cruise south, stopping at unique island and peninsula anchorages along the way. One stop may be a Ricketts/Steinbeck collection site; another may be the home of an endemic cactus or be the best example of a niche in the Sonoran desert ecology. This area is scattered with islands, some large, some tiny, all of which are Mexican national parks. Paddling kayaks in quiet coves, or walking the ridge lines and arroyos of isolated islands, we will have the opportunity to absorb their subtle beauty. Spending hours aboard the drifting Westward in what is referred to as the “Blue Triangle”, we hope to see blue and sperm whales, both of which congregate here to feed on the plankton and squid that thrive in the area’s nutrient-rich upwelling waters.

Day 9 - Isla San Jose – Los Islotes – Isla Partida

Today we will visit Isla San Jose, where we will paddle through the labyrinth of mangrove lined passages that fill the lagoon on the island’s southern tip. After an afternoon cruise past the California sea lion haul out at Los Islotes, we continue on to Isla Partida, where we will anchor in Caleta Cardonal. Here we will walk past the mangrove fringed shore and inland to the island’s desert heart.



This area, along with several other of our anchorages, was home to a large population of prehistoric peoples who made their livings from the sea. Traces of their ancient pathways are still visible on the island’s hillsides.

Day 10 - Isla Espiritu Santo

Our voyage’s final anchorage will be in Bahia San Gabriel, along Isla Espiritu Santo’s west side, where there is a nesting colony of frigate birds, as well as one of the most northerly coral colonies along the Pacific shore. If the conditions are right, we can don our swimming togs and snorkel over the colorful fish that live among the corals. The water here is both clear and warm, usually the warmest we will encounter in the course of our cruise.

Day 11 - Isla Espiritu Santo – La Paz

On our final full day together, we will continue our exploration of Isla Espiritu Santo by either foot or paddle. All too soon we will raise anchor and make the fifteen mile run into La Paz. We will celebrate our trip over dinner, and begin packing for tomorrow morning’s early departure to Los Cabos airport.

Day 12 - La Paz - Disembark

An early breakfast before meeting our van for the two and a half hour drive to the airport. We will arrive there by 11:00 AM.

Or add a visit to the amazing **Copper Canyon**. You will fly from La Paz across the Sea of Cortes to Los Mochis, where you will overnight in a beautiful historic hacienda in El Fuerte. In the morning, board the El Chepe narrow gauge train to climb from sea level to 8,000 ft – one of the world’s most scenic railways. Spend two nights at the beautiful Mirador Hotel, built on the rim of the canyon. End in Chihuahua for your flight home.

2019 RATES – Per Person

Double - \$6,550 Single - \$9,825

Includes all meals, beer, wine and standard liquor (You may bring your own preferred brands), taxes and fees, transportation, hotels, excursions, and transfers.

Does NOT Include - Flight to Loreto, return from San Jose del Cabo, trip insurance, and gratuities to crew.



MV Westward

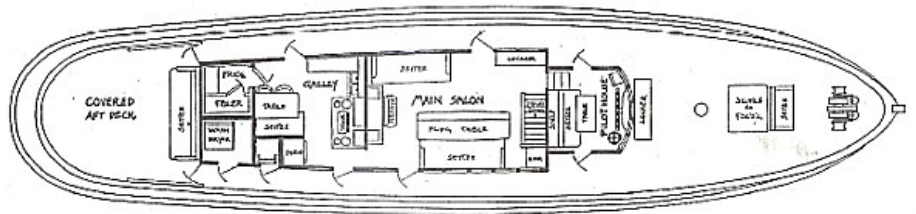
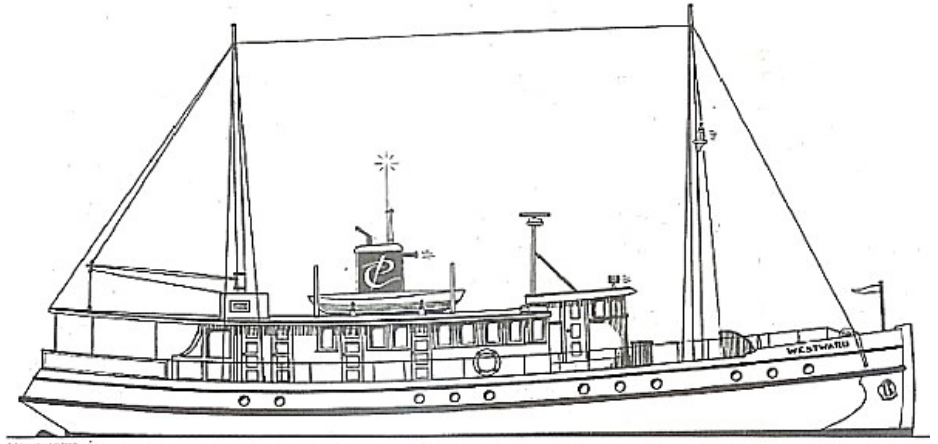
Built 1924 Vashon Island, WA

Length 86' Beam 18.5' Draft 9'

Powered by original Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine

Listed with the US National Register of Historic Places

Each of the four lower deck cabins on the *MV Westward* are outfitted with port lights, a double (4'6" w x 6'8" l) and a single (2'6" w x 6'6" l) bunk, a settee, sink, toilet and shower. There are standard 120 V outlets in the cabins.



Reservations & Information
1-855-EXPLOR1 (397-5671)

Email - info@explorcruises.com www.explorcruises.com

