



SEA OF CORTEZ DIVE EXPEDITION

Last Update September 2010

Club Cantamar



In 1983, the Aguilar family moved to La Paz with the sole purpose of starting a service oriented business. Being a scuba diver since 1965, it was just the natural move for Fernando, beginning operations with a 22' panga (Baja 1, still in operation), and an old 40 hp outboard engine, but with the Cantamar Project in mind as the family goal. After several years of persistent dreaming and planning, construction started in 1994 with a boat ramp, a small office building and the compressors house with the tank filling station, which in turn gave place to the actual

Hotel Cantamar Beach Resort & Marina, the family's dream come true. Also Club Cantamar is the only Dive Resort in Mexico fitted with a decompression chamber in premises, and the operation is in charge of Fernando Aguilar Sr., after exhaustive training in the University Of Southern California (USC), in Catalina Island.

After careful planning and a lot of dreaming, the Aguilar Family decided that the Sea of Cortez had a lot more to offer than what we can reach with the "day trip" boats.

The Sea of Cortez

The Gulf of California also known as the Sea of Cortez is a huge body of water that separates the Baja Peninsula from the Mexican mainland. This sea is thought to be one of the most diverse on the planet, it is home to thousands of species of macro invertebrates (base of the food chain!!) and it is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



The Gulf of California contains 37 islands – the two largest being Angel de la Guarda and Tiburon Island. Most of the islands are found on the peninsular side of the gulf. In fact, many of the islands of the Sea of Cortez are the result of volcanic explosions that occurred during the early history of Baja California. Several islands, including Isla Coronado, are home to active volcanoes.

Depth soundings in the gulf have ranged from fording depth at the estuary near Yuma Arizona to in excess of 3,000 meters (9,800 ft) in the deepest parts.

The narrow sea is home to a unique and rich ecosystem. In addition to a wide range of endemic creatures, like the critically endangered Vaquita Marina, it hosts many migratory species, such as the Humpback whale, California grey whale, killer whale, Manta ray and leatherback sea turtle and the world's largest animal, the Blue Whale. There are unusual resident populations of Fin Whales and Sperm Whales that do not migrate annually. This region has historically been a magnet for world-class sport fishing activities, with a rich history of sporting world records.

On March 19, 2009, The History Channel's TV Show MonsterQuest investigated a report of a 60 ft (18 m) long shark, dubbed "The Black Demon" by the locals. They believed it to be the Megalodon, a super predator long thought to be extinct. They had numerous sightings of the creature, and on the final sighting, their divers went under water but only discovered a whale shark.

THE CALIFORNIA SEA LION



California sea lions are known for their intelligence, playfulness, and noisy barking. Their color ranges from chocolate brown in males to a lighter, golden brown in females. Males reach 850 pounds (390 kg) and seven feet (2.1 m) in length. Females grow to 220 pounds (110 kg) and up to six feet (1.8 m) in length. They have a "dog-like"

face, and at around five years of age, males develop a bony bump on top of their skull called a sagittal crest. The top of a male's head often gets lighter in color with age.

These members of the otariid or walking seal family have external ear flaps and large flippers that they use to "walk" on land. The trained "seals" in zoos and aquariums are usually California sea lions.

Range/Habitat

California sea lions are found from Vancouver Island, British Columbia to the southern tip of Baja California in Mexico. They breed mainly on offshore islands, ranging from southern California's Channel Islands south to Mexico. There is a distinct population of California sea lions at the Galapagos Islands. A third population in the Sea of Japan became extinct, probably during World War II.

Mating/Breeding

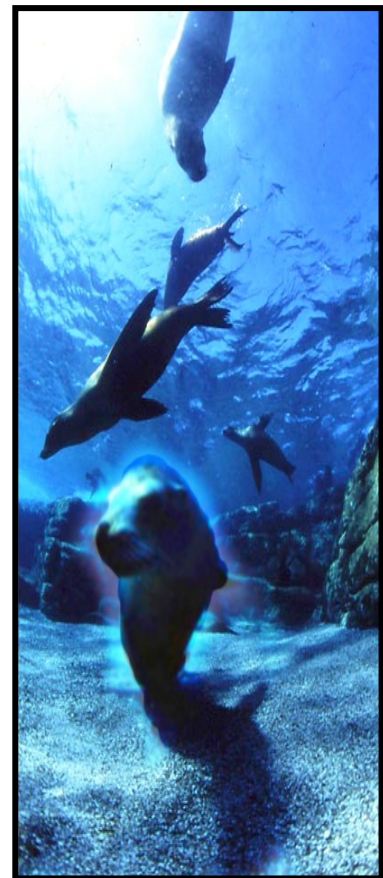
Most pups are born at “Los Islotes” in June or July and weigh 13 to 20 pounds (6 to 9 kg). They nurse for at least five to six months and sometimes over a year. Mothers recognize pups on crowded rookeries through smell and vocalizations. Pups also learn to recognize the smell and vocalizations of their mothers. Breeding takes place a few weeks after birth. Males patrol territories and bark almost continuously during the breeding season.

Behavior

California sea lions are very social animals, and groups often rest closely packed together at favored haul-out sites on land or float together on the ocean's surface in "rafts." They are sometimes seen "porpoising," or jumping out of the water, presumably to speed up their swimming. Sea lions have also been seen "surfing" breaking waves. California sea lions are opportunistic eaters, feeding on squid, octopus, herring, rockfish, mackerel, and small sharks. In turn, sea lions are preyed upon by Orcas (killer whales) and sharks.

Status

Their population is growing steadily, and California sea lions can be seen in many places such as San Francisco Island, Los Islotes, La Reina and Coronado Island Off Of Loreto.



The MY Sandman

Boat layout overall: 58' Hatteras Yachtfisher / 3 staterooms / 3 heads with 2 showers
full galley w/microwave, Jennair range, refrigerator/freezer icemaker, washer dryer /
rear cockpit area for easy access to the water and swim platform for fishing & diving / 4
air conditioner wet-bar / EPIRB / radar / sounder / auto pilot / dive compressor.

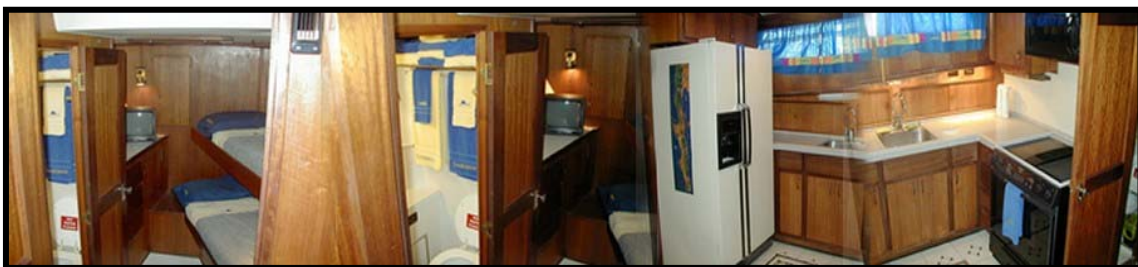
Master stateroom: 2 beds / television / VCR / private head with shower / closet air
conditioning.



Guest stateroom: 4 beds / television / private head with shower / air conditioning.



Forward stateroom: 2 beds / private head / washer dryer / air conditioning / tv.



Galley: side by side refrigerator/freezer / microwave / Jennair range-oven /dINETTE / fully equipped

Main lounge: Leather couch (makes into queen hide-a-bed) / love seat / TV / VCR CD changer / Karaoke / surround sound / 2 air conditioners / helm

Aft lounge: Icemaker / wet bar / settee / table & chairs Cockpit: Live well / saltwater and freshwater wash down / easy water level access for diving and fishing / fish box / coolers / chairs / tank storage / settee Equipment: 2 person Ocean kayak / 1 person Ocean kayak /18' Achilles inflatable with 40 hp Evinrude / fishing gear / dive compressor

Front deck: Generous seating / large sunbathing deck Flybridge: Generous seating / great for whale watching, site seeing, picture taking Ocean kayaks / dive compressor Engine Rooms: Twin Detroit 871 T1 Diesels / 14 gph watermaker Generator Room: 20KW Yanmar Gen Set Watermaker: 14 GPH Spectra desalination system



Itinerary

Fly directly into La Paz airport from LAX or into San Jose del Cabo airport from any major city in the USA. A Shuttle or taxi service can be arranged from any of these airports into our facilities where MY Sandman awaits.



Day 1

MY Sandman departs until midnight so you are welcome to board at any time during the afternoon or night. Welcome drinks and a light dinner will be served at 8:00 p.m.



Day 2

Arrive at the first dive location at 7:00 a.m., most likely the sea lions colony at Los Islotes will be the starting point as it is both a great location to do your buoyancy adjustments & a very fun place to dive!



Day 3-6

We will visit the most amazing dive sites of La Paz, from the world famous “el Bajo” seamounts all the way to the north sites of Las Animas and San Dieguito. 3-4 day dives are scheduled every day, plus night dives.



Day 7

After doing 3 dives we start heading back to our facilities in Cantamar, disembarking is at 16:00 hrs, check in at Club Cantamar or Hacienda Bugambillas hotel.



Day 8

Transfers back to the airport, end of our services.

Trip Info

PACKAGES

The length of our trips varies from short cruises of 4 nights/ 3 days diving to the most common trip of 7 nights/ 6 days diving. We also work with film crews, independent dive instructors as well as dive wholesalers and dive shops.

8 DAYS/ 7 NIGHTS & 6 DAYS DIVING \$1699 USD per person

PRICE INCLUDES

Ground transportation from La Paz airport to our facilities.
Accommodations in double stateroom with a/c and bathroom
6 nights and 6 days of diving aboard the MY Sandman
1 night at Club Cantamar or Hotel Hacienda Bugambilias
Last day's American breakfast
All meals and snacks while aboard
All soft drinks and water
Weight belts

NOT INCLUDED

Rental dive equipment.....\$23 usd per day for the full set of dive gear
Nitrox.....\$20/ day (optional)
Park fees.....\$16 p/p
Tips for the crew.....5% to 10% of the cost of the trip

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL

After presenting your valid passport to Mexican Immigration officials and receiving your temporary Mexican tourist visa (do not lose this visa as you will need to turn it back in upon your departure from Mexico), you will proceed to the baggage claim area to pick up your bags from the carousel.

Once you have your bags, you must submit the Customs form. You will notice that Mexican Customs at the airport make random search by asking you to push a button connected to what looks like a traffic light. A red light means they'll check your bags and a green light means you may proceed. Please be respectful at all times to all Mexican officials. Please check with your airline for their specific weight restrictions.

SUGGESTED GEAR & CLOTHING

Besides your normal dive gear, one dive computer per diver as well as a "safety sausage" are now required on all of our dive trips. This will ensure that you and your dive companions fully enjoy your scuba experience with us. We absolutely recommend wetsuits on all of our trips. Water temperatures during summer and autumn range from

80 F – 90 F so a light wetsuit should be enough, Gloves, and dive lights are highly suggested but not required.

Although the staterooms on MY Sandman are comfortable, there is limited storage space so please pack light. The dress code is extremely casual: a few T shirts, a few pairs of shorts, one pair of pants & bathing suits is all you will need. We suggest packing in a soft duffle bag for easy luggage storing.

Don't forget your hat, sunglasses and biodegradable sunscreen. Feel free to bring your own books, CD's and DVD's

Climate

The MY Sandman explores the Sea of Cortez year round, however the best time of the year for Scuba diving is between August and November, where both air and water temperature are high. Winds during this time of the year are predominant from the south. Storms also form in the Pacific Ocean and sometimes can become a threat when they head into the Gulf of California.



Visibility, Water Temperatures & Currents

Visibility is most of the times very good, with up to 30 meters, sometimes it can fall down to 12 meters specially after a day of heavy rain. Water temperature is usually very warm, never dropping below 80 F.

Currents can be expected especially during full and new moon periods. Protected dive sites are always available.

MENU - Our meals consists of a variety of healthy & nutritious foods including fresh fruits, veggies and meats. The cuisine reflects the Mexican culture and most dietary needs can be accommodated with advanced notice.

TOUR GUIDES

Our Divemasters are well trained and know the area very well, which insure that you will experience the most on each and every dive.



SHIP CREW –

The crew, formed by a Captain, Chef, 1 deckhand and the divemaster are onboard to operate the vessel and make sure of the safety and well being of the group. They bring with them many years of sailing experience in the Pacific Coast and the Sea of Cortez and offer the warmth and kindness that reflects the beauty and hospitality of the people of Mexico.

Booking Terms and Conditions

Individuals: 33% deposit required within 10 days of making reservation. Final payment due 60 days prior to departure. Cancellation fees are as follows:

No penalty if cancelled 9 months before departure.

10% of charter rate if cancelled 6 to 9 months before departure.

30% of charter rate if cancelled more than 90 days to 6 months before departure.

50% of charter rate if cancelled more than 60 to 90 days before departure.

No refunds within 60 days of departure.

Groups: 10% deposit required within 14 days of making the reservation. Additional 30% required 180 days before departure. Final payment is due 60 days before departure.

Cancellation fees are as follows:

No penalty if cancelled 9 months before departure.

10% of charter rate if cancelled 6 to 9 months before departure.

30% of charter rate if cancelled 60 days to 6 months before departure.

No refunds within 60 days of departure.