The Best of Baja
Todos Santos + Isla Espiritu Santo + La Paz + Magdalena Bay
March 1–8, 2020

WITH Neil P Kelley
Assistant Professor/Senior Lecturer
Department of Earth and Environmental Science
Dear Vanderbilt Travelers,

I invite you to join on a journey to Baja California Sur, March 1–8, 2020 featuring delightful nature walks, historical towns, living coral reefs, beautiful beaches, snorkeling, kayaking, and fun science lectures. Each day will offer several face to face encounters with some of the most fascinating animals on Earth.

The Sea of Cortez has been captivating explorers for centuries and boasts an amazing biological diversity. In this massive natural aquarium you can find manta rays, dolphins, humpback and sperm whales, whale sharks, sea lions and more! Among islands once pillaged for their black pearls and hidden coves one can also encounter flocks of frigate birds, Blue-footed Boobies, tropicbirds, Brown Pelicans and cormorants.

We will spend two days in deluxe camping on the Island Espiritu Santo on the Sea of Cortez, a national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy swimming with sea lions, kayaking, paddle boarding and snorkeling. Our exploration of Magdalena Bay will be fascinating as we experience close encounters with Gray whales and their calves. So when legendary diver Jacques Cousteau tagged the Sea of Cortez as the “world’s aquarium” and the “Galápagos of North America,” he had experienced firsthand the natural richness of this world. And now it’s your turn! Time to kick off your week and travel to BAJA with Vanderbilt.

We look forward to welcoming you on this adventure! Call (615) 322-3673 or email us at alumnitravel@vanderbilt.edu to register now.

Sincerely,

Cary Dewitt Allyn
Director, Vanderbilt Travel
DR. NEIL KELLEY is a paleontologist and evolutionary biologist with a special interest in ocean dwelling animals with land-living ancestors such as whales, seals and penguins. He is particularly interested in extinct marine reptiles that were the top ocean predators during the time of the dinosaurs. He has participated in fossil excavations in China and North America and visited museum collections around the world. His research has been featured in *High Country News, Smithsonian Magazine Online* and on *National Public Radio*. He completed his PhD at the University of California, Davis and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Smithsonian Institution before coming to Vanderbilt.
ITINERARY
SUNDAY, MARCH 1
USA + San José del Cabo + Todos Santos
Fly from your home city to San José del Cabo (SJD), México. Transfer to the pueblo mágico of Todos Santos about 90 minutes from the airport. Move into your lovely rooms with spectacular ocean views at Los Colibrís Casitas. Gather for a welcome gourmet taco dinner and trip briefing. LOS COLIBRÍS (D)

MONDAY, MARCH 2
Pacific Bluffs Cliff Walk + Mexican Cooking Class
Start your adventure with a Pacific bluffs walk along the rugged coastline of Todos Santos. Start at the sweeping Pacific beach where the local fishermen launch their boats each morning and bring in the daily catch each afternoon. A quick walk up the hill brings us to breath-taking views with opportunities to spot whales during several months of the year. See the stunning combination of desert landscape running to the sea as you pass an active sea lion colony. Discover the unique flora and fauna as well as the history of the area. Picnic lunch at the idyllic beach of San Pedro which features a beautiful marsh filled with bird life and a protective cove ringed by towering palms. Here you’ll eat, relax, sunbathe, swim—just enjoy the bliss of being in Baja! In the evening enjoy a cooking class with chef Iker Algorri. He is the author of Cooking Adventures in Baja California Sur and chef-in-residence at your hotel. He’ll share some of his secrets at this wonderful Mexican Survival Cooking Class. LOS COLIBRÍS (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 3
Sea of Cortez and Isla Espíritu Santo
Depart for Isla Espíritu Santo and Camp Cecil today! After breakfast travel to La Paz to head out on the Sea of Cortez! Camp Cecil is on Isla Espíritu Santo, a National Marine Park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This island is one of the best marine life viewing destinations in the world with whale sharks, dolphins, sea turtles, manta rays, and plenty of beautiful tropical fish call the surrounding waters home, while a terrific range of bird species including Blue-footed boobies, Great Blue Herons, Yellow-footed Gulls frequent the island’s skies and shores. The island itself is stunning, with magnificent towering cliffs, spectacular sandy bays, amazing lava rock formations, and rock art left by ancient Indians. It’s a remarkable place to explore. There will be plenty of opportunities to go kayaking, snorkeling, hiking, swimming with sea lions, paddle boarding, bird watching, and exploring hidden lagoons and desert beaches. Sipping margaritas is also highly encouraged.
CAMP CECIL, ISLA ESPÍRITU SANTO (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4
Sea of Cortez and Isla Espíritu Santo
Adventures at Isla Espíritu Santo and Camp Cecil include exploring with your
guides the geology and wildlife of this incredible pristine place on land and in the water. Who knows what discoveries the day may bring! Swimming with sea lions and kayaking are encouraged. Cocktail hour. Overnight at your 5 million star accommodation right on the beach, under the Milky Way.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5
La Paz and Whale Sharks
Today return from Camp Cecil for one of our most exciting adventures yet—swimming ethically with the whale sharks, so named because at up to 59 feet and 15 tons they are definitely a whale of a shark. In fact, they are the largest fish in the world. And while your mother probably told you to stay away from sharks, these gentle giants are only interested in plankton—all human flesh is safe! In the afternoon check into your hotel in the city of La Paz. Remainder of the afternoon to relax and explore this town. Dinner at a local restaurant.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6
Magdalena Bay (Bahía Magdalena)
Whale Watching Adventure
Drive to Magdalena Bay for one of life’s most joyous adventures—interacting with the gray whales in the Pacific lagoons. On your afternoon 3-hour boat excursion, search for Gray whales who often put on a show and/or approach the boat to say hello. Later check in to Mar y Arena for dinner and overnight. Things that often happen during trips to Magdalena Bay:
• Gray whale mothers bring their babies right up to the boat to say “hello”
• Gray whale babies present themselves for a good rub or a pat
• Gray whale males sidle along the boat and spout water on us—they clearly think it’s very funny
• Gray whale couples roll languidly by, completely ignoring us as they enjoy some Baja romance
• Gray whales of all types bring their huge heads out of the water and look us straight in the eye

And that’s just to give you an idea! The possible connections with our fellow mammals in the lagoons of Magdalena Bay are absolutely wondrous and should be at the top of any bucket list you may be creating. MAR Y ARENA (B.L.D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 7
Whale Watching +
Return to Todos Santos + Farewell Dinner
Enjoy 3 more hours of interacting with the gray whales this morning, then return to Todos Santos in the afternoon, with a stop for lunch along the way at an authentic restaurant. In the evening gather for a farewell dinner at La Casita, Chef Sergio Rivera’s ode to Baja.

LOS COÍLIBRÍS (B.L.D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 8
Adios! Todos los Santos +
San José del Cabo + USA
One last terrific breakfast then a 90 minute transfer to the airport in San Jose del Cabo for your return flight home. (B)
This program provides an excellent introduction to Baja California Sur’s beauty, culture, and wildlife, with opportunities to see whales, dolphins, whale sharks, manta rays, sea turtles, lizards, and even Blue-footed Boobies. The trip includes two nights of luxury tent camping on Isla Espíritu Santo, part of a National Marine Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site in the spectacular Sea of Cortez. Activities throughout the trip include interacting with gray whale mothers and babies, swimming with whale sharks, snorkeling with sea lion puppies, paddle boarding, kayaking, birding, hiking along cactus-clad rims with ocean vistas, and discovering centuries-old towns. Some walks take place over natural and uneven terrain where paths can be rocky and rugged. The mean temperature throughout the trip will be in the upper 60’s/low 70’s in the day, and low 60’s/high 50’s at night. Accommodations in the pueblo mágico of Todos Santos are at Los Colibrís Casitas, with marvelous views of the Pacific Ocean. Other hotels are comfortable or best available and appropriate for the activities on the trip. Meals are excellent, offer a variety of choices, and there is also a Mexican cooking class. There is a daily cocktail hour on the island. This program is described as active to moderately active. Although the camping section offers beds and excellent meals, it is still “camping”. Therefore flexibility and patience with some insects and natural conditions found in national parks is necessary and part of any camping experience.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

**LOS COLIBRÍS CASITAS** was made for nature lovers seeking beauty and tranquility. It offers the services and amenities of a boutique hotel, combined with the privacy and comfort of a vacation rental. Each of the casas and casitas has magnificent views of the Pacific Ocean, a freshwater estuary and a palm grove oasis to the front, and the Sierra de la Laguna Mountains to the side and back.

From your casita you can watch the fishermen cast their nets on the beach in the early morning light, wait for the green flash of a magnificent Baja sunset in the late afternoon, and enjoy the vast expanse of a star-filled sky at night. Los Colibrís is just a 10-minute walk to 70 miles of pristine, virtually empty beach, and a 5-minute drive to the delightful restaurants, artists’ galleries and shops of Todos Santos.

**CAMP CECIL** is located on the pristine and wildly beautiful Isla Espíritu Santo, part of a National Marine Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The award winning camp includes 8 walk-in tents that have real beds, linens, chairs inside and out, bedside tables with lamps, mirrors, storage areas and towels for beach and bath. Each tent can have either one king bed or two twin beds, and there is room for cots as well. (Added joy: the housekeeping staff cleans the tents and makes the beds each day!) There is a large dining tent with tables, chairs and lounging sofas where the camp chefs serve terrific food throughout the day, starting with cold breakfast and coffee, followed by hot breakfast, lunch, happy hour and dinner. Two sun shower and two compost toilet cabañas complete the camp.

**MAR Y ARENA**. Simple, clean and on the waterfront, the rustic cabañas of Mar y Arena offer a charming place to relax, dine and refresh after a wonderful day on the water with the gray whales of Magdalena Bay.

**HOTEL HBLUE**, situated in La Paz offers 31 nicely decorated rooms. All rooms are equipped with air conditioning, flat screen TV, safety box, fridge, coffee maker, hair dryer, water bottles and amenities including WiFi. From the terraces, you can have an extraordinary view of the Bay of La Paz. There is a seasonal outdoor pool, bar and terrace.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

**PROGRAM COST**

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Land Program</td>
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<td>Child</td>
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<td>Single Supplement</td>
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**SAMPLE COACH INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE**

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<td>From Nashville, USA to San José del Cabo, MX</td>
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(Not included, quoted separately, subject to change)
GENERAL INFORMATION

PROGRAM COST INCLUDES
Educational program of lectures and discussions with Vanderbilt professor • All accommodations • All meals as specified in the itinerary • Private transportation • All activities per itinerary • Daily Happy Hour with dinner on the island • Entrance fees • Taxes • Service charges • Local guides and tour director throughout • Entrance fees and permits • Airport transfers for group flights • Gratuities to local guides and drivers • Baggage handling • Leadership • Pre-departure information • Coordination and administration.

PROGRAM COST DOES NOT INCLUDE
U.S. domestic and international airfare • Excess baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary • Personal items such as laundry, email, fax or telephone calls • Alcoholic beverages aside from daily cocktail hour on the island • Dishes or beverages not included with meals • Room service • Passport fees • Private transfers • Medical expenses • Travel insurance • Optional extensions or deviations from the scheduled tour • Tip to the tour director which is not included.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS, AND FINAL PAYMENT To reserve a space on this tour, please mail authorization of a credit card payment or a check made payable to “Royal Adventures” for $800 per person with a completed reservation form to: Vanderbilt Travel Program, Office of Alumni Relations, PMB 407735, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7735. Reservations are acknowledged in order of receipt. Final payment is due December 10 and must be paid by check made payable to Royal Adventures—CST #2009579-40.

TOUR SIZE This tour, exclusively designed for Vanderbilt Alumni and friends on a first-come, first-served basis. The minimum group size is 14. Should the minimum not be met, we reserve the right to levy a small group surcharge.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS Refunds less a cancellation fee of $500 per person are made if Royal Adventures is notified in writing on or before December 10, 2019. No refunds are made after that date. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations or other trip features.

TRAVEL INSURANCE We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance as the cancellation penalty in this brochure will apply. An application for travel insurance will be sent upon confirmation. The pre-existing medical conditions exclusion is waived if the insurance is purchased within 14 days of initial deposit. Neither the Alumni Relations Office of Vanderbilt University nor Royal Adventures accepts liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the tour.

QUESTIONS Please contact Cary Allyn or Clay Krebs, Vanderbilt Travel Program, (615) 322-3673 or alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu or Katie Howe, Royal Adventures (925) 820-6260 or 1-800-453-4754.

RESPONSIBILITY Royal Adventures, its owners and employees act only as agents for the various independent suppliers and contractors providing transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant and other services connected with this tour. Such travel and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services and transportation are offered or provided, and Vanderbilt University and Royal Adventures are not responsible for any loss, injury, accident, delay or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any aircraft or vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, local laws, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, and acts of nature or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which they are provided. Vanderbilt University and Royal Adventures reserve the right to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour participants. They reserve the right to withdraw this tour without penalty. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, or to substitute another qualified leader or special guest. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The price of the program is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any change, exchange rate, airfare, or fuel increases will be paid over onto participants. Neither Vanderbilt University nor Royal Adventures accept the liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable airline ticket. The air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. As part of the consideration and right to participate in this tour, each participant will be asked to sign a liability release.

Please sign and return this form with deposit check payable to “Royal Adventures” or credit card authorization to:

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI RELATIONS
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NASHVILLE, TN 37240-7735
1-615-322-3673 OR ALUMNI.TRAVEL@VANDERBILT.EDU

RESERVATION FORM

To register, return this form with your deposit of $800 per person on The Best of Baja, March 1–8, 2020. Final Payment is due December 10, 2019, by check only, payable to “Royal Adventures.”

NAME AS ON PASSPORT DOB VANDERBILT YEAR
NAME AS ON PASSPORT DOB VANDERBILT YEAR

ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP CODE

HOME PHONE
OFFICE PHONE
FAX

E-MAIL

PAYMENT OPTIONS
☐ Enclosed is my deposit check made payable to “Royal Adventures”; OR
☐ Charge my deposit for a total amount of $______ to:
  ☐ AMEX ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card

CARD # EXP. DATE SEC. CODE

NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD

ACCOMMODATIONS
☐ I will require single accommodations (limited availability)
☐ I will share accommodations with:

I/We have carefully read the Terms and Conditions and Responsibility sections of this brochure and agree to their terms on behalf of myself and the members of my party named above.

SIGNATURE DATE

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THE BEST OF

Baja

Todos Santos + Isla Espíritu Santo
La Paz + Magdalena Bay

March 1–8, 2020

WITH Neil P Kelley
Assistant Professor/Senior Lecturer
Department of Earth and Environmental Science

HIGHLIGHTS

SNORKEL among gentle whale sharks and with playful sea lion pups
ENJOY two nights of deluxe camping at Isla Espíritu Santo National Park and UNESCO Heritage Site.

EXPERIENCE close encounters with Gray whales at Magdalena Bay
HIKE along the rugged coastline of the Sea of Cortez

DISCOVER old pueblos including leisure time at centuries-old La Paz
PARTAKE in a cooking class with a local chef