



### WELCOME TO BAJA!

The Gulf of California is your classroom in EPI's Marine Science Program. Your course provides a unique opportunity to assist with international conservation efforts in a World Heritage Site that's home to 39% of the Earth's marine mammal species.

### THE ISLAND:

Espiritu Santo is a protected island in the Gulf of California, just a short boat ride from La Paz, Mexico. The island's waters are a marine reserve thanks to their unique ecology and bounty of rare and native species. Here you'll find stunning beaches, red rock cliffs, abundant bird life, reptiles, and desert plants. While on Espiritu Santo, you'll conduct snorkel counts of echinoderms, including the predatory crown of thorns. In addition, you'll develop a field-based research project using data you collect throughout the week.

### A SUSTAINABLE CULTURE:

There's a saying in Baja: El agua no viene de la llave, viene de las Sierras. Water doesn't come from the tap, it comes from the mountains. The precarious nature of life in the desert demands sustainability, and a culture of conservation has taken root in Baja. EPI's campus, poised between the desert and the sea, is a bastion for sustainable living and community education. With EPI, you'll meet local eco club members to learn more about resource limitations in Baja and steps that the engaged local community is taking to find solutions.

# BAJA MARINE SCIENCE

## HIGHLIGHTS



STUDY UNIQUE WILDLIFE THAT  
THRIVES ON THE EDGES OF DESERTS



SNORKEL WITH WHALE SHARKS, SEA  
LIONS, OR OTHER MARINE WILDLIFE



CAMP ON A PRISTINE BEACH  
UNDER THE STARS

# BAJA MARINE SCIENCE SAMPLE ITINERARY



ECOLOGY PROJECT  
INTERNATIONAL

## Day 1: ARRIVE IN BAJA

- Head north to La Paz, Baja California Sur
- Get to know your instructors and explore the EPI campus

## Day 2: TRAVEL TO ESPIRITU SANTO ISLAND

- Keep an eye out for dolphins, leaping rays, and even whales as you journey into the Gulf of California
- Watch as the deep blue gives way to shallow, pufferfish-speckled waters as you approach the protected shores of Espiritu Santo Island
- Set up and explore your home base on the beach

## Days 3-6: EXPLORE MARINE SCIENCE

- Conduct hands-on data collection with green sea turtles—measuring, weighing, and checking tags of threatened turtle species (*dependent on researcher availability and turtle presence*)
- Explore and investigate the desert island ecosystem and travel north to swim at a sea lion rookery (*alternate activity*)
- Practice your snorkel skills in the bay just steps away from camp while monitoring marine invertebrates
- Enjoy the slow pace of island life and sleep under the stars
- Bid farewell to your island home and travel by boat back to the EPI campus

## Day 7: CORAL RESTORATION & CULTURAL EXCHANGE

- Travel to the protected Pichilingue Beach where you'll take part in a coral restoration project
- Meet local eco club members and learn how they've worked to promote sustainable living projects with their community

## Day 8: SWIM WITH GIANT WHALE SHARKS

- Don your snorkel gear one more time to dive in alongside the world's most massive fish—the whale shark (*weather-dependent*)
- Take in the vibrant marine and conservation-inspired art during a stroll along La Paz's iconic waterfront Malecon
- Enjoy a farewell dinner and celebrate the work you've done to protect the world's aquarium

## Day 9: DEPART FROM CABO SAN LUCAS AIRPORT



| Length | Research & Service Hours | Coursework Hours | Focus  |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------|--|
| 9 Days | 18                       | 30               | turtle, coral, & whale shark biology, marine ecology, sustainable living |

