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La Paz



La Paz, Baja California Sur Overview

La Paz ("peace" in Spanish), is the state's capital, and the largest city south of Tijuana on the Baja Peninsula. It lies on a deep inlet off the Sea of Cortés. Despite its size (population 175,000) and position as the region's commercial and political center, La Paz is a tranquil, easy to love port. It has preserved a sort of "old Baja" atmosphere that makes you think little has changed here for decades.

Even though Hernán Cortés himself visited La Paz in 1535, there was no permanent settlement here until 1811. In 1829 it became California's capital when Loreto was leveled by a hurricane.

Surrounded by barren desert, the city is set amid ancient laurel trees and coconut and date palms. Its waterfront promenade is one of Mexico's prettiest. A few blocks inland is the city's main square, the Jardín Velasco with its pink quartz gazebo, tile walkways and 19th century cathedral.

Once a major center for the pearling industry, today La Paz draws sport fishermen, divers, and water enthusiasts to its sunny beaches, calm bays and ecologically pure offshore islands. Within 15 miles of town are several stunning beaches on gleaming white sand and clear, almost turquoise water. Several deserted islands with unique natural habitats can be visited via excellent guided boat excursions.

While limited, the shopping, dining and nightlife scene in La Paz is much improved over that of Loreto. There are also some unexpectedly fine lodging establishments, making it a comfortable and overall well-appointed destination.



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