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San Felipe

San Felipe is a picturesque town facing small islands and pristine waters with excellent fishing.

SAN FELIPE gained much of its popularity with the invention of the three day weekend. This charming beach side town is the first of many towns to be found as one travels south, down the east side of the Baja Peninsula. It is just close enough to the U.S. border to make it a long weekend destination, and it's just far enough from the big cities for tourists to feel like they really got away from it all.

San Felipe is a very easy two and a half hour drive south of the border from Mexicali (about 123 miles) on a good paved road, and worlds away from any typical gringo environment. The road from Mexicali is four lanes for the first 30 miles through the Mexicali suburbs and farmlands, and then it narrows down to two lanes when it reaches the wide open spaces. Shortly after the road turns to two lanes, the unique Baja scenery begins, and the stark open Baja frontier is nothing short of spectacular!

The waterfront areas around San Felipe are very active. The city has recently initiated a plan to beautify the waterfront area, and dozens new palm trees have been planted in 1998 on either side of the seaside main drive. Both visitors and locals like to cruise the seaside drive near the center of town, and vehicles of all kinds can be seen parading by.

There are dozens of campgrounds located on sandy beaches north and south of town, and San Felipe is finally beginning to offer some nice hotels. Basic services such as gasoline, ice, beer and food are plentiful in the various markets located throughout San Felipe. One of San Felipe's claim to fame is the extreme tidal changes. When the

tide goes out, it goes way out! This makes for excellent beachcombing, but makes launching a boat more of a planned event than a random act.

The weather in San Felipe is very pleasant most of the year, and very hot in summer. Fortunately, the Sea of Cortez is never too far away for a refreshing dip. Strolling along the seafront walkway in the evenings is a great way to enjoy the evenings all year long.

The Port of San Felipe is a small town that has traditionally depended on fishing as their economic base. In fact, the fish taco was invented here, and now is served in many chain restaurants in the U.S.. In a little more than two decades the economic base has changed from fishing to tourism. You'll find camping north & south of town, as well as in town, a few hotels & resorts, many restaurants, and watersports.

The natural attractions of this area, it's beautiful beaches of warm water during the spring, summer & fall, plus it's temperate winter is the major draw for both *Snowbirds* (retirees who live part-time in Mexico) and weekend vacationers from southern California and Arizona.

The high tourism season seems to be October though May when many *Snowbirds* arrive sometimes for a month or more at a time. Early fall and late spring offer the best weather. About 2 hours southeast of Ensenada, the weather in San Felipe is usually about 10 degrees warmer than their Pacific coast neighbor. The average temperature year around is about 75F. San Felipe is located in a unique eco-system, where the desert meets the sea. Therefore, temperatures have ranged from 115F in the shade during the summer months of July and August and, in December and January, the temperature can get to a low of about 40F at night. These are the extremes, and most of the time you will find the weather very pleasant in San Felipe. The altitude of the Bay of San Felipe is 3 meters above sea level (or about 10 ft.).

The population of San Felipe is estimated at 20,000 people. This number can increase by up to 5,000 depending on part-time residents (retirees & vacation home owners) or popular weekends such as Spring Break or Memorial Day.



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