SEA OF CORTEZ

A Cruiser’s Guidebook
2nd edition

by Shawn Breeding and Heather Bansmer
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Also Available
Pacific Mexico: A Cruiser's Guidebook
Exploring the Pacific coast of mainland Mexico - from Mazatlán to Bahías de Huatulco

www.bluelatitudepress.com
Chapter 1
The Cape: Cabo San Lucas to Isla Cerralvo

Found at the end of nearly 800 miles of rugged and sandy coastline, the Baja peninsula comes to a “Land’s End” at the popular destination of Los Cabos (The Capes), which includes the tourist towns of Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo. From this cape, the gateway to the serenely beautiful Sea of Cortez opens. Where cruisers have a chance to experience the true meaning of where the desert meets the sea.

The cape is a unique area where two large bodies of water meet, with the cooler Pacific Ocean combining with the warmer, protected waters of the Sea of Cortez. This merging of nutrient-rich waters provides an excellent feeding ground for a variety of fish and marine mammals.

While the cape region shelters boats from northwest wind and swell from the Pacific Ocean, it can become a dangerous lee shore when southerly wind and seas arrive. Northeast of Punta Gorda, following the southeastern tip of the Baja peninsula is the region referred to as East Cape, where the anchorages of Bahía Los Frailes and Bahía de los Muertos are found. As boats head farther east and around the cape, the rolling Pacific Ocean swell diminishes in strength as it bends around the tip of the peninsula. However, the effects of northwest winds blowing down the entire length of the Sea of Cortez generally begin to be felt northeast of Los Cabos. Waves are built that are short in wave length and steep in height, making for an uncomfortable trip north when the wind is blowing from the northwest.

The cape area anchorages are also popular jumping off locations for boaters heading to and from mainland Mexico destinations such as Isla Isabel, Mazatlán and Puerto Vallarta.
Cabo San Lucas

Cabo San Lucas is a bustling tourist town located on the very southern tip of the Baja peninsula. It is a Port of Entry and a welcome stop for boats traveling down the remote west coast of Baja. There are marinas, fuel docks, a haul out facility, marine chandleries, banks, and grocery stores to replenish anything you may want, need or desire. For many decades, Cabo San Lucas had remained a quiet, isolated fishing village. Only within the past thirty years has Cabo become the tourist destination that it is today. With world class game fishing, five star resorts and endless white sand beaches, Cabo San Lucas has become a famous holiday and cruising destination.

The cape of Cabo San Lucas is a sliver of land projecting east towards the Sea of Cortez and lies 4 miles east of Cabo Falso. The cape forms the southwestern edge of Bahía de San Lucas, with Cerro La Vigía, a prominent hill, rising from the tip. Lying off the eastern point of the cape are a group of detached rocky islets named Isla Cerro Blanco and Isla Cerro La Bufadora. Wide berth should be given when approaching from the west or south to avoid these rocks when entering Bahía San Lucas.

Bahía de San Lucas is a large bay, well protected from the winter's typical northwest winds, with the protection of the cape shielding the anchorage from the rolling northwest Pacific swells. A long white sand beach marks the northern portion of the bay, which is lined with palm fringed resorts and condos. At the western edge of the bay is a dredged channel leading to the man-made inner harbor where the fuel docks, marinas, haul out facility and dinghy dock are located. Moorings are located northeast of the entrance to the inner harbor with a few available for rent for transient moorage.

A deep underwater canyon runs roughly west to east through Bahía de San Lucas reaching depths over 100 fathoms inside the bay. Anchoring can be a challenge due to the canyon and its steep sides reaching into the anchoring area. The chart below shows distances to various locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bahía Santa María</th>
<th>175 nm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>142 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensenada de los Muertos</td>
<td>90 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahía Los Frailes</td>
<td>45 nm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cabo San Lucas to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mazatlán</th>
<th>190 nm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isla Isabela</td>
<td>232 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Vallarta</td>
<td>292 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zihuatanejo</td>
<td>575 nm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
age. Off the white sand beach, anchorage can be taken in approximately 5 to 8 fathoms on good holding sand shelves.

Keep in mind that winds can shift and should a south wind pick up, anchoring too close to shore could place your boat near a dangerous lee shore in breaking waves. This situation happened during a late season storm in December 1982, in which many boats were damaged or destroyed including Bernard Moitessier’s beloved boat *Joshua*. During the summer months, southerly winds become more frequent and can make Bahía de San Lucas a poor anchorage.

Cabo San Lucas is an official Port of Entry where boat, captain and crew can officially be cleared into Mexico if you haven’t done so already. The captain will need to visit Migración (Immigration), the Capitania de Puerto (Port Captain), Aduana (Customs), Administración Portuaria Integral - API (Port Authority), and the bank to have all papers and passports stamped, and official fees paid (see the Immigration, Importation, and Visas section on page 14 for more information on clearing into Mexico).

**Marina Cabo San Lucas**

Marina Cabo San Lucas offers 380 slips ranging from 20 to 200 feet, each with electricity (110 and 220) and water. The marina water is purified, coming straight from the marina’s own desalination plant. The fuel dock is located near the entrance and can accommodate boats up to 200 feet in length and 12 feet of draft. Showers, laundry, pumpout stations, cable TV and wireless internet are also available. Located in the heart of town, Marina Cabo San Lucas is surrounded by numerous restaurants, cantinas, hotels and shops. A launch ramp is available for trailer boats.

Marina Cabo San Lucas
Monitors VHF channel 88A
Lote A-18 de la Darsena
Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur
(624) 173-9140/ (624) 143-1253 fax
www.igy-cabosanlucas.com
CSL@igymarinas.com
Marinas de Baja

Marinas de Baja is located just to the south after entering the breakwaters at Cabo San Lucas. There are 35 slips available that can accommodate boats from 23 feet to 120 feet. The marina’s services include a fuel dock, electrical and water hookups, showers, laundry facilities, and free wireless internet.

Marinas de Baja
Monitors VHF channel 16
(624) 143-6523
www.marinadebaja.com
eduardocorona@marinadebaja.com
reservations@marinadebaja.com

Cabo Yacht Center

Cabo Yacht Center is a fully equipped marine haul out yard with a 70 ton travel lift. Their services include fiberglass, stainless and aluminum repair, as well as custom fabrication, painting, upholstery, engine work, electrical troubleshooting, and maintenance services if you need to leave your boat in Cabo San Lucas. The Cabo Yacht Center also has a wide selection of items at their marine chandlery. The Cabo Yacht Center is located at the head of the marina near the boat ramp and the Marina Cabo San Lucas office.

Cabo Yacht Center
Monitors VHF channel 16
Cabo San Lucas Marina,
Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur
(624) 143-3020 / Toll free from the US (866) 702-6337
www.caboyachtcenter.net
info@caboyachtcenter.net

Cape History

Up until recent years, Cabo San Lucas has had a quiet, but varied history, far removed from the tourist destination that it has become today. The original inhabitants, the Pericu Amerindians, were a nomadic group of hunters and gatherers who lived off local plants, seeds, small game and seafood. It wasn’t until the mid 1500’s that early Spanish explorers came upon the small harbor and ultimately changed its future.

As Spain set up trade routes from the Philippines to Acapulco, the protected harbor at Cabo San Lucas was used as a trade stop along this route (see the pirate sidebar on the following page). However, due to the area’s lack of fresh water and the occasional encounters with the Pericu Amerindians, Cabo San Lucas remained relatively undeveloped.

By the early 1900’s, after an abundance of tuna was discovered in the area off Los Cabos, it didn’t take long before the fishing fleets moved in, piers were erected and canneries were opened. With the increased fishing activity in Cabo San Lucas, a small village was eventually formed. By the 1930’s, the secret was out to the public that the Los Cabos area featured year-round, world class sport fishing. However, without any developed roads, the only people able to access the prime fishing grounds were those with private planes and yachts. To accommodate these wealthy fishermen, luxury resorts were some of the initial hotel developments in Cabo San Lucas.

Realizing the tourism potential for the cape area, FONATUR (Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo, or National Trust Fund for Tourism Development), along with domestic and foreign funding, launched a development program in 1969, which included building the inner harbor marina, bringing freshwater to the town, and enlarging the

Log from the Sea of Cortez

“The tip of the Cape at San Lucas, with the huge gray Friars standing up on the end, has behind the rocks a little beach which is a small boy’s dream of pirates. It seems the perfect place to hide and from which to dart out in a pinnace on the shipping of the world; a place to which to bring the gold bars and jewels and beautiful ladies, all of which are invariably carried by the shipping of the world. And this little beach must so have appealed to earlier men, for the names of pirates are still in the rock, and the pirate ships did dart out of here and did come back.”

John Steinbeck
The Cape

airport. The transpeninsular highway, Mexico Highway 1, was completed in 1973, opening a whole new world of tourism to Baja.

Today, Cabo San Lucas has grown to nearly 57,000 full time inhabitants (2005 census), with over 430 boat slips in the inner harbor, 8 world class golf courses, and numerous daily flights arriving from cities around the world.

Pirates at Cabo San Lucas

In 1587, Sebastián Cermeño captained the largest galleon of the Spanish fleet, named the Santa Ana. Over 600 tons, this galleon was part of the trade route fleet making regular trips to Manila in the Philippines and returning to Acapulco hauling vast quantities of gold, silver, silks, china and spices. From Acapulco, these downwind sailing ships followed a westerly route to reach the Philippines. After having stuffed these ships nearly beyond capacity with valuables from the Orient, these heavy boats had to follow the great-circle route along the Japanese coast, across the north Pacific, and finally down the North American coast to Baja and mainland Mexico, leaving them targets for any number of raiding ships hiding out along the coastline.

Captain Thomas Cavendish of the ship Desire, sailing under the English flag, lay in wait near Cabo San Lucas for the Santa Ana and all her riches. Cavendish had originally begun his adventure in July 1586, setting sail from Harwich, England in attempt to circumnavigate the globe. Along his path, Cavendish raided Spanish or Portuguese coastal towns in the new world, and pirated ships such as the Santa Ana for their treasures. In November 1587, the Santa Ana rounded Cabo San Lucas where Cavendish overtook and raided her cargo which included over 122,000 silver dollars.

Cermeño, whose life was spared, made his way back to Acapulco and continued captaining galleons along the trade route to the Philippines. However in 1595, Cermeño, who was returning to Acapulco from a trip to the Philippines, once again lost his fully loaded galleon, San Agustín, off Drake’s Bay near San Francisco, California.

Cavendish went on to complete his circumnavigation, and landed back in England in September 1588. In 1591, Cavendish set sail on another voyage aboard the Lester, accompanied by a number of other vessels. Cavendish died in the middle of the Atlantic in 1592 due to unknown causes, after returning from a failed trip to Brazil.

Groceries and Services

Airport

The San José del Cabo International Airport (SJD) is located 6 miles north of San José del Cabo and 12 miles northeast of Cabo San Lucas. Numerous international and national flights arrive and depart each day. Advantage, Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Europcar, Hertz, National, Payless, and Thrifty car rental agencies are all located either within or nearby the airport.

Aramburo Plaza Supermercado

Located in the shopping center on Lazaro Cardenas and Ignacio Zaragoza. A supermarket style grocery with a large selection of domestic and imported foods including fresh produce, meats and frozen foods. Very convenient to the marina.

Banks

There are a number of banks throughout town, conveniently located, all with ATMs.

Bus Station

Intercity - Located on Mexico Highway 19, just north of the Mexico Highway 1 junction. Multiple bus lines travel each day to and from La Paz. There are also daily buses traveling to cities further north all the way to Tijuana.

Intracity - The Subercabos are the public buses that run throughout the city. The Subercabos also have routes that run along the highway to and from Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo (there is a bus stop in front of the Puerto Paraiso mall on Lazaro Cardenas). These buses are a very efficient and inexpensive way to travel around the city as well as traveling to San José del Cabo. There are specific bus stops with covered seats, but the buses will stop where ever you like, just flag them down.
C.C.C.
Located on Highway 19 to Todos Santos on the northeast end of town, near Soriana. A supermarket stocked with all you might need or want.

Cape Marine
Located in Plaza Marina (Plaza Las Glorias) on Boulevard Marina. Select amount of yachting and fishing equipment, supplies and tools.

City Club
Located on Lazaro Cardenas and Paseo del Pescador. A large, warehouse style supermarket. Daily membership passes are available as well as annual passes.

Costco
Located on Mexico Highway 1 at kilometer 4.5. A large, bulk style grocery and housewares store with many of the same products and departments featured in Costco stores found in the U.S. and Canada. Membership is required.

Home Depot
Located on Mexico Highway 1 at kilometer 6.5. The same selection of products as in all North American stores.

Minerva’s Baja Tackle
Located on Madero and Boulevard Marina. A wide selection of tackle and fishing supplies. Phone: (624) 143-1282, Web site: www.minervas.com Email: minerva@minervas.com

Soriana
Located on Mexico Highway 19 to Todos Santos on the northeast end of town, near CCC. A supermarket stocked with a large selection of fresh produce, food staples, meats, dairy and household items.

Restaurants
Cabo Coffee Company
Two shops located on Madero and Miguel Hidalgo, as well as Boulevard Marina near the Giggling Marlin. Good coffee and wireless internet.

Cabo Wabo Cantina
On Calle Guerrero and Madero. Owned by the famous rock- er, Sammy Hagar, the Cabo Wabo nightclub can keep you up until the wee morning hours. Try the Wabo Grill, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, serving Mexican specialties.

El Squid Roe

Latitude 22+ Roadhouse
On Mexico Highway 1 at km 4.5, next to Costco and behind the power plant. A popular boater’s hangout with authentic marine decor, serving Mexican, American and seafood dishes. The bar serves a tasty caesar and bloody mary as well. Web site: www.lat22nobaddays.com

Mariscos Mazatlán
On 16 de Septiembre and 20 de Noviembre. Excellent fresh seafood without the tourist hype or price. Mariscos Mazatlán is a favorite for its casual, local flavor.

Playa del Amor
Playa del Amor, or Lover’s Beach (also previously known as Playa de Doña Chepa) is a wonderful spot to spend the day snorkeling or lounging on the white sand alongside the golden rock formation of Land’s End. By dinghy, the beach is easily reached from the harbor and landing is available on the sand. Although the beach has a number of tourists arriving by panga, it is worth the stop. Snorkeling along the protected shoreline of Bahía de San Lucas is a great chance to experience the warm waters and tropical fish of the Pacific. A small sand passageway opens onto a larger beach that faces the open Pacific— a perfect spot to soak up the sunshine and ponder the open ocean at Land’s End.

Log from the Sea of Cortez
“The great rocks on the end of the Peninsula are almost literary. They are a fitting Land’s End, standing against the sea, the end of a thousand miles of peninsula and mountain. Good Hope is this way too, and perhaps we take some of our deep feelings of termination from these things, and they make our symbols. The Friars stood high and protective against an interminable sea.”

John Steinbeck
Puerto Los Cabos Resort and Marina

San José del Cabo, located 19 miles northeast of Cabo San Lucas, is the site of the new Puerto Los Cabos Resort and Marina. The resort and marina are currently under construction, although at the time of printing this guide, many sections of the marina are currently open. Ultimately, the marina will have 430 slips averaging 50 feet, with a maximum length of 180 feet. The marina plans to have wireless Internet, potable water, cable TV, pump-out stations, ample parking, a crew lounge and business center, a swimming pool, a fitness center, restrooms, showers, beach access, nature trails, picnic and playground areas, 24 hour security, on-site port captain clearance staff, and access to the Captain's Club. For further information on marina plans, and availability, contact the Puerto Los Cabos Resort and Marina.

Puerto Los Cabos Resort and Marina
Paseo de Los Pescadores S/N, Colonia La Playa
San José del Cabo, B.C.S., CP 23400 Mexico
Phone and Fax: (624)105 6028
www.marinapuertoloscabos.com
marinainfo@puertoloscabos.com

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (nm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensenada de los Muertos</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahía Los Frailes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (nm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabo San Lucas</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isla Isabela</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To Puerto Los Cabos, La Playita

To Cabo San Lucas

Toll Road to Airport

To Airport, La Paz

San José del Cabo Streets

A - Plaza Mijares
B - Estero San José
C - Palacio Municipal
D - Iglesia San José
E - Museum
F - Plaza San José
G - Mega Comercial (grocery)
H - Sea Turtle Camp

1 - Port Captain

Note: Marina is still under construction
Slips/facilities shown are installed (2009)
Contact Puerto Los Cabos Resort and Marina for updates

PUERTO LOS CABOS
Not for navigation

Marina Office

Dry storage, workyard

Boat ramp

Fuel Dock

Mag. Var. 9.1E (2009)

B C S 0 1 0 - 2 3 ° 0 3 . 3 0 0 ' N , 1 0 9 ° 4 0 . 2 3 0 ' W
Bahía los Frailes

Bahía los Frailes is a popular anchorage for boats headed north to La Paz and for boats getting ready to cross the Sea of Cortez bound for mainland Mexico. It is a good north wind anchorage with plenty of room for numerous boats. The Tropic of Cancer crosses the area nearby at 23°27' N.

When approaching Bahía los Frailes from Cabo San Lucas or San José del Cabo, be sure to give the coastline adequate room as many dangerous rocks lie up to 1 to 1.5 miles offshore. Manta Reef is one of these dangerous rocks, found approximately 5 miles south of Cabo los Frailes and 1.25 miles offshore (Manta Reef was aptly named by local diver Terry Kennedy whose first diving experience with giant mantas was at this location). Seas usually do not break over this reef, making it difficult to spot from any distance.

The trip from Los Cabos to Bahía los Frailes can be a challenging, upwind beat at times. While the weather at Los Cabos appears to be calm due to the protection of the cape from northwest winds, the sea conditions as you near Bahía los Frailes become less affected by the Pacific Ocean and more affected by the Sea of Cortez. With a stretch of nearly 600 miles, northwest winds can create short, steep seas down the entire length of the Sea of Cortez, with the East Cape lying at the end of those 600 miles. To avoid an uncomfortable trip around the cape and north to La Paz, listen to the weather forecasts for the Sea of Cortez to determine the wind and sea state for rounding the East Cape (see the Weather section on page 17 for a listing of amateur marine forecasts over the SSB and ham radio).

For boats approaching from the north, be sure to stand off the coastline at least 2 miles when traveling near the area of Cabo Pulmo due to dangerous reefs and shoals. Pulmo Shoal is located 1.2 miles northeast of Cabo Pulmo and has a reported least depth of 5½ fathoms. Approximately 0.8 miles north-northwest of Cabo Pulmo, the shoreline turns in a northwest direction. A dangerous shoal with a least depth of 6 feet, extends out 1.5 miles due north from this point to an approximate position of 23° 28.90'N 109° 25.70'W (BCS021). This dangerous shoal occasionally has waves breaking across it and should be given a large berth when traveling between Bahía los Frailes and Ensenada de los Muertos.

Bahía Los Frailes is a large bay, free of dangers. A deep underwater canyon running northwest to southeast extends through the bay. A sizeable shelf runs along the northern coastline towards the Friars. During north winds, good anchorage can be taken in the north-northeast portion of the bay near the large headland of Cabo los Frailes. Anchorage can be taken on the shelf in the northeastern portion of the bay in 4 to 6 fathoms over a sand bottom. During strong northerlies, Cabo los Frailes provides good protection from the steep, square waves built through the nearly 600 miles of fetch stretching the length of the Sea of Cortez.

To dinghy ashore, one of the best landing locations is in the northern portion of the bay where the sand beach meets the rocky hillside of the point. From here, there is a good hike (scramble) that takes you to the top of Cerro los Frailes, affording an exceptional view of the rugged, surrounding coastline and inland mountains. With no defined trail, it is easiest to pick your way over rocks and through the brush along the moderate ridgeline to the west of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA PAZ</th>
<th>104 NM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BONANZA (Isla Espíritu Santo)</td>
<td>85 NM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENSENADA DE LOS MUERTOS</td>
<td>46 NM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAHÍA LOS FRAILES TO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CABO SAN LUCAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAZATLÁN</td>
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hill and continue to climb up. Once at the top, you will have a good view of nearby Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park and Cabo Pulmo village. For a refreshing dip after a long hike, there is good snorkeling and diving to be found along the rocky shoreline of Cabo los Frailes.

Los Frailes is a fairly remote location on the East Cape served by an unpaved road from San José del Cabo. An airstrip lies just inland of the anchorage and numerous fish camps dot the beach near the arroyo. New homes are going up every year, taking advantage of the beautiful scenery the East Cape has to offer. There is a hotel on the western shore of the bay named Hotel Bahía los Frailes, which offers cold beverages and use of their satellite phone for a premium (they also serve meals primarily for their guests, but with advance notice they will also cook for people not staying at the hotel). Also in Los Frailes is a small restaurant, found just south of the main community.

Off the beaten path is Tito’s in Cabo Pulmo village, where cold cervezas can be enjoyed. A couple of small, casual eateries are also found in the village at Cabo Pulmo along with Pepe’s Dive Center where rental equipment and guided trips of the Cabo Pulmo reef can be arranged (www.cabopulmo.com.mx). There are two wrecks found near Cabo Pulmo, the freighter, Colima and a 90 foot fishing boat, both vessels found in 30 to 50 feet of water. The Colima was lost in a storm in 1939 and the fishing boat sank in 1978.

For the fisherman, Gorda Banks has been a longtime hotspot favorite. Banco Gorda de Adentro (Inner Gorda Bank) lies roughly 5 miles southeast of Punta Gorda and has a least depth of approximately 48 feet. Banco Gorda de Afuera (Outer Gorda Bank) found roughly 7 miles southeast of Punta Gorda has a least depth of approximate 200 feet.

Roughly 7 miles south of Bahía los Frailes is Boca del Tule, which is a known surf spot during periods of southerly swell. A series of breaks over both sand and reef can be found here. Unfortunately, when surf conditions are good at Boca del Tule, the anchorage at Bahía los Frailes is very poor as the anchorage is open to southerly wind and waves.
Ensenada de los Muertos

Ensenada de los Muertos is a good north wind anchorage, popular with cruising boats heading north to La Paz, south towards the mainland, or around the Cape. During a short period in the 1920’s, the cove served as a cargo port for off-loading supplies for a nearby silver mining operation. Years later, salt produced in local salt pans was stored in a warehouse near shore and then shipped out. With tourism booming in the cape region, Bahía de los Muertos (Bay of the Dead), also known by developers as Bahía de los Sueños (Bay of Dreams), is slowly acquiring more luxury homes and a new golf course.

From Cabo Pulmo north, the coastline recedes back towards the northwest, and the effects of the Pacific swell slowly diminish as you enter the Sea of Cortez. There are a few navigation hazards to be aware of on the way north towards Ensenada de los Muertos. For boats traveling between Bahía los Frailes and Ensenada de los Muertos, be sure to stand off the coastline at least 2 miles when traveling near the area of Cabo Pulmo due to dangerous rocks and reefs, including Pulmo Reef and Roca Blanca, as well as dangerous shoals stretching out into the Sea of Cortez.

Pulmo Shoal is located 1.2 miles east-northeast of Cabo Pulmo and has a least depth of 5½ fathoms. North of Cabo Pulmo, dangerous shoals extend roughly 1 nautical mile offshore with a least depth of 6 feet reported. This dangerous shoal occasionally has waves breaking across it and should be given a wide berth, staying at least 2 miles offshore in deeper water.

Seven miles northwest of Cabo Pulmo is Punta Arena, a very low and distinctive sandy point that reaches out into the Sea of Cortez. As the water shoals rapidly near and around the point, it is recommended to stay in deeper water, at least 2 miles offshore, when rounding Punta Arena. Many times waves can be seen breaking along the shallow shores of the point.

Punta Colorada is 3.5 miles northwest of Punta Arena. Detached rocks and shoal areas extend from the point. It is recommended to lay a course at least 2 miles offshore between Punta Arena and Punta Colorada to avoid these dangers.

Punta Pescadero is a large rocky point of land approximately 16 miles northwest of Punta Colorada, at the north end of Bahía de las Palmas. Dangerous detached rocks and shoal areas extend well off the point. Passage should be made at least 2 miles offshore to avoid these dangers. Punta Pescadero is the southern point of Bahía de los Muertos, with Ensenada de los Muertos located in the northeast portion of the bay, south of Punta Perico.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La Paz</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caleta Lobos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonanza (Isla Espíritu Santo)</td>
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<th>Ensenada de los Muertos to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahía Los Frailes</td>
<td>46 NM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabo San Lucas</td>
<td>90 NM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
<td>190 NM</td>
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Looking southwest across Ensenada de los Muertos.

The beautiful waterfront restaurant, El Cardón Tequila Bar & Grill.
The Cape

When approaching Ensenada de los Muertos from the north through the Canal de Cerralvo, be sure to give Punta Arena de La Ventana and Punta Perico a wide berth due to detached rocks and shoal areas lying off the points. Do not cut the corner into the anchorage when approaching from the north as a reef lies off the point of land forming the east side of the anchorage.

For good north wind and wave protection, anchorage may be taken in 4 to 7 fathoms over a sand bottom, tucked up inside Ensenada de los Muertos. An open, south wind anchorage can be found off the northern shore of Punta Arena de La Ventana. When rounding Punta Arena de la Ventana, be sure to give it ample room as shoal waters surround the point.

A beautiful white sand beach lines the north and northwest sides of the Ensenada de los Muertos, perfect for strolling after a long day’s travel. For a night away from the galley, the El Cardón Tequila Bar & Grill is located on shore, serving cold beverages and a variety of Mexican and American dishes. El Cardón monitors VHF channel 10, and provides water taxi service to its patrons to save you the time of launching your dinghy. The restaurant also has wireless internet, satellite TV, a dinghy dock, and phone service throughout Mexico, Canada and the United States for a quick call home.

Bahía de los Sueños, the planned resort community is quickly taking shape with a small, luxury hotel and golf course. A 5,000 foot long, paved airstrip is also located nearby for tourists and home owners flying in to relax and play.

A northerly view of Ensenada de los Muertos with Isla Cerralvo in the distance.

East Cape Wind Sports

The East Cape of Baja has long been world renowned as a premier location for windsurfers and kiteboarders. The relaxed, easy pace of life on the Baja Peninsula along with its clear, warm waters and perfect wind conditions, draws hundreds of wind sport enthusiasts to the East Cape every winter. Camping, B&B’s and hotels dot the long, white sandy beaches of areas like La Ventana and Los Barriles, where rental gear and lessons are easy to come by. The season generally begins in November and continues through March, following the region’s typical north wind winters. During strong north wind blows, the East Cape windsurfers and kiteboarders capitalize on the Sea of Cortez’s nearly 600 miles of wind driven fetch, building waves to an exciting height, perfect for catching big air.
Isla Cerralvo

Isla Cerralvo is a 16 mile long island lying roughly 6 miles off the Baja peninsula. The waterway between the island and the Baja peninsula is known as Canal de Cerralvo (Cerralvo Channel). At times, wind, waves and currents flowing through the channel can make for a rough trip. With Ensenada de los Muertos only 7.5 miles south of the channel, it is easy to get an early start and make it through the narrowest part of the channel during the morning hours, before the typical afternoon winds begin to pick up.

At its narrowest, the Cerralvo Channel is but 4.5 miles wide near the southern end of Isla Cerralvo and across to Punta Arena de la Ventana. The channel runs approximately 25 miles in length and currents can attain rates of up to 2.5 knots.

From November to March, winds typically blow from the north, down the Sea of Cortez. With the restriction of the channel by Isla Cerralvo to the east and the Baja peninsula to the west, winds tend to funnel through the channel, bringing with it, wind driven waves.

With adverse currents, strong winds and steep waves, the Cerralvo Channel can become very challenging, so plan accordingly. To avoid a trying day of bashing into wind and waves, many traveling northbound choose a favorable weather window, tidal flow, and travel through the channel during the typically calmer early morning hours.

Isla Cerralvo has some off lying rocks and reefs on both the north and south ends of the island. Islote de la Reina (Arrecife de la Foca) lies 4 miles northwest of the north end of the island. Roca Montaña lies approximately 0.8 miles southeast of the southern tip of the island and comes within 7 feet of the surface. Both of these spots are popular for fishing and diving with boats from La Paz and the La Ventana area.
Chapter 2
Bahía de La Paz: San Lorenzo Channel to La Paz

The beautiful bays and coves found along the shores of Bahía de La Paz and the nearby national park islands of Isla Espíritu Santo and Isla Partida provide a picture perfect cruising destination for boaters. Within a 30-mile radius, there are over 20 spectacular anchorages, all set in the warm turquoise waters of the Sea of Cortez.

Lying in the southeast corner of Bahía de La Paz is the international port city of La Paz, which is host to a number of marinas, marine chandleries, haul out facilities, and provisioning stores, making it a welcome stop for cruising boats that have traveled down the isolated west coast of Baja, or for cruising boats preparing to make the Pacific “puddle jump” to the South Pacific islands. With a large international airport, La Paz is also an easy destination to reach for visiting friends and family or for those chartering boats out of La Paz.

The city is true to its name, which translates as “The Peace.” Known for its casual, easy-paced and peaceful lifestyle, La Paz is a favorite stop among travellers. The palm-fringed malecón welcomes travelers and locals alike for strolls along the city’s beautiful waterfront. A number of sea-themed bronze sculptures highlight the malecón, making for striking photographs set against a sunset sky.