



**StudentReach International
Individual Application
For
EXPEDITION:BAJA**

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STUDENTREACH INTERNATIONAL

EXPEDITION: BAJA TRIP DETAILS

Service: Participants will get an equal mix of hard work, enrichment and fun during this StudentReach expedition. Expedition:Baja will involve construction projects, water projects, food and clothing distribution and other humanitarian projects for families who are among the poorest of the poor. Throughout the week, we will also have leadership lessons and team building.

Location: The San Quintin Valley, Baja California Norte, Mexico, approximately 200 miles south of the U.S. border on Mexico Highway 1.

Accommodations: Dorm-style enclosed cabins or modest Motel accommodations are provided. Hot showers (usually), flush toilets (a luxury in rural Baja) and filtered water on site are included. In this setting, participants will be able to challenge their perceptions and discover their potential while changing the lives of the needy. This will be "Extreme Home Makeover" meets "The Amazing Race" meets summer camp. Think *vacation with a purpose*.

Activities: During our free time, activities will include going to the beach, hiking and *trips to the best taco stands on the planet!* Surfing, boogie boarding, fishing, snorkeling, hiking, and *other related activities are available. Please feel free to bring the items needed to engage in these activities* (Mexican fishing permits are about \$10 US and chartered fishing boats are safe, fun and inexpensive in groups)

Trip Length: 7 days including travel in and out of Baja.

Travel: In most cases, Trip participants will arrange their own travel to San Diego International airport and be picked up by StudentReach International Staff for ground transportation down the Baja coast.

Currency: American dollars are accepted everywhere and small bills are most useful, nothing larger than a \$20 will be accepted at most places - one's and five's are much better. All change will be received in pesos. Please be conservative about the amount of money brought on the trip. Tacos cost \$1.25, soft drinks are \$1 and Mexican ponchos cost about \$10 just as a point of reference. Some places are starting to take Credit cards and there are a few ATMs available.

Climate: The climate is very Mediterranean with warm days and cool nights. Summer temperatures average 85°/50°, winter is 60°/40°. It's frequently cool on the beach and the Pacific Ocean is about 60-70°.

Travel Documents: At the time of this writing, the requirements for coming back into the U.S. are:

- Adults 20 and over must have a U.S. valid passport (or passport from another country and a valid U.S. travel visa), a US passport card or an Enhanced Security Driver's license (currently issued by Michigan, New York, Vermont and Washington – and some Canadian states).
- Those traveling with a group who are under 19 can use their official original (or certified copy) birth certificate.

In addition, all minors must carry a letter of permission:

"Mexican law requires that any non-Mexican citizen under the age of 18 departing Mexico must carry notarized written permission from any parent or guardian not traveling with the child to or from Mexico. This permission must include the name of the parent, the name of the child, the name of anyone traveling with the child, and the notarized signature(s) of the absent parent(s). The State Department recommends that the permission should include travel dates, destinations, airlines and a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding the travel. The child must be carrying the original letter – not a facsimile or scanned copy – as well

as proof of the parent/child relationship (usually a birth certificate or court document) – and an original custody decree, if applicable.”

The form included in the document for minors will suffice as the parent/guardian permission form.

StudentReach International will keep all documents in safe keeping for minor travelers. Check the U.S. State department travel site for up-to-date information on travel in Mexico at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html

Is it safe to visit Mexico? (a note from our executive director, Jeffrey Devoll)

The media has been working overtime in recent months spreading exaggerated reports of violence and criminal activity in Mexico, thereby engendering great fear in North Americans about traveling into Mexico. Based on this type of misinformation, many people, both tourists and short-term missionaries are avoiding Mexico.

This is a very sad situation on many levels. The financial impact trickles down through the Mexican economy, hurting an already-struggling economy. But, even more devastating is the loss of assistance which mission's teams bring to the poorest people of this state.

We would like to set the record straight: life in the San Quintin Valley where you will be going, and on the Baja peninsula is normal, safe and calm. People are going about their normal business, going to work and school, shopping and playing. We have brought teams many, many times and are in contact with people who bring teams. There has never been any problem with any team. People who visit the area laugh that they feel safer in rural Baja than in their home town. We do not go into Tijuana at all....we stay on the patrolled toll way. We travel directly through Ensenada...where four cruise ships a week allow 1000's of people to disembark and stroll around the city, with no problems at all.

We have never, ever witnessed even a hint of violent activity in all of our travels. Nor have any of our teams reported ever hearing or seeing anything of that nature.

The spate of crime that the news media is so quick to inflate and report is, for the most part, between drug cartels and between the cartels and police/military. Mexican President Felipe Calderon has pledged to fight the drug cartels which means, if anything, we are seeing increased police and military presence, which we feel is a good sign. It makes us feel safer. The major areas of violence are Juarez Mexico near El Paso Texas, the State of Guerrero which is almost 2000 miles away from where we minister, and the Mexico City area, which is also close to 2000 miles from where we minister.

The Baja California area and in particular the town that we minister in (Vicente Guerrero) is in the green (safe) area on the U.S. State Department violence maps.

The U.S. State Department site also notes that "millions of U.S. citizens **safely** visit Mexico each year (including thousands who cross the U.S. land border every day for study, tourism or business)."

Bottom line: We have taken over 2000 people on trips to dozens of countries, if it wasn't safe, we would not risk a trip there. Please also note that issue doesn't even come up with teams from California because Californians know people traveling safely to Mexico all the time.

Please feel free to call me personally at 707.310.2665 or e-mail at jeff@studentreach.org with any specific questions.

Emergency procedures: All expedition participants should check their health insurance plan for coverage during foreign travel. Many health plans do cover travel in Mexico. However, those without health insurance or without coverage in Mexico can purchase health insurance through StudentReach for a very low cost.

In the case of emergency or illness, Participants will be evaluated by any medical professionals (Doctors, nurses, EMT's, etc) traveling with StudentReach International and, if recommended, will be referred to the local regional hospital (about 15minutes from the base) which is staffed by Mexican Government appointed doctors or to the local free clinic which is staffed by international doctors on humanitarian assignment. Parents/guardians (in the case of minors) and emergency contacts (in the case of adults) will be notified at the earliest possible time to make medical decisions or just for informational purposes.

What's included in the price of the trip: Your trip cost includes ground transport from San Diego (unless otherwise specified), meals (Sunday night, 3 meals a day Monday-Friday, Snacks for the ride home), purified water, construction materials/tools for house build, adult chaperones (1 to 5 ratio), recreational activities and leadership training. Individuals are encouraged to bring spending money for extra meals, shopping, etc. Very little is needed.

Travel to San Diego International airport can be arranged by air, bus, or personal car. Off-airport parking with shuttles is available at reduced rates.

Paperwork and Deadline Instructions for Individuals

It is very important that you be aware of all deadlines for payments, paperwork, passport copies/birth certificates. There are four deadlines set up (see details on each deadline below):

- **10% non-refundable deposit due** when application is mailed in.
- **2 months before trip - 30%**
- **6 weeks before trip - 30%**
- **2 weeks before trip - 30%**
- In order to confirm your trip, the following must be submitted to Student Reach:
- A **10% non-refundable deposit**, a completed, signed and notarized individual application form and assumption of risk agreement. (Only minors who are not traveling with their parents need their application notarized). This deposit is due no later than 2 months before the trip, at which time the 1st and 2nd payments to total 40%, would be due.

The fees for late or missing paperwork are assessed per individual.

All submissions should be sent to:
StudentReach, 5449 E Levee Rd, Sacramento CA 95835

Cancellation Policy

- All 10% deposits and group application fees are non-refundable.
- If a cancellation is made within 1 month before the trip 30% is non-refundable.
- If a cancellation is made within 2 weeks of the trip 100% is non-refundable, that person is responsible for the entire amount of the trip price.

Item's needed for the trip:

- **General** – Sunscreen, Spending money (see "currency" section for guidelines), toilet paper (for times away from the base), a backpack (normal kind), a water bottle (you will refill with purified water), toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, etc) a package of wet wipes and hand sanitizer for the job site and "optional" ear plugs (for sleeping), light shorts/t-shirt to sleep in, sweatshirt or light jacket, you can bring some snacks if you want.
- **For the beach** - Sunscreen, beach towel, sandals, a modest swim suit (this is a humanitarian trip), sunglasses
- **For work** - More sunscreen, a hammer, work shoes (boots or hardy sport shoes), gloves, work clothes (you will get dirty), a hat (something with a wide brim is recommended), painting clothes that can get "ruined." Please bring long (in length, not long sleeved) shirts for the work site that don't bare your midriff when you bend over, shorts for the work site should be at least mid-thigh, tank tops should be modest - the Mexican people are very modest. We don't want to be a freak show.
- **Do not bring:** Any illegal substance. Non-prescribed pharmaceuticals, illegal drugs, or firearms of any kind. These are illegal in Mexico and are punishable by Mexican law which provides for serious consequences. Alcohol, fireworks and other potentially dangerous items are not allowed on the expedition.