

Baja Travel: San Ignacio - A land of Palm and Calm

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If you want to see a classic little Baja pueblo oasis in the Vizcaino desert, get off Baja Highway One at San Ignacio and be sure to take the time to visit the main plaza in town.

Every time I have stopped by and rested in the main plaza while having a cool drink under the Indian Laurel trees I have experienced real peace. The beautiful old Misión San Ignacio Loyola was built in 1786 and has four foot thick volcanic walls.

San Ignacio is a slow moving, relaxing little town that will infect your soul with laziness.



The people of La Paz have jokes about San Ignacians and how lazy they are. While true Pacenos (people of the city of Peace, La Paz) are not the most energetic people they claim there are people lazier than themselves.

The anecdote goes like this:

“An old man is sitting in his living room and he sees a scorpion coming through the front door of the house. He then yells to his wife to go get the antidote.” [Planning on being struck by the scorpion because he is too lazy to get up and avoid it.]

Laziness does seem to hold true as the cool sea air rolls into the plaza interrupting the persistent desert heat, rustling of the leaves of the giant shade trees. Not much going on here for me, but total release. Just let it out and relax. Ah I could spend hours in that plaza.



By the way if you are headed down, just over the border on a straight through trip to the south you may want to stop in here and acclimatize to the Mexican way of life. I know of no quicker way of returning to the understanding of the concept of manana manana (that is “not today”) than to chill out here for a few hours.

San Ignacio has been a favorite for travelers since the mission days, surrounded by mesas, the oasis, being a respite for many a traveler from whatever Baja journey they may be on. Many tourists today visit San Ignacio and use it as a base to see some of the greatest natural wonders of Baja California.



You will find on one side of the mission the Museo de Pinturas Rupestres de San Ignacio (museum of painted caves). Here you will find much information and beautiful photographs of the painted caves created by ancient Indians found in the Sierra de Francisco.

You may also want to pay a visit to Laguna San Ignacio to see the nursing area for the grey whales. The Laguna is forty miles west (a couple of hours) from town on a dirt road and tours are available with reservations suggested.

After that well deserved rest in the plaza you may want to go explore the lake edge or go for a dip depending on the weather. It is really amazing the quantity of water that exists in the palm lined lake or river of San Ignacio.



As you return to the trans-peninsular Baja Highway One, you will notice little of the sea or palm groves as the desert takes over and you leave this incredible oasis behind.



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