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*Latitude 38's*

**FIRST TIMER'S**

**GUIDE TO**

**MEXICO**

**2017**



Welcome to La Paz

# Baja Ha-Ha

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Thursday, November 30

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

*Mexican Folk Dancing • Live Music • Food & Drinks*

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(2017 Baja Ha-Ha participants.)

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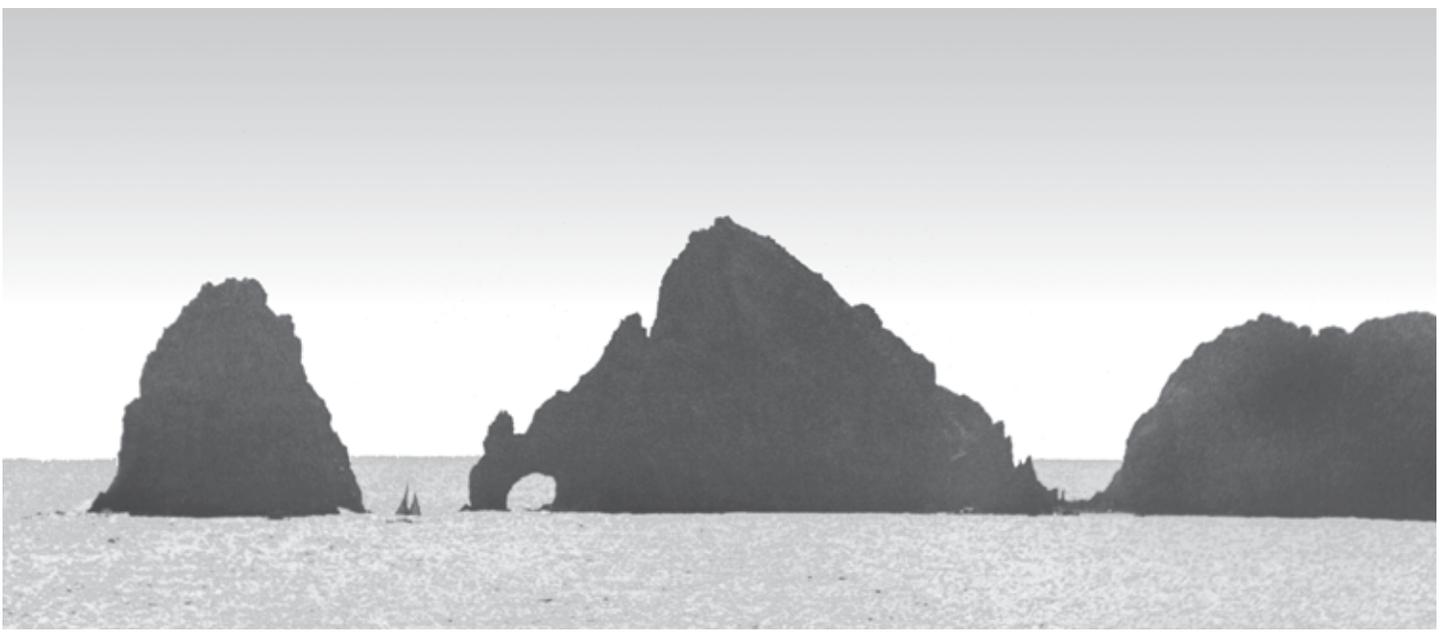
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# Latitude 38's FIRST TIMER'S GUIDE TO MEXICO



Produced by the *Latitude 38* staff, who remind you to 'keep in touch' during your travels.

We encourage you to email us with reports — and photos! — about interesting places you visit, or letters about issues of interest to other cruisers.

Email: [tim@latitude38.com](mailto:tim@latitude38.com)

*Digital photos can be attached to emails  
(in medium to high resolution).*

Phone: (415) 383-8200, ext. 112

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Acknowledgment: In addition to insights from the *Latitude 38* staff, much of the text in this guide was provided by Emily Fagan. Links to her writing on additional topics can be found at: <http://roadslesstraveled.us>.

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## A WORLD OF ITS OWN

Dear Baja Ha-Ha Sailors,

We are very pleased to have this opportunity to support your adventure in Mexico with the 24th Annual Baja Ha-Ha Rally, and welcome you to the unique Mexico cruising lifestyle.

Renowned as a haven for the world's most discerning cruisers, Mexico's harbors, marinas and attractions have garnered rave reviews from generations of cruisers and Baja Ha-Ha participants.

In the two decades since the first Baja Ha-Ha, marina facilities and shore side services for cruisers have improved dramatically, while the warm waters, steady breezes and friendly nature of the traditional Mexican culture have stayed true to their history.

Additionally, due to our ecologically rich environment, you will see amazing wildlife, clean waters, and will have numerous new and rewarding experiences exploring Mexico's coastline. Of course, we would encourage you to also venture inland, where you will discover even more of Mexico's many rewards and attractions.

These features have made Mexico the destination of choice for cruisers from around the globe, including many repeat Baja Ha-Ha participants. Although there's a big world for cruising sailors to experience, many world travelers tell us there is no better cruising grounds on earth than the waters of Mexico.

On behalf of Mexico Tourism, we hope to welcome you soon, and share with you the magnificence that Mexico has to offer.

My best,

*Jorge Gamboa*

Director

Los Angeles Office of Mexico Tourism

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# FIRST TIMER'S GUIDE TO MEXICO

## The Big Picture

**Mexico is a great cruising ground** — There are many reasons Mexico is one of the most desirable cruising destinations in the world. The diversity of cruising areas, from the northern Sea of Cortez to southern mainland, is rarely matched anywhere else in the world. It's very inexpensive. Not only is the cost of living extremely low, for about \$50 Mexico will give you a 'Temporary' Import Permit (TIP) that's good for 10 years! It's the cruising bargain of the world. Mexicans are overwhelmingly friendly, and cruising Mexico is about as safe as anywhere in the world. Finally, Mexico is so close to the 'home' in the United States.

## Preparing to Cruise

**The Boat** — If you're going to sail to Mexico, the size of your boat isn't nearly as important as the quality. Make sure the boat was designed and built, and has been maintained, for open-ocean sailing. While Mexico usually has lighter winds than many sailors prefer, now and then weather conditions can get very rough. Hopefully you won't ever find yourself in such conditions, but if you do, you won't want to be trusting your life to a boat designed for lake sailing.

If you own a trailerable boat that wasn't designed for open-ocean sailing, remember that parts of the Sea of Cortez are ideal for trailerboat sailing. Look for the places that have a large number of anchorages close together, which means you'll never have to wander too far from shelter. For those willing to drive farther, Banderas Bay would be another great place for a trailerable boat.

No matter what kind of boat you take to Mexico, check to make sure her basic features, systems, and emergency gear are in good working order. After all, you're better off discovering that the steering cable needs replacement at the dock in California than off Cedros Island at 2 a.m. when it's blowing 30 and all the crew is seasick. 'A stitch in time saves nine' is for landlubbers. When it comes to boats, a 'stitch in time' can save 109 at sea. Furthermore, specialized marine gear is expensive and hard to come by in Mexico. So if your gooseneck fails while you're rounding Cabo Corrientes, you might blow a month of your precious cruising time trying to get it replaced.

If you're unsure how to evaluate the condition of your hull, thru-hulls, steering system and rudder, propulsion system, mast, rigging, sails and other gear, hire a surveyor. It may turn out to be one of the best investments you make.

*(Author Emily Fagan offers additional notes on boat prep tips later in this publication.)*

**Gear** — Despite the fact that many boats heading to Mexico are loaded down with gear, much of it isn't absolutely necessary. To our mind, the following is the minimum:

An EPIRB and/or a two-way satellite messaging device such as a Garmin InReach or Iridium Go!, Coast Guard-required safety gear, liferaft, dinghy (which may be modified to serve as a liferaft), AIS and/or radar, three appropriate-

size anchors with appropriate-size rode, compass, two GPSs, VHF radio, working sails, a light air headsail, plenty of cockpit and other shading, at least one set of charts and one cruising guide. Add food and water, and you can enjoy a great cruise. For what it's worth, we've also cruised the Sea of Cortez with a Cal 25 and an Olson 30 with less than half the gear mentioned here. But if you do something like that, you'd better know what you're doing.

While we've cruised Mexico in a boat with only the above gear, if you've got money left, it would also be nice to have an electric windlass, a depthsounder, electronic charts, radar (which is as important for navigation as it is for avoiding ships in the fog), speed and wind instruments, a top-quality



**Kids love the 80-degree water temps of Cabo San Lucas.**

dinghy with an outboard powerful enough to make it plane with two passengers, and a SSB radio or Iridium satphone.

There's nothing like cold beers and lots of fresh water when cruising in the tropics. While both refrigeration and water-makers are great, remember that in addition to their initial cost, they'll also increase demands on your boat's electrical supply and increase your maintenance time. We think that both refrigeration and watermakers are well worth it, but many people cruise without them.

**Skipper And Crew** — If you're the skipper, you need to be aware that there are significantly greater challenges to cruising in Mexico than there are in sailing across San Francisco Bay or on a typical weekend cruise from Marina del Rey to Catalina. The biggest challenge is that you have to be self-sufficient. For all intents and purposes, there is no Coast Guard rescue or US-style tow-boat services in the more remote and offshore areas of Mexico, although the Mexican Navy will do the best they can to help with limited resources. You need to assume that you'll be on your own. That means you need to be comfortable with night sailing, heavy weather sailing, coastal and offshore navigation, anchoring in unfamiliar places, and handling the fatigue that accompanies the first couple of days at sea.

It's also important that you know how to respond to problems. What would you do, for example, if you lost your mast, your rudder, your engine's charging capability, your engine or transmission? Have contingency plans for the basic problems.

If you don't have much offshore experience, you should

strongly consider bringing along a seasoned mentor for your virgin run from San Diego to Cabo. We had mentoring for our first two trips to Mexico, and it really prepared us for doing it on our own. Not only do you 'learn the ropes' more easily, but the trip will probably be more relaxing and less stressful. And when you're finally on your own in Cabo, you'll have much greater confidence in your abilities.

Before heading south of the border, the skipper and crew should review all the boat's emergency gear and procedures, boat systems, as well as how to start and operate the engine. The last is critical, because it would be a shame if the skipper fell overboard and was lost because he/she didn't bother to teach anyone else how to start the engine. It's also wise to post a diagram indicating the location of all thru-hull fittings. If water is coming in, you instantly want to know where all the thru hulls are.

The skipper and crew should practice putting in single and double reefs, preferably at night at sea. Having a boat well-reefed in 25 knots of wind can make all the difference between a miserable time at sea and a much more comfortable and safe one. Ask any veteran sailor. Crew overboard drills should also be conducted under realistic conditions.

You'll be anchoring all the time in Mexico, so the whole crew should be made familiar with all the gear and techniques prior to having to set the hook at midnight in Bahia Santa Maria.

If you're crewing on a boat and the skipper hasn't gone over all the basic gear and emergency systems and procedures, *insist* that he or she do so.

While many people have singlehanded to Mexico, it's safer — and usually more fun — to have at least one other per-

son along. If your boat is large enough, a third or fourth person often makes the trip down Baja much more of a pleasure cruise. And it's twice as true on a Bash back up Baja.

But if there are just two of you making a quick trip from San Diego to Cabo, expect to be wiped out when you arrive at the Cape. After all, the first couple of days at sea are the hardest on even the most experienced sailors, and 12 hours of watches per day will drain anyone. Fatigue on a boat can be brutal.

Fortunately, there are frequently good anchorages down the coast of Baja and on the mainland.

**Insurance** — There are two types of insurance you need to know about. The first is insurance for your boat in the event that you lose the mast, get blown onto the beach, or get holed by a shrimper. This is often referred to as 'hull insurance'. If your boat is in good condition, you shouldn't have any trouble getting it. If you already have it, there's a good chance your insurer will add a Mexico 'rider' for an additional fee. We would guess that about 50% of the boats

cruising Mexico have this kind of insurance.

Most marinas will no longer admit boats that can't produce a copy of liability insurance.

The second type of insurance is Mexican liability insurance, and is required of all boats visiting Mexican waters. In the unlikely event you do some damage with your boat in Mexico — run over a *panga* fisherman in the middle of the night, T-bone a shrimper and damage their hull, that kind of thing — you'll be glad you have a Mexican liability policy.

Liability insurance for Mexico is not too expensive, and can be purchased from a broker who deals with boat insurance for Mexico. It's the kind of thing you probably won't ever need, but if you do, you'll be really glad you have it.

**Fishing Licenses** — If you carry fishing gear on your boat, every person aboard has a valid fishing license. It doesn't matter if only one or two people fish, everyone has to have a license.

While you are still in the US, fishing licenses may be obtained in person or by mail from: Mexican Department of Fisheries, 2389 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, CA.92101 Phone: (619) 233-4324; [www.sportfishinginmexico.com](http://www.sportfishinginmexico.com)

Mexican fishing licenses can also be obtained from the Baja California and Baja California Sur State Government site: [www.bajasursportfishing.com](http://www.bajasursportfishing.com).

Another very informative site that includes fishing tournaments and events, plus a lot more about fishing in Mexico is: [pescadeportiva.conapesca.sagarpa.gob.mx:82](http://pescadeportiva.conapesca.sagarpa.gob.mx:82). (Once there, click on 'English'.)

Regardless of where the licenses are purchased, they are valid for use anywhere within territorial Mexican waters.

**Radio Licenses** — If you're a Ham operator, you need a FCC ship's station license in addition to your VHF and SSB radio license. To obtain an FCC amateur radio license you will need to complete form FCC 605, which can be downloaded from the Internet ([www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form605/605.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form605/605.pdf)). For general requirements and procedures see <http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/amateur/licensing/index.html>. Or call (888) 225-5322.

To operate a ham radio in Mexico, you need to get a reciprocal Mexican license. You will need two copies of your U.S. Ham license along with two copies of your stamped Tourist Card. You can get a license in Tijuana from the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (1071 Calle 16, Libertad; phone: 011-52-668-29500). or at other Mexican port cities.

**Charts and Cruising Guides** — Charts come in many forms: originals, single reproductions, compilations of reproductions, and electronic. The most important thing to remember is that almost all of the original charts for Mexico, and many chartlets in older cruising guides, are inaccurate! And often very inaccurate.

When sailing close to shore in Mexico, your GPS coordinates will often show you to be a mile or more to the east — or in many cases, on land. To be safe, we always assume at least two miles of error for charts of anyplace in Mexico, and constantly double-check our GPS position with radar and depthsounder.

If you buy Navionics electronic charts, remember that you have to download specific areas while you have internet, or else you just get the most basic, and often wrong, information.



**Fishing in Mexican waters can be excellent, but sometimes you get surprises.**

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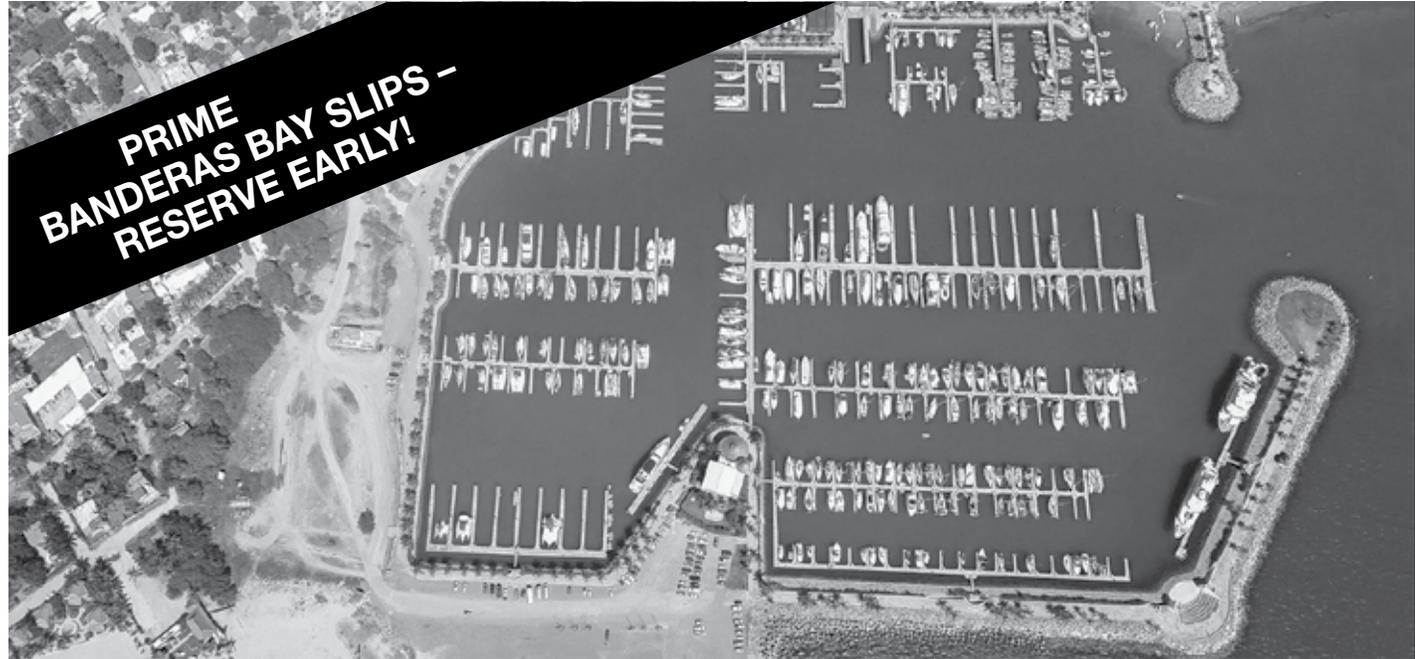
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letting others know what a great place you have –  
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*Andrew Linney, [www.nokaoi2.info](http://www.nokaoi2.info)*

**Contact us for Baja Ha-Ha Savings!**

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These days, electronic charts seem to be irresistible. But you always want to have some 'hard copy' backup in case you spill a pitcher of sangria on your computer or iPad.

While the cruising guides offer tidbits of historical and cultural information about Mexico, nothing can compare with the informative general tourist guides to Mexico published by Moon Publications and/or Lonely Planet. While a combination of their *Baja Handbook* and *Pacific Mexico Handbook* will do the job, they also offer handbooks for Cabo and Puerto Vallarta. The first two, at about \$15 each, are 'must buys' to fully appreciate Mexico.

While lots of folks read trashy novels in Mexico, there are three classic books you shouldn't miss: *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* and *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, and Karl Franz's *People's Guide to Mexico*. If you're confused by Mexican culture, Franz's book will explain it in a most entertaining manner.

**Identification, Documents & Licenses** — Don't go to Mexico — or take any crew to Mexico — without the following:

- 1) A passports for each member of the crew.
- 2) FMM Visitor Cards or other immigration document for non-Mexicans.
- 3) The original copy of the vessel documentation.
- 4) A Temporary Import Permit (TIP).
- 5) Proof of liability Insurance.
- 6) Fishing licenses, if you have fishing gear.
- 7) The original Mexico International Clear-in Document or Crew List.
- 8) A Letter of Authorization if someone other than the owner is to be left in charge of the boat.
- 9) Notarized permission letter for children who are minors if they are not accompanied by both their parents.

Legally, if you arrive by sea you are also supposed to have a zarpe from the last country and a health certificate. In the more than 30 years we've been taking our boats to Mexico, we don't know of anyone who has needed either one. Some officials ask, but so far it hasn't been a problem.

### **Immigration Requirements Which May Be Processed By You Prior to Arrival in Mexico (By Private Boat)**

**Editor's note:** In recent years the Mexican government has taken steps intended to make immigration procedures and temporary boat importation easier. Two special websites have been dedicated to facilitate this effort, but in many cases it's been two steps forward, one step back.

The following is the latest info we have, as of May 2017, on using these new government systems. Since there is no reason to get either document more than a month before going to Mexico, we suggest you wait until, as the Mexican government often retweaks or changes the rules or procedures in late September of each year. Repeat, the following information may be inaccurate or obsolete for those headed south for the winter

of 2017 cruising season. The important things are to: 1) Not sweat it, as it will all work out, and 2) Keep reading *Latitude 38* and *Lectronic Latitude* for updates.

**Immigration Document** — When flying to Mexico, you automatically get a tourist visa for 180 days. When you sail to Mexico, you need to apply for a DNR — we have no idea what it stands for — in advance, as it makes you legal in Mexican waters before you reach your first port of entry. The DNR costs less than \$25. When you get to your port of entry, you exchange this at no cost at Immigration for a normal 180-day tourist visa.

To apply for a DNR, visit <https://www.banjercito.com.mx/registroEmbarques/> and follow the instructions. Each member of the crew should apply individually and pay their fee by credit card. *Have each person do this individually, or everyone will have to leave Mexico at the same time.* It is also very important that you print out and save the receipt that is presented on the site after you pay, as you will need it when you email the passenger list to INM in the next step. Also print out a second copy to keep with you on the boat. The following information must be provided to get a DNR:

- 1) Passport number of the person responsible for the vessel
- 2) Vessel Documentation (State or Federal Documentation).
- 3) Total number of crew aboard. We know this is crazy, but when they ask how many people will be on the boat, just say 'one', even if there will really be 10 aboard. Don't ask why.

Next, download and complete the spreadsheet with the information of the vessel and passengers. There you will find the following:

- A Sample Form (spreadsheet) for submission of a list of maritime passengers and crew members — delete the sample information and insert your passenger list. Save it to your



**Turtle Bay's beach only gets this much use when the Baja Ha-Ha fleet is in town.**

computer following the instructions on the web page, including how to name the file correctly.

- A guide for filling out the form for the submission of a list of maritime passengers and crew members.
- An email Directory/List of INM Ports addresses for submission of lists of maritime passengers and crew members.

Next, email the completed spreadsheet and a copy of your receipt to INM. As an example, if you are leaving from Southern California you should send the email to the Ensenada INM Office at: [www.inm.gob.mx](http://www.inm.gob.mx)

Once the visitor's information outlined above is sent to

INM, INM will email you back the entry authorization (or denial) to the individuals intending to enter Mexico's territorial waters onboard the given vessel. The document must be kept aboard the vessel at all times, along with the receipt of payment.

The authorizing email will also contain INM's permit to enter as a Visitor Without Permission to Perform Activities for Profit (i.e. work for income/profit).

The length of the stay will be the amount of time requested

**A sample TIP.**

by the applicant, but shall not exceed 180 days, and cannot be used for multiple entries and departures.

A copy of your information will be sent to the Secretary of the Navy / (SEMAR) and to the Secretary of Communications and Transportation (SCT).

We know this all sounds very confusing, and is, but don't sweat it, for as the start of the cruising season approaches, lots of others will already have had success and can help those who get confused.

**Immigration Requirements By Individuals Upon Arrival in Mexico By Sea**

**Children** — Unless accompanied by both parents, children under 18 years of age need a notarized letter from the absent parent to travel to Mexico.

**Upon Arrival** — When arriving at your first Mexican port of entry, you can either have a ship's agent do all your paperwork, or you can do it yourself. If doing it yourself, you first need to check in at Immigration office with your passport and DNR. Each one will get a 180-tourist visa in return for the DNR.

**Vessel Documentation Requirements**

Every vessel entering Mexico must carry *original* of the current Vessel Documentation or Registration that proves ownership. (Today's copiers are so good they make it impossible to tell the difference between an original and a copy.) This means federally documented vessels will need to present a USCG Certificate of Documentation and undocumented

vessels will need to have a valid state registration..

All vessels registered under a Corporation or LLC are required to have an original notarized letter onboard authorizing the master or representative to operate the vessel.

**Temporary Import Permits (TIP) for Vessels**

All vessels are legally required to get a Temporary Import Permit (TIP) arriving in Mexican water, and the original of the TTIP must be carried on the boat at all times.

That said, every year — including 2016 — boat arrive in Mexico without a TIP and without a problem. They just get one in La Paz or Mazatlan. You cannot get one in Cabo. But it's so simply to get once in advance like you are supposed to, we highly recommend it..

A TIP may be obtained online between seven and 60 days before your departure for Mexico. We recommend applying one month in advance. Apply at <https://www.banjercito.com.mx/registroVehiculos/>

You may also acquire the TIP at the following Mexican Consulates:

- In California: Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Bernardino
- In Arizona: Phoenix
- In Texas: Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Austin
- In Colorado: Denver
- In Illinois: Chicago
- In New Mexico: Albuquerque

You can also get a TIP in Tijuana.

**Important note:** If your vessel's TIP expires before your boat leaves Mexico — a TIP is good for 10 years! — your vessel will be considered to be in Mexican territory illegally. It would then be subject to confiscation.

Temporarily imported vessels cannot legally be sold in Mexico, but it seems to be done all the time.



*Caleta Partida is a must-see anchorage in the Sea of Cortez.*

**Clearing Into Mexico For the First Time**

A vessel must clear-in when entering Mexico at the first official port of entry.

The clear-in process is as follows:

- 1) Complete the Crew List Document

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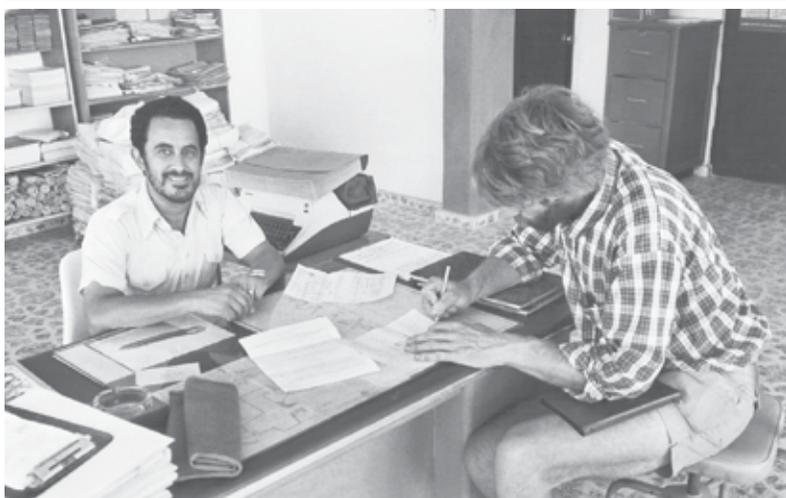
**Wednesday, Sept. 6**

**6 to 9 p.m.**

*Mix, mingle and meet sailors and  
boat owners – connect to sail South.*

2) Go to the Immigration office and get the Crew List properly stamped and get 180-day tourist visas for each member of the crew.

3) Go to the Port Captain's Office with the completed form to pay the clear in fee, and have the document duly authorized and stamped. In some ports you may be required to pay a Port Use Fee with the API (Port Administrator).



*Appearance counts with officials.*

### Clearing Out of Mexico

A vessel must clear out when leaving Mexico at the last official port of exit.

The process for clearing out of Mexico is as follows:

- 1) Complete the crew list for exiting Mexico (*Zarpe*).
- 2) Have Immigration get the crew list stamped and surrender the tourist visas.
- 3) Go to the Port Captain's office to pay the vessel's check-out fees, and have the crew list stamped with the authorization to exit the country of Mexico.

**Important note:** From time to time, port captains in different ports require more documents than do other port captains. Such as a health clearance for the boat. Before leaving Mexico, ask other cruisers what the current policy is for the port you are thinking about leaving.

*Important note:* Do not skip the clear-out process, since the next time you visit Mexico, your information may show that you never left the country and therefore you are considered to be in Mexico illegally. Or if you sell your boat, the next owner may find himself in big trouble when going to Mexico.

### Clearing Into and Out of Ports Within Mexico ('Cabotage')

If you are navigating from one Mexican port to another, all that is required is that you inform the port captain or in some cases the harbormaster of the marina you've been staying in. This is another case where different port captains have different requirements. Ask around for the latest policy.

Depending on the port captain's office, some may require a

written notification, while others allow a verbal one via VHF, Channel 16.

### Once You're in Mexico

**Dress To Impress** — To a greater degree than in the United States, officials and business people will treat you according to the way you dress and behave. If you dress as if you're an important person, you'll usually be treated accordingly. It's not the end of the world if you dress in the 'cruiser's uniform' of shorts, faded T-shirt and flip-flops when you visit the office of a port captain or other official, but it doesn't show much respect. Remember, you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

If you're a woman who enjoys wearing sexy outfits or displaying breast augmentation with a skimpy bathing suit, you won't have many problems around tourist areas or resort marinas. But if you visit official offices or venture off into 'real' Mexico, you can expect to be treated with less respect than you might wish. Similarly, although going naked is lots of fun, Mexico isn't the South of France. So only go starkers on your boat when you're anchored way out. If you go naked on the beach, know that 'Mexican eyes' are everywhere.

### Weather Issues

**Water Temperatures** — While there can be spells of cool and cold air temperatures in the Sea of Cortez as early as November, the water temperature normally stays quite warm as late as early December. We once recorded 88° at Isla Partida during Thanksgiving. After that, the water temperature cools rapidly and dramatically, so forget swimming without a wetsuit from La Paz north until March or April.

The bottom line is that the best times to cruise the fabled Sea of Cortez are the spring and fall. Winter is too cool for those who enjoy water sports and are looking for a great tan. Summer is very, very warm in the Sea — in fact, August and September are hot as Hades — but some folks still love it.

South of Mazatlan or Puerto Vallarta, the air and water temperatures are pleasant year round. While some Northerners



*Another perfect day in Mexico? Perhaps, but it's important to keep abreast of local and long-range weather forecasts.*

blow down as far south as Mazatlan, they never invade the sheltered waters of Banderas Bay or the Gold Coast. However, if you like serious warmth in the dead of winter, there's nothing like getting as far south as Zihuatanejo. At midnight one

memorable New Year's Eve, we measured both the air and sea temperatures over 80°. The skies almost always seem to be blue in Z-town.

**Nasty Weather** — While the sailing winds in Mexico are normally light and benign during the prime cruising season — between November and June — there can be some notable exceptions. The Pacific Coast of Baja is periodically subject to strong winds from the northwest and less often the northeast, which makes the Baja Bash so much fun.

The waters of Sea of Cortez can also be dangerous from November to March, as Northers howl down from the States on a semi-regular basis. It's not uncommon to have 40 knots of wind during a Norther. But the wind isn't as much of a problem as the short and steep seas. When there's a Norther blowing, you want to be holed up in a snug anchorage, not crossing the Sea of Cortez. Northers are easy to forecast.

The number of Northers during any given winter can vary tremendously. Sometimes they seem to come almost one after another. Other years there are hardly any at all.

**Tropical Storms and Hurricanes** — The hurricane season in Mexico is generally considered, by mariners, to be from June 1 until October 31, although it's officially from May 15 to November 30.

During the last 50 years there have been a handful of Mexican hurricanes in the month of November, only one or two of which affected cruisers. There was, however, one nasty hurricane in the middle of December — so you never can tell.

The nice thing about tropical storms and hurricanes in Mexico is that they almost always give plenty of warning, as they form down by the border with Guatemala.

During the summer hurricane season, most boats on the mainland are tucked tightly into marinas and are therefore quite safe. None of the ports on the mainland from Mazatlan

Storms in the summers of '92, '93 and '14 were very powerful, and caused damage to many boats Cabo, La Paz, Puerto Escondido, and San Carlos. Most, however, that were well prepared or were in marinas did well. Tropical storms and hurricanes are hard on boats that are anchored out an unattended.

The farther up in the Sea you get, the greater the chance that an approaching hurricane will fizzle out before reaching you.

If you want to be an authority on Mexican hurricanes, go to: <http://weather.unisys.com/hurricane/index.html>. This site has all the data, plus a color-coded chart showing the windspeed and path of every Mexican tropical storm and hurricane since 1949.

In the summertime, the Sea of Cortez is also subject to *chubascos* and *elephantos* — brief storms with winds that often blow at close to hurricane force. In the fall of '97, a number of cruising boats were driven ashore at Puerto Escondido by a *chubasco*.

### Staying In Touch

If you're one of those people who likes to stay in touch with your family, friends, and business, there are many ways to communicate back to the States by voice and data.

**Cell Phones** — Some US telecom companies now offer relatively economical 'North American Plans' voice and data plans that sound almost true good to be true, and they are too good to be true. When these companies infer that they offer "unlimited" "international" data, even at 2G, they are lying. For if you're in Mexico for as short a time as one month, they will cut you off. Only one company lets you go for three billing cycles.

At this time, T-Mobile seems to offer the best plan, and they are the slowest to cut customers off. But they will. With

their plan, phone calls to the States are 20 cents a minute and 2G data, good enough for email, is unlimited.

A lot of people have found that it makes sense to also get a Mexican phone and a Mexican data plan. Things change often, so ask around.

Naturally, you want to do most of your internet stuff on wifi. Fortunately, most marinas and restaurants have great wifi — although not to the docks.

When you have wifi, Skype is a great option for voice.

**Satellite Phones** — If you like to hear distant voices while at remote anchorages, a satellite phone is the answer. The Iridium works all over the world, but the sound quality isn't always the best. And calls get dropped.

**Email** — The most popular communication innovation to hit the world of cruising since shouting was email via SSB radio, enabled via either SailMail, Winlink services, or by using a satellite phone as a portal. Every cruiser who uses these systems will tell you that they are a godsend. The SSB-based systems do require a significant investment in setup, in



PHOEBE WILSON

**Dolphins are a common sight both offshore and in the Sea of Cortez.**

south have taken a big hit in quite a few years, except for Barra de Navidad. Despite nearly being hit by the strongest hurricane in the history of the Eastern Pacific, the boat in Grand Marina and even anchored out did remarkably well.

While cruising pretty much shuts down on mainland Mexico during the summer months, many folks continue — and love — cruising the Sea of Cortez. The Sea gets visited by a tropical storm on the average of about one every two years. That's an average, however, and doesn't mean there won't be more than one in a given year.

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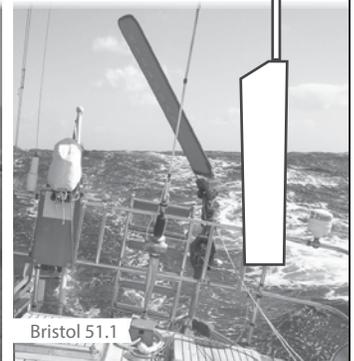
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terms of the radio and a Pactor modem, but cruisers consider them a terrific value. They are good not only for staying in touch, but also for ordering parts and making reservations at marinas at which you're about to arrive.

**Satellite Messengers** — What's dramatically changed onboard communication in recent years are two-way messengers, the most popular of which are Garmin InReach and Iridium Go! Both of these are viable — and we think superior — alternatives to EPIRBs, as they allow two-way communication. Both the InReach and the Go! allow you to send short messages from anywhere in the world, and the Go! allows you to read the New York Times and check GRIB files in the middle of the Pacific. It's very slow, however.

The two-way messengers don't do everything that SailMail and Winlink do, but they do almost everything, plus a lot more, and they are easier to use and much less expensive.

### Miscellaneous

**Guns** — There are reportedly dozens of Americans in Mexican jails because they brought guns or bullets into Mexico. Given Mexico's history with revolutions, *banditos* and drug cartels, the government shows little mercy on those who violate their strict laws. We've never brought guns or bullets to Mexico, nor have we ever felt that we needed them.

**Drugs** — Messing around with any amount of illegal drugs in Mexico can be very dangerous. While the overwhelming majority of Mexicans are kind and friendly, this doesn't apply to drug dealers and runners.

Even buying a little pot for personal use can be risky, as there is always the possibility you're dealing with the wrong kind of people and/or are being set up. Our advice is to never to allow any illegal drugs on your boat.

**Cruiser Code of Conduct** — If there were one, it would be based on the Golden Rule and the Caribbean motto: "Take only photos and leave only footprints."

**Getting Wild And Crazy** — Just about everybody needs to get a little wild and crazy from time to time. Fortunately, in any large Mexican tourist area there are designated bars where Americans can get drunk and behave like complete idiots. Our post-Ha-Ha favorite has always been Squid Roe in Cabo, where the staff relentlessly encourages everyone to get bombed, do lascivious things with consenting partners, and generally misbehave in a controlled environment. *Caution:* Do not take this behavior out into the street, as there are lots of cops and they will throw you in the slammer for seemingly minor offenses, such as peeing on a wall in a dark alley.

*With that intro from the **Latitude 38** staff, we'll turn to the advice of cruiser **Emily Fagan...***  
**Thoughts on Mexican Culture**

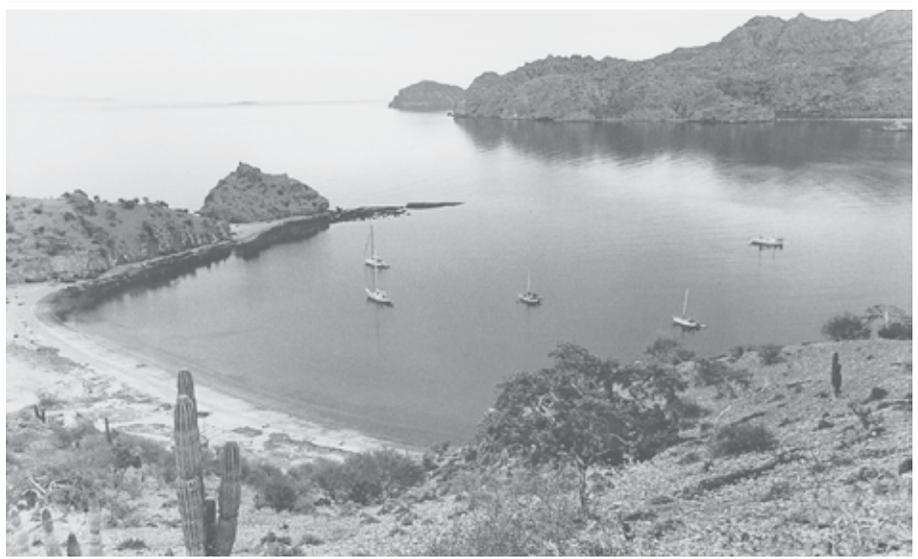
Mind you, some of this material is dated, but overall we still think it's very helpful in giving a feel for cruising in Mexico.

**Where Are We?** All it takes is one provisioning run in Mexico to realize that you're not in Kansas anymore, and it can be quite a culture shock. Mexicans are a wonderful, outgoing, friendly and exuberant people, and their warmth is infectious. But their traditions, ways of doing things, history and ethnicity are very different from what we are used to in the US and Canada.

**Learning Spanish** — One of the best things I did to prepare for cruising in Mexico was to take some conversational Spanish classes at my local community college. I took three semesters and have found it has not only made it easier to get around and find things, but it has enriched my time in Mexico. I have gradually reached a point where I can listen to the thoughts of these fine people in their own language.

Although three semesters taught me almost all the verb tenses and lots of vocabulary, learning to actually hold a meaningful conversation is still an ongoing process for me. However, the conversation in which the pizza store guy in Loreto explained the Mexican presidential election process to me, the day the canvas lady in San Carlos told me all the ups and downs she has faced as a professional boat service person in a man's industry, and the time the fuel dock guy in Manzanillo told me about the keys to enjoying a long marriage, all stand out as true highlights of this crazy cruising experience. If you won't be starting your cruise for a few years, sign up for a Spanish course today, and keep taking it until the day you leave. By the way, I have met many cruisers trying to learn Spanish from courses on CD like Rosetta Stone. But I haven't met anyone who learned Spanish this way.

**Editor's Note:** *The Wanderer has found that smart phones*



**Agua Verde, in the Sea of Cortez.**

*with translation programs are a tremendous tool for communicating in languages you don't know and learning those languages. You speak a sentence into the phone in English, and it comes out in Spanish. And it's saves them so you can go over phrases you use the most. Google has a free translation program, and there are many others. Get at least one that doesn't need internet.*

### Navigation Issues

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Navigation in Mexico with a modern electronic chartplotter and radar overlay is a cinch. All the cruising guides give GPS waypoints for major obstacles and anchorages. Shawn Breeding and Heather Bansmer, authors of the popular *Sea of Cortez: A Cruising Guide* and *Pacific Mexico: A Cruising Guide*, include a table at the end of each book that lists the suggested waypoints with logically named labels and descriptions. Entering these waypoints into your chartplotter turns cruising Mexico into an easy paint-by-numbers affair.

As mentioned above, the survey data used to create the *some* chartplotter charts is something like a century or more old, and although the contours are usually correct, the data are often offset from the real GPS coordinates by as much as a mile or so.

Whenever we approach an unknown anchorage we turn on the radar to see how accurate the chartplotter is. Fifty percent of the time it is right on. The rest of the time it is usually just offset to one side or the other, and it is easy to see where you should go and what to avoid.

Before setting out, we purchased *Pat Rains' Mexico Boating Guide* and *Charlie's Charts of Mexico* by Charles and Margo Wood, as well as the two books by Bansmer/Breeding. All four were useful, and we were glad to have each one on board, as they offer different perspectives. *Charlie's Charts* reflects an earlier age of cruising, but is completely up to date. Pat Rains gives down-and-dirty practical advice. Bansmer/Breeding paints a vivid picture of what you will find in each anchorage. We relied on Rains and Wood for the San Diego-to-Cabo passage. We used Rains, Wood and Bansmer/Breeding on the Pacific coast and used Rains and Bansmer/Breeding in the Sea of Cortez.

**Weather Prediction** — We have found the weather in Mexico to be generally benign and the bad weather predictable well in advance.

Our preferred method for weather prediction is the internet. We have had Internet access from the boat at most locations, relying primarily on our USB modem from TelCel (more on acquiring one later in this guide). On the trip south the only place without internet via TelCel is Cedros Island. (*It has it now off the village.*)

Once south, the only place where there is no internet access (and you really could use it for weather forecasting) is from Isla Espiritu Santo north to just south of Ensenada Blanca (Bahía Candeleros) in the Sea of Cortez, and from north of Isla Coronado farther north to Bahía Concepción, also in the Sea of Cortez. These are both long stretches of excellent cruising grounds, so after a few days at anchor when your downloaded weather data is out of date, it becomes necessary to rely on SSB radio broadcast forecasts from amateur meteorologists (more about that below) or some other method of obtaining weather information.

*(It's now possible to download GRIB files from an Iridium Go! or have a friend with internet give you a brief weather forecast visa InReach.)*

If you can understand rapid-fire Spanish full of wave heights and wind speeds, the port captains periodically broadcast weather forecasts on the VHF radio on channel 12 or 14 (they are announced first on Channel 16 and come mid-morning and mid-afternoon).

The key to all the internet weather websites is to add five knots to the wind speeds and a few feet to the wave heights, especially in the Sea of Cortez where predicted, pleasant-sounding 15-knot winds may be 20 with gusts to 25, ac-

companied with short, steep waves. Not fun.

**Editor's Note:** Emily wrote this before the advent of [www.windyty.com](http://www.windyty.com), the brilliant animated weather site that has become so popular for mariners. For what it's worth, when the Wanderer wants to check out weather, he uses either Windyty or Passage Weather.

#### **San Diego to Cabo San Lucas Passage Websites:**

- [www.sailflow.com](http://www.sailflow.com) — Gives high resolution graphic images of the Pacific side of Baja that are accurate if you add 5 knots to the wind speed for good measure.
- [www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com) — There is a page for Baja California that shows the conditions on the Pacific side of the Baja peninsula. The time is given in UTC (Greenwich Mean Time). Rather than worrying about time zones and being exact, I simply subtract 6 hours to try to keep it simple and easy reading these charts, as the forecasts are given for 3, 6, 9 and 12 a.m. and p.m. You really need to study each time-stamped chart carefully to figure out what conditions to expect.
- [www.wunderground.com/blog/Geary/show.html](http://www.wunderground.com/blog/Geary/show.html) — From amateur SSB weather broadcaster Geary (see below), this site gives three-day forecasts for each major anchorage on the Pacific side of the Baja peninsula. The posts are not always up to date.

#### **Mainland Mexico Weather Websites:**

- <http://www.passageweather.com> — There is a page for California to Mexico that offers wind and wave forecasts. Subtract 6 hours from UTC to get approximate local time.
- <http://www.passageweather.com/download.htm> — The California-to-Mexico forecasts are available for download if you have a slow Internet connection. These are also useful to download if you are going to lose Internet access in the next few days.
- [www.magicseaweed.com](http://www.magicseaweed.com) — Offers wind and swell forecasts similar to [passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com).
- [www.weather.solmatesantiago.com/forecasts.html](http://www.weather.solmatesantiago.com/forecasts.html) — Posted by amateur meteorologist Stan from Manzanillo Bay, there are separate links for each region of Mexico including the Tehuantepec. The posts are not always up to date.
- [groups.yahoo.com/group/southbound\\_group/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southbound_group/) — This "Southbound\_Group" is resident at [Yahoo.com](http://Yahoo.com), and is an excellent resource for info on cruising between Mexico and Peru.

#### **Sea of Cortez Weather Websites:**

- [www.sailflow.com](http://www.sailflow.com) — Gives high resolution graphic images for the Sea of Cortez that are accurate if you add 5 knots to the wind speed for good measure.
- [www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com) — There is a page for the Baja Peninsula offering wind and wave forecasts
- [www.bajainsider.com/weather/baja-weather108.htm](http://www.bajainsider.com/weather/baja-weather108.htm) — This gives a nice synopsis, including sea temperature (SST tab), and there is a ton of other information about Baja elsewhere on the website.

#### **Sea of Cortez — Mainland Crossing Websites:**

The Northern Crossing of the Sea of Cortez is between (approximately) Bahía Concepción / Punta Chivato / Santa Rosalia on the Baja side and Guaymas and San Carlos on the Mainland side.

- [www.saildocs.com/southerncrossingforecast](http://www.saildocs.com/southerncrossingforecast) — From



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Stan in Manzanillo Bay, the Southern Crossing forecast. It is not always up to date.

- [www.saildocs.com/northerncrossingforecast](http://www.saildocs.com/northerncrossingforecast) — From Stan in Manzanillo Bay, the Northern Crossing forecast. It is not always up to date.

- [www.wunderground.com/blog/Geary/show.html](http://www.wunderground.com/blog/Geary/show.html) — From amateur SSB weather broadcaster Geary (see below), this site gives 3-day forecasts for the northern and southern crossings including the wind conditions on each side and in the middle. Posts are not always up to date.

**SSB Broadcasts** — Due to time constraints on the air, forecasters have to generalize a lot, lumping many miles over many hours into a single "15 knots NNW" kind of statement. When I have Internet available, I find it much easier to look at pictures of the Sea of Cortez or of Mainland Mexico showing wind speeds and directions in a graphical form to get an idea of what will be happening in my particular little spot. Especially in the Sea of Cortez where the wind wraps around the towering mountains, changing its direction and intensity with every mile it traverses, a single wind speed and direction forecast can't tell the whole story.

We also like to get a general weather prediction for the air temperature, humidity, sunshine and rain. We use:

- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

Other websites that can be useful:

- [www.grib.us](http://www.grib.us) — a free downloadable application that allows you to manipulate GRIB files. Windows only.

- [www.buoyweather.com](http://www.buoyweather.com) — a subscription-based marine weather predictor.

- [www.predictwind.com](http://www.predictwind.com) — a subscription-based marine weather predictor

- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) — a general weather forecasting website

- [www.ssec.wisc.edu/data/us\\_comp/us\\_comp.html](http://www.ssec.wisc.edu/data/us_comp/us_comp.html) — Gives a radar overview of the most recent conditions

- [www.atmo.arizona.edu/products/wximagery/usir.html](http://www.atmo.arizona.edu/products/wximagery/usir.html) — Gives a radar overview of the most recent conditions.

**Editor's Note:** *Once again, the Wanderer would suggest that [www.windyty.com](http://www.windyty.com) has equalled or surpassed most of the sites mentioned above.*

**Tides & Lunar Calendar** — Tides generally run less than six feet in most of Pacific Mexico except in the far northern Sea of Cortez, where they can be a lot more (few cruisers venture to that area).

- [www.tide-forecast.com](http://www.tide-forecast.com) — Has a good graphic layout that shows where in the tide sequence you are right now.

- [www.tides4fishing.com/mx](http://www.tides4fishing.com/mx) — An alternative tide forecasting site that includes solar/lunar and other info too.

It is nice to know how much moon you will have on an overnight crossing. This website detects where you are from your IP address and generates a lunar calendar for the month. It also lets you put a red pinpoint on any location in the world and then create a lunar calendar for the month:

- [www.kwathabeng.co.za/travel/moon/full-moon-calendar.html](http://www.kwathabeng.co.za/travel/moon/full-moon-calendar.html)

## Sailing in Mexico

We found the best sailing in Mexico to be north of Cabo Corrientes: in the Sea of Cortez, in Banderas Bay (Puerto Vallarta area), and in the "crossing zone" between Cabo San Lucas, La Paz, Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta. South of Cabo

Corrientes — the Gold Coast (Costa Alegre) and south to Zihuatanejo — has very light wind and it tends to run parallel to the coast, making it either right on the nose or dead astern as you sail between those anchorages.

We have sailed about half of the time that we have been in transit north of Cabo Corrientes and 10% of the time south of there.

This translates to somewhere around 5-10% of all the miles we have covered as the crow flies. In order to sail in Mexico you have to be willing to tack, to sail dead downwind and to sail at 2 or 3 knots. Romping sailboat rides in 15-knot winds on flat seas are not common, but they can be found. One of the best ways to do that kind of sailing is to daysail. Our favorite places for daysailing have been Manzanillo Bay, at the south end of the Costa Alegre (Gold Coast), Loreto Bay between Isla Carmen and the Baja peninsula north of La Paz in the Sea of Cortez, Acapulco Bay, and the Bahías de Huatulco. Banderas Bay (Puerto Vallarta) is another good spot. In some of these places you will likely be one of the only boats out daysailing.

Fishermen's "long lines," or nets, crop up in certain places. We have seen one in the Sea of Cortez, five or six in the Isla Isabel / Mazatlan area, one south of the penal colony islands Islas Marias outside Banderas Bay, and one on the Gold Coast south of Cabo Corrientes. They are marked by some kind of buoy at each end, and these end buoys are a few hundred yards or a few miles apart. The two end buoys may have a flag on them and may have a second smaller buoy floating nearby. Reports from people who have sailed into them are that you can cut them fairly easily with a knife.

The VHF radio is an experience unto itself in Mexican waters. The fishermen go crazy on channel 16, especially out at sea late at night. They whoop and holler and whistle at each other. They hold the mic way too close and yell into it in very fast and excited-sounding Spanish. I asked a Bolivian cruiser what the heck they were saying, and he said he couldn't understand them either, and that they have their own jargon. Sometimes they hold the mic to their radio speakers and play songs on Channel 16.

In between, the cruisers hail each other and the freighters and cruise ships hail the port captains, all sounding very formal. I once heard a Mexican voice say in Spanish, "This channel is for serious mariners, not animals." To which the reply was a loud chicken squawk and then silence. Channel 22 is the channel cruisers use to hail each other when not underway, and many busy anchorages host morning nets on Channel 22.

## Emily's Thoughts on Boat Preparation

If you are outfitting a boat for cruising, I hope this section offers some food for thought and sparks some ideas. We have found that it is easy to get caught up in a mindset of never-ending boat projects to the point where the projects overshadow the cruising. Starting north of the border with a slew of upgrades, it is really tempting to continue taking on huge boat upgrade projects in Mexico. In addition, things break, and suddenly The Boat turns into a 50-hour-a-week job with no time left for sightseeing and enjoying Mexico itself. Soon frustration sets in. "When does the boat work end and the cruising begin?" one friend asked me in jest, but not really joking. Here are some thoughts I've had about some of the most popular upgrades:

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## SAIL SOUTH: JOIN BAJA HA-HA 2017

The Baja Ha-Ha is a 750-mile cruisers' rally from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas, with stops along the way at Turtle Bay and Bahia Santa Maria.

The Baja Ha-Ha XXIV entry roster is already closing on 100 boats. Have a look at the event's website, [www.baja-haha.com](http://www.baja-haha.com), and you'll see that a great variety of boats are entered, and the backgrounds of those who sail them vary greatly also. You may find your friends or a boat like yours on the list. You should join them.

There are many first-timers who'll be sailing south this year with the Ha-Ha, but also plenty of 'repeat offenders' who are eager to replay some of the fun and great sailing that they experienced during previous rallies. The sail from San Diego is one of the finest, most accessible cruising adventures available to West Coast Sailors.

Look for event updates in our *Sightings* section and our 3x per week blog: 'Lectronic Latitude.'

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## CREWING FOR CRUISERS

Among the important dates to note (on next page) is *Latitude's* annual Mexico-Only Crew List and Ha-Ha Party to be held September 6 in Sausalito. You are invited to mix and mingle with hundreds of potential crew and Ha-Ha boat owners who are looking to sail South with extra watch-standers.

Whether you are looking for a ride or for crew, you can get a head start on this process at our constantly updated Crew List at [www.latitude38.com](http://www.latitude38.com). As many Ha-Ha vets will confirm, the best way to prepare for doing the event in your own boat is to crew for someone else first.

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## IMPORTANT DATES

September 6, 4-6 p.m. – Free Mexico Cruising Seminar, Sausalito's Spaulding Marine Center.

September 6, 6-9 p.m. – *Latitude 38's* Fall Crew List Party and Baja Ha-Ha Reunion at Spaulding Marine Center.

September 15, Midnight – Entry deadline.

October 21, Noon-4 p.m. – Ha-Ha Welcome to San Diego Party, Downwind Marine.

October 29, 5 p.m. – Pacific Puddle Jump Seminar. Inside West Marine at 1250 Rosecrans St., San Diego.

October 29, 11 a.m. – Skippers' meeting. West Marine, 1250 Rosecrans.

October 29, 1:00 p.m. – The Annual Ha-Ha Halloween Costume Party and BBQ. West Marine, 1250 Rosecrans.

October 30, 10 a.m. – BHH Kick-Off Parade.

October 30, 11 a.m. – Start of Leg One to Bahia Tortugas.

November 2, 2 p.m.-Daytime – BHH baseball game at Turtle Bay.

November 3, 11 a.m. – Famous Turtle Bay Beach Picnic Party.

November 4 – Start of Leg Two to Bahia Santa Maria.

November 6 – Bahia Santa Maria Day; a layday for relaxing and exploring.

November 7 – Beach Party at BSM.

November 8 – Start of Leg Three to Cabo.

November 9 – Dance Party at Squid Roe.

November 10 – Cabo Beach Party.

November 11 – Awards presentations hosted by Cabo Marina.

November 30, 4-7 p.m. – La Paz Beach Party at La Costa Restaurant.

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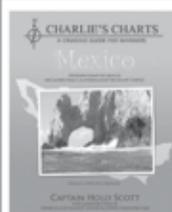
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— If you are going to be in Mexico for just a season or two, and you have the budget to spend 50% or more of your time in marinas, you may be best off skipping the watermaker and solar panels. We think these are two large and complicated, installation projects that will only help you when you are anchored out. For a lot of people the time spent anchoring out is just a few weeks in the Sea of Cortez, a few days here and there between La Paz, Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta, and a few weeks on the Gold Coast. The \$6-15,000 outlay for a watermaker and solar power/arch setup might be much better spent at the swank resort marinas and on trips inland to Mexico's famous landmarks. Doesn't sitting in a hot tub or visiting the extensive but distant Mayan ruins and dramatic landscapes sound better than overseeing a worker installing your upgrades, or worse, doing it yourself?

If you stay at a marina for a few weeks and are then in transit for a week or two before settling into the next marina, a **Yamaha or Honda 2000 generator** will keep the batteries happy on days you don't use your engine, and a large alternator will top them off when you motor between anchorages. If you have good-sized water tanks you can manage with onboard water from the last marina stop.

Some of the happiest cruisers we've met are people who didn't install these expensive items. The water at the marinas is usually — but not always — potable.

If in doubt, you can always filter the water at the dock with a 1-micron filter and a carbon filter in series, or you can add a carbon filter at a sink onboard. If you are fussy about drinking water, it is easy to stock up with bottled water in gallon containers, as these are carried in even the smallest bodegas.

### **Solar Power and Watermaker for Living on the Hook**

— On the other hand, if you are going to anchor out most of the time or are planning a longer cruise to places beyond Mexico that don't have so many marinas, solar power and a watermaker are two awesome upgrades. For us it made sense to get the biggest ones we could.

Our DC fridge and freezer eat up about 100-120 amp hours every 24 hours. Our 555 watts of solar panels tied to a 60 amp MPPT charge controller are just barely sufficient in the winter.

On good sunny days we get anywhere from 150 amps in December/January to 230 amps in June/July. We need to run the engine (with its 100-amp alternator) for a few hours every third or fourth day in the wintertime. This works out fine because that is generally about the time we are ready to move on anyway.

We have met a lot of sailors in Mexico who did not install enough solar power before starting out and decided to add more in Mexico. This isn't easy. So if you are considering putting solar power on your boat before starting your cruise, get at least 500 watts.

The panels need to be installed so they are not in shadows, and they need to be wired in parallel. Ours are aft of the boom, but they often get a little shade when the sun is on the beam or forward of the beam. Lashing the boom off to one side often helps. Unfortunately, on some older panels, if as little as 5% of a solar panel is shaded, it quits working altogether. If the panels are wired in series this knocks out the whole solar panel array. Placing panels near or under radomes, wind generators or the boom will make it very easy for shadows to creep onto one of the panels and severely impair the system. Of course, while sailing they often end

up tilted away from the sun as well as being shaded by the sails.

Our engine-drive watermaker is rated to produce 38 gallons per hour, but it actually makes as much as 50 gallons per hour. In our research we discovered that most DC watermakers require running the engine to keep the batteries at a high enough voltage for the watermaker to operate well, so



*It's smart to always carry small bills. Twenty pesos = roughly \$1.10.*

getting an engine-driven unit that produces five times more water made sense to us. It was the same price as the more popular DC watermakers that produce 6-12 gallons per hour.

The salty, grubby marine environment requires lots of fresh water to keep things clean. My husband Mark attaches a hose to the watermaker's sample tube so we can hose down the decks while making water. Although the water pressure is light. Snorkeling gear and kayaking gear need rinsing after use, and it is nice to rinse off salty feet and salty bodies after swimming. We also have freshwater flush toilets. We use about 20 to 30 gallons of water a day.

**Anchor & Rode** — In Mexico we have been able to anchor in 15 to 25 feet of water almost everywhere, and we put out 120 feet of chain regardless of the depth because there is usually plenty of swinging room. When a Sea of Cortez Norther or Corumuel or westerly blows in, we let out more chain, often as much as 250 feet. We thought it was a little crazy when we followed the advice of seasoned cruisers and installed 300 feet of chain, but we're sure glad we have it now, as we have never dragged. Snorkeling over our 60-lb. Ultra anchor (and Ultra flip swivel) we have seen a case where the boat pulled the chain in a 360-degree circle around the anchor, and the anchor neatly cork-screwed into the sand. The chain's pattern on the sand was very pretty. I wish I'd had an underwater camera to capture it!

### **Day-to-Day Life in Mexico**

**Money** — The best place to change money is with your debit card at ATM machines located within bank buildings. By using a bank's ATM machine, you have someone to go to if the machine doesn't give you your money. (Three different friends have told me a free-standing Mexican ATM machine shorted them their money or gave them nothing at all, and they had little recourse). You can't exchange money with a bank teller unless you have an account at the bank, and the money changers on the streets don't give great rates.

You will be charged a small fee by the bank that changes your money, and unless your bank has a relationship with the Mexican bank, your bank will likely charge a \$2-\$3 fee too. So we prefer to change as much money as possible whenever



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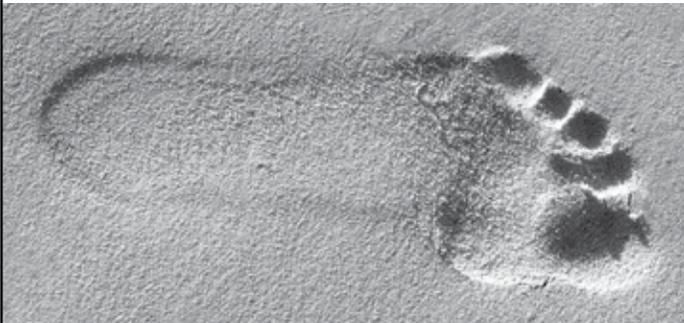
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The receipts never show the exchange rate you were given, so we find out what rate we got when we look at our bank account online after the fact. HSBC, Bancomer, Banamex, Santander and Scotiabank are in most cities.

Credit card fraud is rampant in Mexico. In one year we had five cases of fraud on three different credit cards. I guess it took us a while to learn our lesson. In our opinion, the bottom line is avoid using your credit card. Our last fraud was either at an Ensenada marina or at the main TelCel office in Ensenada, so even if you are dealing with an established, above-the-board big business, your card may get compromised. Look up "ATM skimmers" or "credit card skimmers" online to learn more about some of the ways credit card fraud is accomplished, both at US bank ATM machines and abroad.

All that being said, it can still be helpful to have a credit card available for emergencies or for purchases where you trust the merchant. Beware of cards that charge foreign transaction fees!

You will need lots of smaller bills when you are in smaller towns, i.e. 20, 50 and 100 peso notes. We have found some places are challenged to make change when you hand them a 200-peso note (worth roughly \$11). Lots of 2, 5-and 10 peso coins are also handy for tipping. If the ATM machine gives you a wad of 500-peso notes, go inside the bank and get some small ones.

## Food & Provisioning

**Warehouse Stores** — There are some warehouse stores on the Mexican coast. Sam's Club is more prevalent in the



*Shopping at local markets can be lots of fun.*

coastal port towns than Costco. The only coastal Costcos are in Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta and Acapulco. The one in PV is very difficult to get to, especially if you are staying in La Cruz, as there is no bus to it. The cab ride back to La Cruz from that Costco is about 100 pesos (\$5.50). Sam's Club is much more common in coastal Mexico (Manzanillo, Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and La Paz) and is relatively easy to reach in every town. Before buying or renewing your club

card, check the Mexican locations online, as new Costcos and Sam's Clubs will continue to pop up.

**Supermarkets** — There are lots of big supermarkets in the



*US-style supermarkets are becoming common in larger cities.*

major cities (Ensenada, La Paz, Loreto, San Carlos, Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo, Zihuatanejo). The Mexican chains are Soriana, Comercial Mexicana (which has a line of mammoth supermarkets called Mega) and Ley.

Wal-Mart is in most of those cities, too. If you need to do a big provisioning run, take the bus there and a cab back. Most cab rides are around 30 to 50 pesos (\$1.60-\$2.75). Negotiate the fare before you hop in.

The selection and prices are all over the map, both in the warehouse stores and in the major supermarkets. American packaged products are often more expensive than in the US due to import taxes. Some brands have a big presence in Mexico, and some are nonexistent. For instance, Kellogg's cereals are everywhere, some General Mills products are re-branded Nestle, a handful of Quaker cereals can be found, and Post cereals don't exist at all. If you have certain products you can't live without, stock up before leaving the US. If you are willing to take the time in the bigger cities, you can find just about everything.

Soriana and Comercial Mexicana (Mega) both have club cards for frequent shoppers. It is easy to sign up for a card and you will accumulate points. Every so often it pays off. I've never fully grasped the subtleties of these cards, but a few times we've had a hundred or so pesos deducted from our grocery bill at the checkout counter.

It is customary to tip the bagger a few pesos for bagging your groceries. I have heard rumors that they are not paid by the stores. We purchased two big insulated "cold bags" and keep some cold packs in our freezer. This helps keep the refrigerated items cold during the long trek back to the boat.

**Public Markets** — Many bigger towns have a Mercado Publico — a central public market. These usually take up nearly a city block and are enclosed with lots of booths for different vendors. The meat, fish, poultry and produce is brought in from the fisherman and outlying farms. Prices

aren't posted, so it's a great time to practice your Spanish numbers as you ask what different items cost. You bag what you want and pay the person near the booth's register. Often lots of other things are for sale — there might be a hat booth, a straw basket booth, a hardware booth, a broom booth, a DVD booth, etc. For us *gringos*, it can feel like a very third world experience, but it is also very colorful and exciting.

**Small Grocery Stores** — In smaller towns, villages and on the back streets of the cities you'll find corner *tiendas* or *abarrotes*. These are small convenience stores and grocery stores that carry essentials. These little one-room shops usually have a few vegetables (onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and maybe a few others), lots of canned goods, bread, boxed milk, soaps, cold drinks, bottled water, beer and other basics. They are often called a "mini-super."

There are US-style convenience store chains as well. Oxxo is the most common convenience store chain. Similar to 7-11 or Circle K, it can be found on many city street corners. The beer breweries also have chains of convenience stores that sell their beer and other basics. Modelo, Pacifico and Tecate all have convenience stores. For Corona fans: Modelo makes Corona.

**Dollar Stores** — There are dollar stores in Mexico. The most common are Waldo's ("*Todo a un precio*" — "Everything at one price") and Solo Un Precio. Just like dollar stores in the US, they sell all kinds of cheap goodies.

**Provisioning before leaving the US** — Specialty items, from favorite toiletries to spices, sauces and condiments, may or may not be available in Mexico, so stock up on those before you leave.

**Provisioning in Mexico** — Many big city supermarkets

This chicken is delicious. Choose a stand that has a crowd of Mexicans around it, and it will be tasty and safe to eat. A whole chicken is usually around 100 pesos (\$5.50) and you can also buy half and quarter chickens. They are often split



**You may meet both locals and cruisers when shopping in 'tiendas'.**

along the sternum and laid out flat on the grill so they look like roadkill. They are sold with corn tortillas and often with delicious flavored rice. This is a terrific thing to buy prior to a long passage. You can nibble the chicken plain, make chicken salad or sandwiches, turn it into a stir-fry, or wrap it in a tortilla with cheese and heat it up.

Tacos on the street are also a great way to go for cheap eats. A good price is about 10 to 20 pesos per taco (around \$0.55 to \$1.10). Two make a meal and three stuff you. They are served open so you can fill them with toppings and then roll them up yourself. Always choose places that are crowded with Mexicans. They know where the good food is.



**Basic marine products are now available in larger coastal cities.**

have a *gringo* section, and that is often stocked with Kirkland brand items, although the prices are more than in the US. Breton crackers, fancy mustards and olives can often be found on these shelves. I've even seen peanut-butter pretzels.

Mexican dairy products are not the same as in the US. For some reason the fresh milk goes sour a lot faster — is it inferior processing, or does the US use more potent chemicals? Who knows?

Fresh fish is often a good choice. The Spanish names are different. Fish we have enjoyed immensely are *cabrilla* (bass) and *sierra* (Spanish mackerel), as well as *dorado* (mahi-mahi).

*Pollo asado* is grilled chicken sold at outdoor stands.

**Boat Parts** — Because all Mexicans eat there is, of course, an abundance of food to be had, even if it isn't quite what you're used to at home. But not many Mexicans own cruising boats, so finding parts for the boat is a challenge. Even finding simple tools and hardware is a challenge.

The best chandlery we've seen is Lopez Marine in La Paz. It is about the size of West Marine in San Diego. If they don't have it on the shelf they can order it for you from the US. Prices are 10% to 30% higher than in the US. All the other chandelries we visited in Mexico were fishing oriented and had few, if any, sailboat-specific parts. My eyes popped out of my head when I saw a snap shackle at Lopez Marine — it was the first I had seen since West Marine in San Diego six months earlier, and we had been all over the Mexican coast at that point.

**(Editor's note: Puerto Vallarta and La Cruz also have good chandelries.)**

The rule in Mexico for buying anything is: if you see and think you might want it someday, buy it, because you won't see it again. That goes for the humongous jar of Skippy peanut-butter and it goes for the gizmo-widget that looks as if it might come in handy in a crisis at sea.

Most hardware stores (*ferreterias*) are small one or two-room shops that carry a variety of general purpose tools and

parts. The selection is often minimal and sometimes a bit weird. They may have 100 screws of one length and pitch, six of another, and none of any others. When you ask for an item they might hand you a dusty, opened box with something similar to what you want inside. You have to rely on your own ingenuity and creativity to make the best out of what you find in these little places. That's what the Mexicans do, and they are extremely good at it.

Some hardware stores have specialties — the nuts-and-bolts-and-screws store, the tool store, etc. Little is available in stainless steel. Home Depot has a few stores in Mexico, and they are much the same as the stores in the US, but they don't sell things the Mexicans don't buy. Appliances are smaller; the selection of things like faucets is minimal. The major US auto parts stores like Napa Auto Parts are also common in Mexico. Again, patience, lots of walking, and creativity are key. Most store clerks will point you to another store if they don't have what you are looking for. You will get in lots of miles on foot.

In many ways we have had some of our best days getting to know the Mexicans and their culture when we wandered the back streets of different towns looking for a particular part. We might not have found the part, but we had a chance to practice our Spanish and experience a little of life in a culture that is very different from our own.

Major replacement parts can be brought into Mexico, but it is a complicated process that is heavily taxed. Some cities like La Paz have an enterprising person that will drive to the US and carry packages over the border for you for a fee (they avoid the import tax for you by not declaring the part at the border crossing). Otherwise, if the parts are shipped by a commercial shipper they have to go through customs in a major inland city (Mexico City or Guadalajara) and an import duty is imposed. We have not done either of these things, so I won't mislead you any further.

### **The Cost of Cruising in Mexico**

Everyone has a different budget, and everyone spends what they have. So it is impossible to accurately say "It costs X to cruise in Mexico". However, I'll give a very rough idea of what some of the costs are that we have seen.

For us, keeping a boat in Mexico, living on it and sailing it six months a year, maintaining it, flying back and forth to it, insuring it and storing it when we're not there costs around \$13,000-\$14,000 per year. If we were on it full-time and didn't fly back and forth or store it, our annual cost would be around \$21,000-\$24,000.

Getting our boat ready to cruise — anchor system upgrade, watermaker installation, solar installation, dinghy & outboard, downwind sailing gear, safety gear, interior comfort stuff, and small goodies cost about 20% of the purchase price.

**Food** — On average we found our food bill is about 90% of what it is in the US, slightly higher in the northern parts of Mexico and slightly lower in the southern parts. Beer is typically anywhere from 55 pesos a sixpack (\$4.25) for Pacifico/Modelo to 72 pesos a sixpack (\$5.50) for Bohemia Oscura (a darker more premium beer). Many grocery items are taxed 15%. American branded items seem expensive. For instance Listerine is 42 pesos (\$3.25) for a 16-oz bottle. Colgate toothpaste is 35 pesos but for the same size tube the Mexican brand called Fresca is 6 pesos. So it is all in how you shop.

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[www.marinapuertoesccondido.com](http://www.marinapuertoesccondido.com)

**Restaurants** — We don't eat out much, but simple street food is cheap: 100 pesos (\$7.50) can buy each of us a meal and a drink. At the beach *palapa* bars (sitting under an umbrella on a plastic chair in the sand) a beer is typically 12 pesos (\$0.95) in the far south and 25 pesos (\$1.95) farther north. Fine dining in the high end resorts is similar in price to comparable US restaurants.

**Fuel** — Fuel pricing is government-controlled so it can't swing up and down by huge amounts, and there is a tax on it. In addition, marinas charge a service fee for using their docks and that fee can be anywhere from 10% to 20%. Diesel now costs more than in the United States.

We use about half as much fuel per month while cruising as we do while RVing. This may sound surprising, but we drive our truck in the US less than some people might expect and we motor our sailboat in Mexico more than we ever expected. On the boat we burn about 2/3 to 3/4 of a gallon of fuel per hour, and we traveled from San Diego down to Zihuatanejo, up to San Carlos, and back down to Puerto Vallarta in a year. Our monthly fuel cost during that time was somewhere around \$250 — but fuel was about 25% less expensive then.

**Marinas** — Most cruisers are surprised how expensive slips are in Mexico. Slips in Mexico are often as much or more than in the United States. One of the reasons is that most marinas are quite new, even if they don't always look like that way, and the build costs have to be recovered.

**Boat Services** — Having the bottom cleaned by a diver generally costs about \$1 per foot. Having the boat washed is the same. We got the hull waxed in San Carlos for 700 pesos (\$53). If you use dive tanks to clean the bottom yourself and don't have a compressor, it generally costs about 100 pesos (\$7.50) to have one tank refilled at a dive shop — and you have to lug it there).

**Boat Insurance** — Insurance varies a lot by boat age, sailing experience, where you keep your boat during hurricane season and whether you go south of Acapulco. Keeping our boat in San Carlos during hurricane season, staying north

of Acapulco the whole season, and having plenty of sailing experience, insuring our newer boat ran \$1,600 per year.

### What to do During Hurricane Season

Starting in February, cruisers begin discussing their summer plans. The marinas in Puerto Vallarta, Paradise Marina, La Cruz, Barra de Navidad, Mazatlan, La Paz and San Car-



*Beautiful sunny days are the norm in Mexico — often with stunning sunsets. But hurricanes are a legitimate concern during summer months.*

los are popular, as is dry storage in La Paz, Loreto and San Carlos/Guymas. Some marinas offer significant summer discounts, especially when pre-paid.

We left our boat in San Carlos in the water for 3 months and were shocked to return and find that everything was just as we left it. A quick boat wash and bottom cleaning and the boat was ready to sail away. Some people who left their boats for six months in dry storage in Loreto and San Carlos reported having to clean a lot of dust off the deck, and some inside, too.

On Emily's site (<http://roadslesstraveled.us>) you'll find additional insights about living in Mexico including: what clothes to bring, the lowdown on bugs; dinghy and outboard theft and more. And she also discusses in depth a variety of goodies and gadgets to consider bringing along such as a portable SSB radio, a Wi-Fi booster, GMR (walkie-talkie) radios; sun



*Baja Ha-Ha cruisers head south from Bahia Santa Maria.*

shades, screens and fans; a super siphon hose; and electronic Spanish-English dictionary; LED lighting upgrades; and more. The only caution is that the material is a couple of years old.

## A Latitude 38 Addendum:

### Most Common 1st-Timer Mistakes

**Wrongful Anchoring** — The two main causes of faulty anchoring, which leads to anxiety and sleepless nights, are: inadequate equipment and poor technique.

As Einstein noted, everything is relative. So what looks like an enormous anchor and monster rode sitting on a shelf in a chandlery looks like toy stuff when trying to hold a 12-ton boat off a lee shore in a 40-knot blow. Within your cruising budget, there are items you can skimp on, but anchors and rodes should not be among them. Buy big and buy extra. And don't forget the windlass and chafe gear.

The good news about Mexico is that other than at Cabo, where the outer harbor is an uphill sand bottom, and La Paz, where the famous tidal waltz has boats drifting about in all directions, the anchoring conditions are generally very good.

Of course, even the biggest anchor and strongest rode won't do you any good if you don't know how to use them. Throwing the anchor and rode over the side in a bundle while still moving forward is a recipe for disaster. Such a mess will hold in light wind, but as soon as you go to sleep and the breeze comes up, you'll drag right through the fleet.

In most conditions, the proper anchoring technique is to back down at a slow but constant speed, getting the rode to lay out in a straight line. When you get the proper length down, you gradually increase your power in reverse, allowing the anchor to slowly dig in.

**Reefing Madness** — Far too many people sail to Mexico without having a 'clew' about how to properly reef or heave to. Reefing is essential for safety and comfort. And it's useless to practice at the dock, because it's an entirely different experience during a stormy night at sea. If you sail shorthanded, reefing at night is not a bad routine strategy. Sometimes folks heave-to even in light conditions just to catch some rest or a peaceful meal.

**Over-provisioning** — There's not a significant number of food products you can't find in Cabo, La Paz, Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo or Acapulco. So why cruisers continue to load up with a six-month supply of goods at Costco in San Diego is beyond us. The stuff takes up valuable storage space, overloads the boat, and goes to waste. Besides, there are great *mercados* — and Costcos and Sam's Clubs — all over Mexico.

**Electrical Shortages** — The majority of first-time cruisers greatly underestimate the electrical needs of all the new gear they've had installed. Transmitting on SSB, for example, can really drain a battery. So can refrigerators struggling in tropical heat and watermakers trying to filter the high salinity water of the Sea of Cortez. The same goes for older computers and big monitors. The only two solutions are to limit electrical consumption or increase capacity.

**Dinghy Deficit** — When cruising Mexico, your dinghy is not an indulgent toy, but your lifeline with both the shore and greater adventures. For some cruisers it's their liferaft, too. In our opinion, you need a top-quality dinghy with an outboard powerful enough to plane while carrying the number of people in your crew. That means 6 hp for one, 7 hp for two, and 15 hp for three or four. A good dinghy and outboard combination is expensive, but if you take decent care of it, it should last for five years and still have good resale value. A serviceable second dinghy of some sort is a godsend for



Mexico has some excellent, top-notch marinas, but they're not cheap. Seen here is the Paradise Village Marina near Puerto Vallarta.

boats with larger crews.

Because you'll make so many landings in Mexico, you'll probably want dinghy wheels. You probably won't use the wheels anywhere else, but they're worth it for Mexico alone.

**Health Kick** — While the climate in Mexico is great for drinking, it's even better for the healthy outdoor life and getting yourself into better shape than you've been in years. We all know the formula: Walk a couple of miles a day, swim a mile a day, eat well and drink in moderation. And we all know the results: less weight, lower blood pressure, greater endurance, wilder sex, and better general health.

**Make The Most Of Cruising** — We suggest that everyone about to take off cruising prepare to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the experience. In addition to getting your body into great shape, and doing the normal things such as sailing, diving, hiking, swimming and exploring, use the free time to expand your mind in other ways. Have mental goals, too.

While in Mexico, interact as much as possible with the locals, for they are wonderful people. One of the biggest surprises is how friendly and helpful most of the civil servants have become.

### Where to After Mexico?

Most cruisers with open-ended timetables spend at least a year exploring Mexican waters. When they eventually head south along the Central American coast, there's much to see and do. But sooner or later they have to ask themselves the question, "Where to next?" Some continue on to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, but most either hang a left into the Caribbean — it's a 1,200-mile beat to the islands of the



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Lesser Antilles from Panama — or head west toward the South Pacific.

**The Pacific Puddle Jump** — The latter choice requires a 3,000-mile passage to the Marquesas Islands, a voyage we like to call the Pacific Puddle Jump. Because this is one of the longest, and therefore most challenging, crossings in the realm of cruising, *Latitude 38* dedicates a lot of ink to reporting on each year's fleet, and we work with the Tahiti Tourism board to put on special events in the islands for arriving sailors, such as the Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous (late June each year).

*Latitude 38* also hosts annual Pacific Puddle Jump send-off parties each winter at both Nuevo Vallarta and Balboa, Panama. Look for date announcements in *Electronic Latitude* postings ([www.latitude38.com](http://www.latitude38.com)) and on the official Pacific Puddle Jump website ([www.pacificpuddlejumps.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejumps.com)). On the website you'll also find fleet lists, photos, and annual recap articles on the passages of previous fleets.

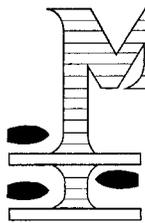
Online registration for the upcoming Puddle Jump will begin in mid-November.

*The Latitude 38 staff hopes you found this guide to be helpful as you enter the cruising lifestyle. If you find errors within the text, please bring them to our attention:*  
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## Principal Cruiser Nets Used by Mexico Cruisers

*(Please Note: Some times and frequencies may have changed. Also, there may be additional nets for which we have no info here.)*

The entire country of Mexico observes daylight saving time, which means you will be in the same time zone (Pacific) as San Diego until you reach Bahia Tortuga. From there until you reach a line between La Cruz and Puerto Vallarta, you will be the same as the Mountain Time Zone, and from there south to Z-town you will be in the Central Time Zone.

Below are listed the current times of the nets, given in UTC (ZULU) time. It's up to you to figure out what time zone you're in to get local time. Note also, that use of cruiser nets has changed substantially due to wide proliferation of HF email.



Time / UTC	Freq / kHz	Net Name & Type
1430 Z daily	3.968 LSB	Sonrisa Net (Ham)
1530 Z daily	7192 LSB	Chubasco Net: (Ham) Monitors for emergency traffic at 1530.
1600 Z daily	7233.5 LSB	Baja California Maritime Service Net (Ham): Forecasts San Diego to Puerto Vallarta, including Sea of Cortez. Wkdays
0200 Z daily	8.122	Southbound Net (Marine)
0200 Z daily	6516	Bluewater Net (Marine)
0230 Z daily	4051 - 4060	North Sea of Cortez Net (Marine)
0430 Z daily	4030 - 4024	Papagayo Net (Marine)
1400 Z daily	6227 - 6224	Amigo Net (Marine)
1600 Z daily	8104	Westbound Net (Marine)
1430-1500 Z daily	4A, 6A, 8A, 12A, 16A	CanMex (Marine) Helps boats down the Coast and to HI. Changes Freq every 5 minutes. to extend range. Nov 1-Apr 15

## Share Your Adventure!

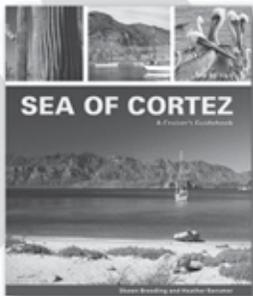


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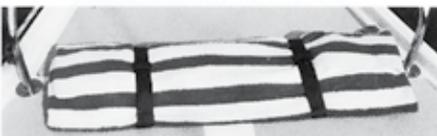


**Raymarine and Humminbird plotters**

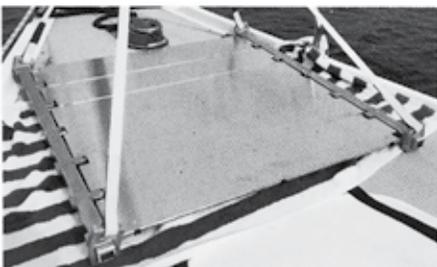
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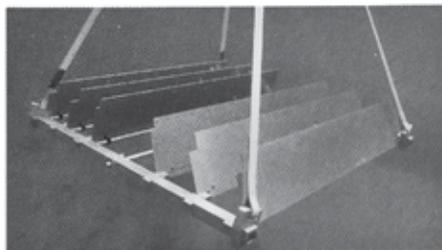


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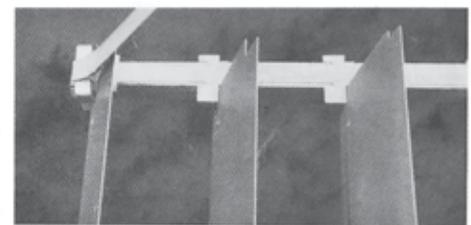


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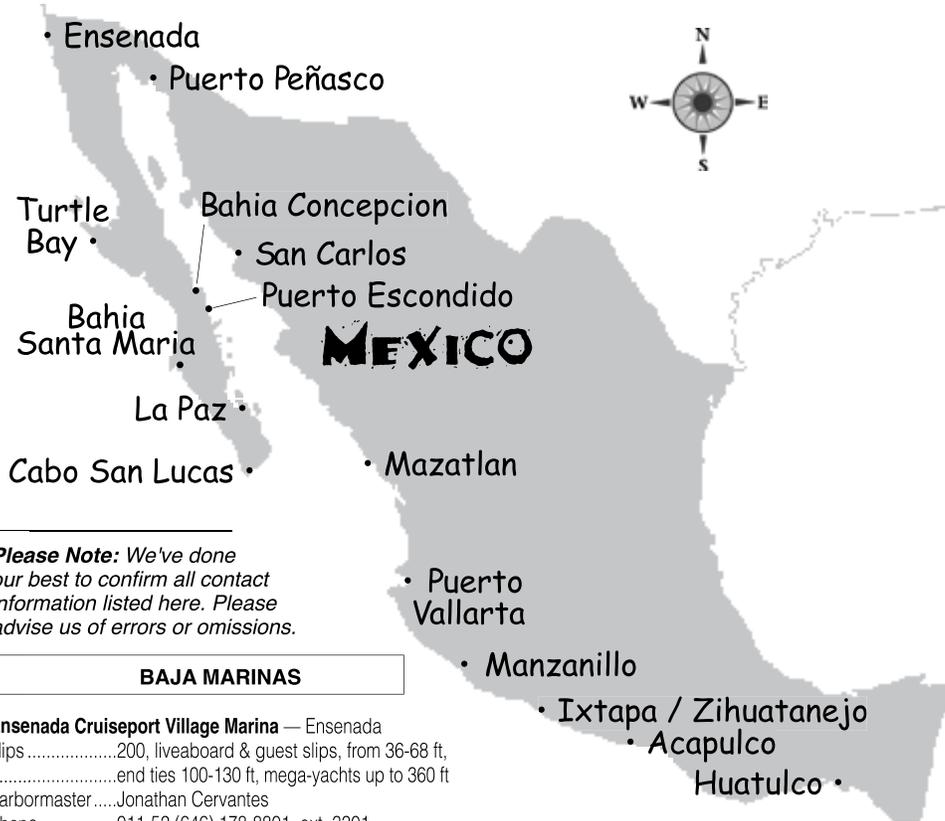
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# Contact Info for Major Mexican Marinas



## Approximate Distances in Nautical Miles:

San Diego to Turtle Bay .....	360
Turtle Bay to	
Bahia Santa Maria .....	240
Cabo to Los Frailes .....	45
Cabo to La Paz .....	148
La Paz to Puerto Escondido (Loreto) .....	140
Puerto Escondido (Loreto) to Bahia Concepcion .....	105
Bahia Concepcion to San Carlos .....	80
La Paz to Mazatlan .....	230
Cabo to Mazatlan .....	200
Mazatlan to Puerto Vallarta .....	175
Cabo to Puerto Vallarta .....	295
Puerto Vallarta to Manzanillo .....	175
Manzanillo to Z-town .....	190
Z-town to Acapulco .....	115

**Please Note:** We've done our best to confirm all contact information listed here. Please advise us of errors or omissions.

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 fax.....011-52 (646) 173-4151  
 email.....reservations@ecpvmarina.com  
 website .....www.ecpvmarina.com  
 VHF.....channels 12 & 16

**Baja Boatyard and Marina** — Ensenada  
 slips .....50, from 33 to 75 ft  
 harbormaster .....Jose Luis Zamora C  
 phone .....011-52 (646) 174-0020  
 boat yd email.....boatyard@bajanaival.com  
 marina email .....marina@bajanaival.com  
 website .....www.bajanaival.com  
 VHF.....channel 77

**Marina Coral** — Ensenada  
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 harbormaster .....Fito Espinoza  
 phone .....toll free from US (866) 302-0066,  
 .....01-152 (646) 175-0050  
 fax.....011-52 (646) 175-0058  
 email .....marina@hotelcoral.com  
 website .....www.hotelcoral.com  
 VHF.....channel 71

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 email .....info@marinapuertosalina.com  
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 website .....www.marinapalmira.com.mx  
 VHF.....channel 16 & 68

**Marina Costa Baja** — La Paz  
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 manager .....Gabriel Ley  
 phone .....011-52 (612) 121-6225,  
 .....toll free (888) 866 9394, (800) 200-0281  
 fax.....011-52 (612) 121-5764  
 email.....gley@marinacostabaja.com  
 websites .....www.costabaja.com,  
 .....www.marinacostabaja.com

**Marina de La Paz** — La Paz  
 slips .....110, from 30 to 200 ft  
 harbormaster .....Neil Shroyer  
 phone .....011-52 (612) 122-1646  
 fax.....011-52 (612) 125-5900  
 email.....marinadelapaz@prodigy.net.mx  
 website .....www.marinalapaz.com  
 VHF.....channel 16

**Marina Puerto Escondido** — Loreto  
 slips .....49, from 30 to 80 ft  
 8 Med Mooring up to 100 ft  
 32 mooring balls up to 100ft  
 harbormaster .....Javier Fuerte  
 phone .....011-52 (613) 131-8097 or 133-0189  
 .....toll free in México 01-800-800-8008  
 email.....marina@marinapuertoescandido.com  
 website .....www.marinapuertoescandido.com

**Marina Puerto Los Cabos** — San Jose del Cabo  
 slips .....200, from 30-260 ft  
 assist.manager ..Shirley Collins  
 phone .....011-52 (624) 105-6028  
 .....toll free 01 855-578-6222  
 email .....scollins@puertoloscabos.com  
 website .....www.puertoloscabos.com  
 VHF.....channel 22 A

**Marine Group Boat Works**, San Jose del Cabo  
 (& San Diego)  
 (dry storage facility and boatyard)  
 yard manager ....Peter Horner  
 phone .....(619) 600-5539, 01-52 (624) 105-6500  
 fax.....01-52 (624) 105-6506  
 email .....phorner@marinegroupbw.com  
 website .....www.marinegroupcabo.com

**Marina Cabo San Lucas IGY** — Cabo San Lucas  
 slips .....380, up to 365 ft  
 manager .....Darren Carey  
 phone .....011-52 (624) 173-9140  
 .....& 011-52 (624) 143-1252  
 email .....CSL@igymarinas.com  
 website .....www.igymarinas.com/  
 VHF.....channel 88A

**Marinas de Baja** — Cabo San Lucas  
 slips .....25, from 41 to 80 ft  
 harbormaster .....Juan Pablo Montes  
 phone .....011-52 (624) 143-6522  
 .....011-52 (624) 143-6533

### SAN CARLOS, SONORA AREA MARINAS

**Marina San Carlos & Marina Seca** (dry storage)  
 slips .....from 16 to 128 ft  
 harbormaster .....Kirsten Grossman de Zaragoza  
 phone .....011-52 (622) 226-1061,  
 USA .....888 483-6038, 520 407-6774  
 email .....info@marinasancarlos.com,  
 .....marinaseca@marinasancarlos.com  
 website .....www.marinasantcarlos.com  
 VHF.....channel 16

**Marina Real** — San Carlos  
 harbormaster .....Isabel Escobar



# Contact Info for Major Mexican Marinas

phone .....011-52 (622) 227-0011  
email .....marinareal@prodigy.net.mx  
website .....www.century21marina.com/marina\_real.htm

**Marina Puerto Penasco** — Puerto Penasco  
slips .....20, from 25 to 79 ft  
harbormaster .....Jorge Valdez  
phone .....011-52 (638) 388-6944  
email .....email via website  
website .....www.marinapuertopenasco.com

## MAZATLAN REGION MARINAS

**Marina Mazatlan** — Mazatlan  
slips .....360, from 30 to 200 ft  
harbormaster .....Saul Alberto Lopez  
phone .....011-52 (669) 916-7799,  
.....011-52 (669) 669-2936  
email .....atecmarinamazatlan@gmail.com  
website .....www.marina-mazatlan.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina El Cid** — Mazatlan  
slips .....90, from 30 to 120 ft; end ties: 4  
harbormaster .....Gerónimo Cevallos  
phone .....011-52 (669) 916-3468,  
.....US free 1-855-513-4080  
email .....gcevallos@elcid.com.mx  
website .....www.elcidmarinas.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina y Club de Yates Isla Cortes** — Altata  
(120 nm North of Mazatlan)  
slips .....43, up to 80 ft. Dry dock for 20 boats to 35 ft  
harbormaster .....Consuelo Sainz  
phone .....011-52 (672) 854-7157  
email .....Consuelo.sainz@hotmail.com  
website .....www.marinaislacortes.mx  
VHF .....channel 16

## PUERTO VALLARTA REGION MARINAS

**Marina Riviera Nayarit** — La Cruz de Huanacaxtle  
slips .....340, from 31 to 40 ft  
harbormaster .....Rafael Alcántara Luarte  
phone .....011-52 (329) 295-5526  
email .....harbormaster@marinarivieranayarit.com  
website .....www.marinarivieranayarit.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina Nuevo Vallarta** — Nuevo Vallarta  
slips .....64, from 22 to 130 ft  
harbormaster .....Juan Sebastian Estrada  
phone .....011-52 (322) 297-7000  
email .....juan@marinanuevovallarta.com,  
.....emilio@marinanuevovallarta.com  
website .....www.marinanuevovallarta.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina Pueblo Nautico** — Nuevo Vallarta  
slips .....10, up to 90 ft  
harbormaster .....Jesus Alejandro Velasco  
phone .....011 52 (322) 297-4553  
.....or 011 52 (322) 297-1069  
email .....javelasco@marinapueblonautico.com  
website .....www.marinapueblonautico.com

**Paradise Village Marina** — Nuevo Vallarta  
slips .....200, from 26 to 240 ft  
harbormaster .....Dick Markie  
phone .....011-52 (322) 226-6728

e-mail .....marina@paradisevillagegroup.com  
.....dmarkie@paradisevillagegroup.com  
website .....www.paradisevillagemarina.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina Vallarta** — Puerto Vallarta  
slips .....354, from 30 to 170 ft  
harbormaster .....Christian Mancebo  
phone .....011-52 (322) 221-0275 &  
.....011-52 (322) 221-0722  
email .....admin3@marina-vallarta.com.mx  
website .....www.marina-vallarta.com.mx  
VHF .....channels 18 & 16

**Opequimar Centro Marino** — Puerto Vallarta  
slips .....25  
manager .....Carlos Verjan  
phone .....011-52 (322) 221-1800,  
.....011-52 (322) 221-1978  
email .....info@opequimar.com  
website .....www.opequimar.com  
VHF .....channel 68

## BARRA DE NAVIDAD

**Marina Puerto de la Navidad** — Barra de Navidad  
slips .....207, from 31 to 150 ft End ties: 6  
harbormaster .....Ing Secundino Alvarez  
phone .....011-52 (314) 337-9014  
fax .....011-52 (314) 337-9014  
email .....harbormaster@islaresort.com.mx,  
.....dockmaster@islaresort.com.mx  
website .....www.islanavidad.com.mx

## MANZANILLO

**Marina Las Hadas** — Manzanillo  
slips .....70, med mooring style (stern-to)  
harbormaster .....Adrián Evidarte Ramos  
phone .....011-52 (314) 331-0101  
email .....hadas.marina@brisas.com.mx  
website .....www.lasbrisascollection.com

## IXTAPA / ZIHUATANEJO AREA

**Marina Ixtapa** — Ixtapa  
slips .....583, from 15 to 200 ft  
harbormaster .....Lic. Elsa Zuñiga  
phone .....011-52 (755) 553-2180, (755) 55-30222  
email .....reservations@marina-ixtapa.com  
.....ezuniga@marina-ixtapa.com  
website .....www.marina-ixtapa.com, www.ixtapama-  
rina.com

## ACAPULCO MARINAS

**Club de Yates Acapulco** — Acapulco  
slips .....350, from 30 to 180 ft  
harbormaster .....Leon Boorenstein  
phone .....011-52 (744) 482-3859  
email .....navegacion@clubdeyatesdeacapulco.  
com  
website .....www.clubdeyatesacapulco.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**La Marina Acapulco** — Acapulco  
slips .....269, from 30 to 240 ft  
phone .....011-52 74-83-7498  
fax .....011-52 74 83 7505  
email .....marinaacapulco@jarestate.com  
website .....www.lamarinaacapulco.com  
VHF .....channel 16

**Marina Performance** — Acapulco  
slips .....18, Med-mooring-style docking up to 120 ft  
harbormaster .....Alexander Arnold Hudson  
phone .....(01 744) 480-2334  
email .....acapulco@jarestate.com  
website .....www.jarestate.com  
VHF .....channel 16

## HUATULCO, OAXACA

**Marina Chahue** — Huatulco  
slips .....139, from 10 to 170 ft  
phone .....011-52 (958) 587-2652  
email .....egutierrez@fonatur.gob.mx  
website .....www.fonatur.gob.mx

## CHIAPAS

**Marina Puerto Chiapas** — Tapachula  
slips .....70, up to 180 ft  
phone .....011-52 (962) 620-4038  
email .....marinachiapas@hotmail.com  
website .....www.marina-chiapas.com  
VHF .....channel 16

## THE YUCATAN & QUINTANA ROO AREA MARINAS

**Marina Puerto Aventuras** — Puerto Juarez/Riviera Maya  
slips .....125, Med-mooring style docking  
phone .....011-52 (984) 873-5108  
fax .....011-52 (984) 873-5008  
email .....pamarina@puertoaventuras.com.mx  
website .....www.puertoaventuras.com

**Marina Hacienda del Mar** — Cancun  
slips .....80, up to 125 ft  
phone .....011-52 (998) 880-1070  
email .....mperez@marinahaciendadelmar.com  
website .....www.marinahaciendadelmar.com

**Marina Mundo Marino** — Cancun  
slips .....40, from 10 to 65 ft  
phone .....011-52 (998) 849-7257  
fax .....011-52 (998) 849-7259  
email .....mmarino@cancun.com.mx

**Puerto Isla Mujeres** — Isla Mujeres  
slips .....64, up to 80 ft,  
.....and dockage for 10 vessels up to 175 ft  
phone .....011-52 (998) 877-0330  
.....& 877-1858 / 59 / 60, ext. 211  
email .....marina@puertoislamujeres.com  
website .....www.puertoislamujeres.com

**Marina V & V** — Isla Mujeres  
slips .....176 slips / 8 Mega-yacht-sized up to 120 ft  
phone .....01-52 (998) 109 5795  
email .....info@marinavv.com  
website .....http://www.marinavv.com

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*PLEASE NOTE: We've done our best to make this list as correct and comprehensive as possible. If you find errors or omissions, please let us know by emailing:*

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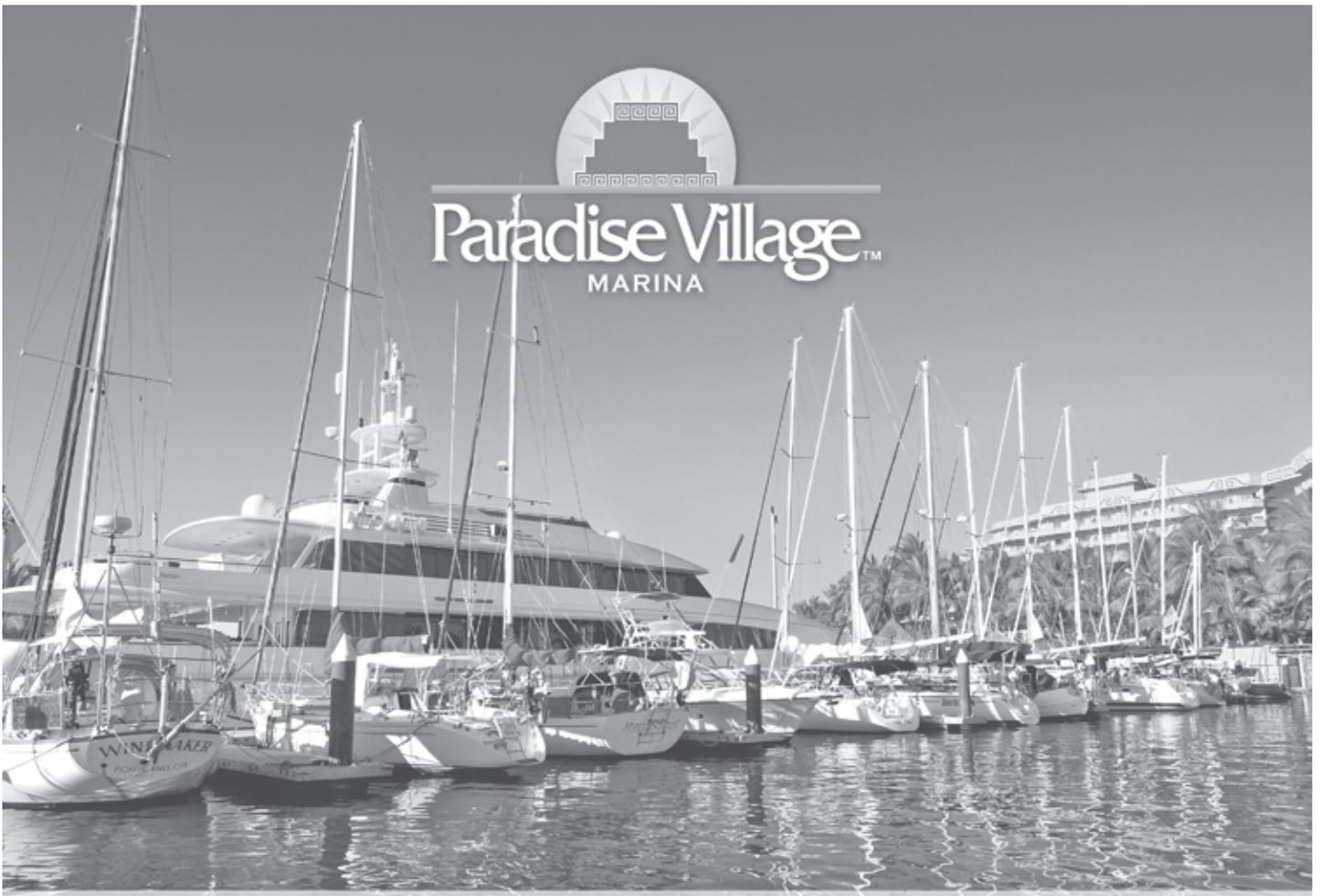
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