



# Rancho el Camino Preparation Guide

Let us help point you in the right direction...



## Contents

General Information	1
Transportation	2
Lodging, Food, Finances	3
La Paz & Free Day	4
Training Resources	5
Reservations & Contact	6

## A 'Typical' Schedule

- Saturday  
— Travel Day
- Sunday  
— Church & Orientation
- Monday-Thursday  
— Work & Ministry
- Friday  
— Free Day & Debrief
- Saturday  
— Travel Day

## Bienvenidos...Welcome!

We want to invite you to participate in what God is doing at Rancho el Camino: A Community of Faith. We know that planning an overseas trip is a lot of work. We want to help you as much as we can in your planning, and we want you to know that there is room for your team here to partner with what the Ranch is doing. The Ranch ministers to a wide range of people both local and international and we seek first and foremost to be a place that demonstrates the love of Christ through hospitality, compassion, and service to all those who pass through the Ranch. It matters more to us who we are as people and how we share the love of Christ in our words and actions more than the specific tasks and jobs we do on a daily basis.

## What will we do?

The exact nature of your experience may vary depending on the time of year. However, typically, our teams serve and work at the Ranch in some meaningful capacity during the day, and we then reserve the evenings for trainings, workshops, outings, and relational ministries as it fits the Ranch programming and your group's interests. The daily schedule can be flexible and can be tailored to your group's needs and work/ministry emphasis however your schedule will ultimately need to fit into the ongoing flow of the Ranch life and regular programming.

## What does work at the Ranch look like?

Rancho el Camino is a unique place where teams can experience the glory of God through His beautiful creation. It is situated in the Sonoran Desert and surrounded by majestic mountains. We have staff housing as well as a dorm, bath house, and outdoor kitchen which are utilized by groups by local and international throughout the year. We are continually growing the facilities of the Ranch as they serve the ongoing ministries of the Ranch and have several building projects underway with more in the plans. We are also seeking to grow the recreational activities on the Ranch, including creating hiking trails and other outdoor camp activities. Your group will be helping us develop the Ranch as it serves our broader community.

## What does the ministry in the village look like?

Rancho el Camino: A Community of Faith serves and ministers through out La Paz and Mexico but specifically our community focuses on the impoverished villages on the backside of La Paz. We serve and minister through compassionate, Christ-centered initiatives and programs which seek to draw out the strengths and meet the needs found in the villages. The ultimate goal of the ministries is redeeming the lost and transforming the community with the holistic power of the Gospel. Your group may be participating and serving in one of these ongoing ministries of the Ranch. We will chat with you specifically about what your group will be able to do depending on the time of year and capacity and skills of your group.

"See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19



## Transportation

### What about Transportation?

We recognize that transportation issues can be complex, and we will do our best to help point you in the right direction with as much help as we can give. However every group is responsible to organize their own transportation and costs will vary depending on the time of year and which travel options you choose.

### What are my travel options?

#### Air Travel:

There are two airports that you can fly into: San Jose del Cabo (SJD) and La Paz International Airport (LAP). SJD is a 2.5 hour drive from La Paz, and LAP is a half hour drive to the Ranch. SJD is more frequently used, as tickets are generally cheaper than flying into LAP, however we have had groups fly into LAP depending on what prices they have found and their preferences. Generally, teams are paying anywhere from \$500-\$900 USD for round trip tickets to San Jose del Cabo. Prices all depend on many variables, such as where you are flying from, the time of year you are coming, your group size, and which airport you want to fly into. Talk to your airline about potential group registration. Booking as a group can help with price rates and can help expedite check-in processes. This is really helpful for large groups. Remember to plan ahead and don't wait till the last minute to purchase your tickets!

#### Road Travel:

Yes! Believe it or not, you can drive to the ranch if you want. Many US tourists drive the Baja every year. It is an absolutely beautiful drive and would take you two days from the US border. If you do plan on driving down, please contact us and we will gladly help walk you through precise directions and suggested places to stay and eat down the Baja.

### How do I get from the airport to the Ranch?

**All groups must arrange for their own ground transportation during their entire stay.** You will need to rent vehicles. Don't worry, this is a tourist area. Gringos rent vehicles all the time. We will meet you at your specific rental company in La Paz (if you fly into LAP) to escort you to the ranch. If you are driving from SJD, we will give you very specific and easy directions to follow to a central spot in La Paz where we will meet you and help you drive the rest of the way to the Ranch. Renting vehicles in Mexico is just like renting in the states. Most of the major US rental companies do business here in the Baja and you can make reservations online. Bring a copy of your reservation with you. Remember to plan for gas in your budget.

If you are coming from SJD there is shuttle (\$35-45USD) that can take you directly from the airport in SJD to the bus terminal in La Paz, where we will then help you to your rental vehicle company so that you can pick up the vehicle(s) you reserved. Make sure to make reservations at <http://www.ecobajatours.com/> for the Shuttle to La Paz.

Once your group secures a week to come and serve with us, we will send you more specific instructions for renting a vehicle and will be available to answer any questions/concerns you may have!



“The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land.”

C.K. Chesterton

#### Tips for Group Travel

- Plan ahead
- Make copies of important docs.
- Give plenty of time at the airport
- Use the buddy system
- Pack light
- Don't forget gas and transportation in your budget
- Take your patience pills

“See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

# Lodging, Food, & Finances

## How much does it cost to stay on the ranch?

The cost for short term trips to stay on the ranch for one week (7 nights) is \$400 per person. This cost includes lodging, all meals on the Ranch starting with dinner on arrival and ending with breakfast on departure, a fantastic Mexican cook to help prepare all your meals, and the essential funds for a meaningful work project on the ranch. An invoice will be provided once we gather the essential details of your group.

If you would like to eat some meals off site, would like to change the number of days staying on the ranch, or if your group is staying off site we can easily give you a custom price adjusted from the baseline cost listed above.

## What about lodging?

The ranch has a fully functioning bath house and bunk house which can hold up to 28 people (14 per side). If you group is adventurous, you can camp out in tents providing you bring your own camping equipment.

## What about food?

One of the ways your group is ministering is by providing your Mexican brothers and sisters in Christ with a steady job. In order to streamline the process of hosting groups and in order to serve our local community, all groups will be served amazingly delicious Mexican food cooked by a wonderful sister in Christ who is very excited to be ministering to you.

## What about funds for projects and ministry on and off the ranch?

Ranch Work Projects: (Included in Cost)

Included in the baseline cost are the minimum fund requirements for projects on the ranch. These essential funds help hire local Mexicans who work on the ranch and help oversee work projects for the Ranch and ensures that your group has sufficient funds and materials to accomplish a meaningful project. We do graciously accept additional donations above the baseline cost and in fact rely on such donations for the continuation of the ranch's ministries.

Las Colonias: (Not Included in Cost)

Funds for ministry off the ranch is an additional cost that is determined by what exactly your group will be doing. (i.e. a sports camp, VBS, etc...) Bottom line, your group needs to determine the appropriate budget for what you would like to be accomplished. We will help you with this as we discuss your group's particular skills and desires.

## Do you require an adult/student ratio?

We do not provide adult chaperones for your group and each group is expected to bring their own adult leadership. In order to maintain the effectiveness, safety, and flexibility needed for an overseas trip we require each group to maintain a 1:8 ratio for each gender attending.

"See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19



### Financial Considerations

- \$400 All-Inclusive Baseline Cost
- Cost does not include transportation, gas, meals off the ranch, ministry funds off the ranch, & free day expenses
- We can adjust the baseline cost to meet the needs of your group





## La Paz & Free Day

### What is La Paz like?

La Paz is the capital of Baja California Sur and the largest city in the region. It enjoys the comforts of a modern city while at the same time sitting in the rugged and beautiful Sonoran desert nestled up to the Sea of Cortez. The Bay of La Paz is generally very calm, hence the city's name which means "The Peace" in Spanish. La Paz is a major tourist hub and is accustomed to having foreigners, so much so that you can easily find a free copy of "The Gringo Gazette" in English almost anywhere you walk. People are very friendly and you may find yourself wanting to make another trip again very shortly!

### What can we do on our free day?

We strongly recommend that your group plan and utilize your free day during your stay. The free day is a great opportunity to debrief and process from all that happened during your week. Debriefing is a vital component of a successful short-term trip, and we want to give you the space to do this while at the same time enjoying God's beautiful creation in the Baja. La Paz is the home of some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, as the dry desert coastline clashes with the turquoise blue waters of the Sea of Cortez. Whatever your level of adventure, La Paz has something to offer you. We can help you coordinate the details of your free day and help point you in the right direction to a great adventure outfitting company that can help you plan your adventure. Here are simply a few options to get you started:

#### **Walk the Malecon...Souveniring, Restaurants, & More:**

La Paz has a boardwalk along the bay called the Malecon. Walking this boardwalk at anytime of day is a great and leisurely way to see the tourist heart of the city, while souveniring and/or grabbing a delicious bite to eat. There are many shops and restaurants along the way you will enjoy. We can help point you to some of our favorites. Walking the Malecon during sunset is a great way to watch the sun set over the bay.

#### **Visit a local beach:**

There are many incredible beaches a short distance from the Ranch. This is great and inexpensive way to enjoy La Paz after a week of service. Depending on the beach and what gear you bring and/or rent, you can snorkel, sea kayak, paddle board, or just sit on the beach enjoying the sun and sand. We can easily lead your group to a beach of your liking.

#### **Adventure Hike:**

Enjoy a beautiful view of La Paz and the surrounding area by taking an adventure hike in the mountains behind the Ranch. Challenge yourself and experience the beauty of the desert in a fresh new way. Various degrees of difficulty and length are available, and we will provide a guide for you.

#### **Baja Expeditions:** <http://www.bajaex.com/>

We have a partnership with a local adventure outfitting company that can easily connect you with an adventure of your choice....from simply renting snorkel gear for your own trip to the beach, to kayaking and paddle boarding, to your own sailing adventure on board a catamaran to swim with sea lions and explore the beaches surrounding La Paz and the Sea of Cortez. Check out their website for more information about how they can accommodate the needs of your group.

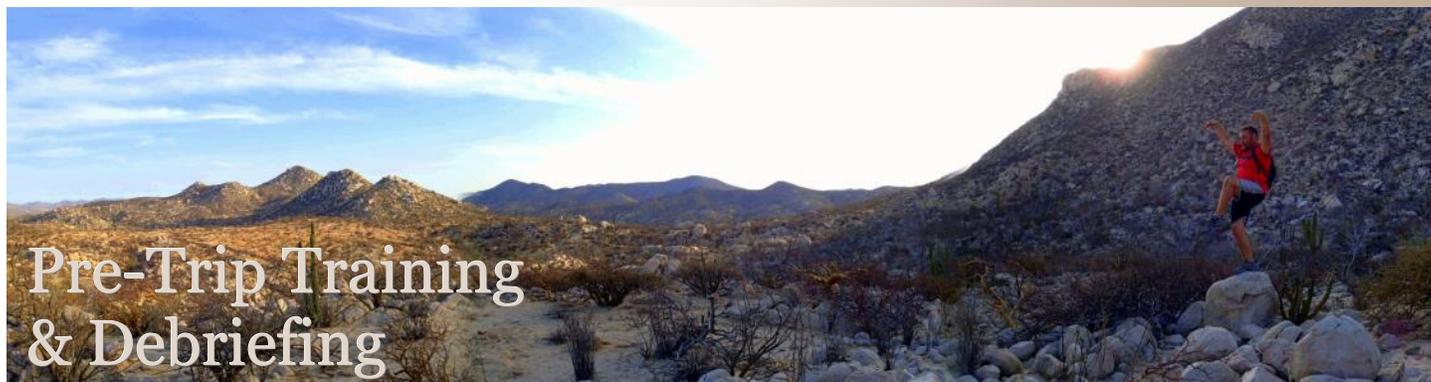


#### **Tips For Your Day Off in the Baja**

- Plan ahead
- Bring plenty of water
- Bring sunscreen and protective clothing
- Be intentional about debriefing. Interweave it into your day.
- Have fun & don't forget your camera!



"See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19



## Pre-Trip Training & Debriefing

### Pre-Trip Training



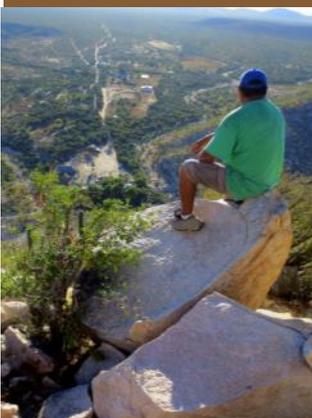
We strongly recommend that all groups do some form of pre-trip training. Current research and literature regarding the effectiveness of short-term trips generally all come to the same conclusion....pre-trip training (and its counterpart– debriefing) makes a huge difference in the short-term and long-term effectiveness of the trip on the individual participants as well as those in the local community. Even if you and most of those in your group have been on a cross-cultural trip the fact remains that your current group with its make-up of specific individuals has not. It only takes one person to change group dynamics. Take the time needed for your group to bond together, learn about the people of Mexico & La Paz, and explore the major cultural differences between the United States and Mexico.

### Debriefing

We also highly recommend that all groups do some form of debriefing at the end of the week of service. As mentioned above, this is the flip-side to pre-trip training and specifically has longer term influence for the participants who came. Debriefing is best done right before you leave *as well as* in an immediate timeframe (within 2-3 weeks) when you return back home. The debriefing is a great time at home to invite everyone who was praying for you and supporting you to come and also learn from your experience while you all share your photos and favorite stories.

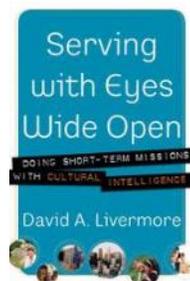
#### Tips for Training & Debriefing

- Hold several pre-trip trainings before coming to Mexico
- Explore what God says about serving and missions
- Learn about cultural differences together before coming
- Debrief the trip together afterwards, praising God for all He did

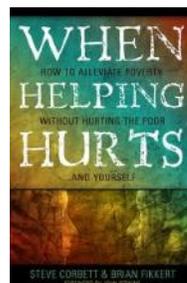


### Some Suggested Resources For Cross-Cultural Ministry

The following are some suggested resources that we and various groups have used in preparing groups for cross-cultural ministry. We would highly recommend that at least the leader read one of these books, and/or better yet have the group read portions and talk about them in your pre-trip training. Please let us know if you have material of your own that you use. We are always looking for new things to learn and ways to improve.



“Serving with Eyes Wide Open”  
by David Livermore



“When Helping Hurts”  
by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert



Leader Trek’s Mission Trip Value Pack: A Comprehensive Mission Trip Curriculum which includes pre-trip training, on the field devotionals, and debriefing material.

<http://www.leadertreks.org>

“See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19



## Reservations & Contact Info

### We want to come, now what?

We are thrilled that you are interested in joining us in ministry. Please contact us to get started and reserving your week of ministry. Please note: Summer groups that wish to stay longer than a Saturday-Saturday trip will have to be flexible. Incoming groups will have priority to Ranch accommodations/scheduling, so we will direct your group to a beautiful Bed and Breakfast in the city of La Paz if you would like to vary your schedule. Please be patient with us as we seek to help you as much as we can while also providing service opportunities for many different groups throughout the summer.

We ask that all groups make a minimum down payment of \$500 to reserve your week and that all trip funds be submitted one month prior to your arrival date. This ensures that we can properly plan and coordinate the ranch's multiple ministries and make the necessary arrangements for your group to have what is needed (i.e. food, project materials, gear, cook etc...) for your stay on the ranch and in La Paz.

Steps for Making Your Reservations:

- 1) Email & Secure a Date
- 2) Fill-Out Group Info Form & Submit Down payment
- 3) Keep in Contact With Us as we help you plan your trip



### Contact Information

To begin planning your trip, please email Peter and Emily Johnson with your requested dates for your service trip. It will help us if you could include your first choice, but also one or two other weeks that would work for you in case the Ranch is already booked for the week you desire. Weeks book up quicker than you might think so you can never plan to far ahead.

Pete and Emily Johnson: pejohnson5@gmail.com

Once we receive your email, we will email you back as soon as possible to secure a week for your group. From there, we will begin communicating together to plan your trip. Communication will be mainly via email, although we may request a skype chat to finalize details before your group comes to Mexico.

We can't wait to meet you and minister together for the glory of our great God!



Rancho el Camino is a place where people ENCOUNTER the presence of God, are EQUIPPED for the work of God, and EXTEND the kingdom of God.

“If I look at the masses I will never act, if I look at the one I will.”

-Mother Teresa



“See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19