FREE FROM CABOCONKATY

Plan Your Cabo Trip: Katy's Checklist

Everything I wish every visitor knew before landing in Los Cabos. Check it off as you go, and keep it on your phone for the airport.



Before you book

- [ ] **Check your passport.** Every air traveler needs a valid passport. Make sure it is good for your whole stay, and many travelers like to have six months left to be safe. US citizens do not need a visa for tourist stays up to 180 days.[1]
- [ ] **Pick your home base.** Cabo San Lucas puts you near the marina and Medano Beach. San José del Cabo is home to the historic plaza and the Art District. Todos Santos is a slower, artsy day trip or overnight up the Pacific side.
- [ ] **Time it with the season.** Whale watching season in Los Cabos officially runs December 15 to April 15. Whale shark season in La Paz runs October through April, and you get 10% off the SunRider Tours whale shark adventure with my code CABOCONKATY. The San José del Cabo Art Walk is Thursday nights, 5 to 9 pm, November through June.[3,4,6]
- [ ] **Have your return ticket handy.** Immigration officers may ask to see your return or onward flight.[1]

Before you fly

- [ ] **Book your airport ride.** Have your transfer set up before you land so you can walk straight out. I use Cabo Airport Shuttle, and my code CABOCONKATY gets you a discount when you book.[2]
- [ ] **Book tours you really want.** Popular days like sunset cruises, whale shark swims and off road tours fill up in high season, so reserve ahead. Save 10% on SunRider Tours trips, including the sunset dinner cruise, with my code CABOCONKATY, and book Cactus Tours UTV and ATV days through my link.
- [ ] **Check your phone plan.** Ask your carrier how your plan works in Mexico before you go, so maps and messages work when you land.
- [ ] **Pack zinc sunscreen.** The Baja sun is strong. Bring a zinc or mineral sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses. If the sun still wins, say CABOCONKATY in the IV Drip chat for 10% off an IV drip delivered to you.
- [ ] **Bring small bills.** Ones and fives make tipping drivers, porters and tour guides easy.[5]

When you land at SJD

- [ ] **Use the electronic passport gates.** Terminal 2 has electronic passport gates, so many travelers skip the officer and the stamp. You qualify if you are 18 or older, traveling for tourism, with an electronic passport (look for the little chip symbol on the cover) that has at least 180 days left, from the US, Canada or another eligible country. Take off sunglasses and hats, lay your photo page face down on the scanner, look at the camera and grab the printed ticket. That ticket is your proof of entry. Its QR code downloads your digital entry form, so keep it with your passport and snap a photo of it for your flight home.[11]
- [ ] **Traveling with kids or not on vacation?** Families with anyone under 18, business travelers and residents go to the regular officer line instead, where your passport gets stamped with your permitted stay, up to 180 days.[11,1]
- [ ] **Grab your bags.** Check the screens for your carousel, and look around it too, because staff sometimes pull bags off and line them up nearby.[12]
- [ ] **Press the customs button.** Fill out your customs declaration on the plane or online ahead of time, hand it in and press the button. Green means walk on through. Red means a quick random bag check, and it does not mean you did anything wrong.[13]
- [ ] **Walk past the sales tables.** After customs comes a long indoor hallway full of people offering timeshares, taxis and tours. Nothing legitimate picks you up inside, so you do not have to stop. Smile, say "no gracias" and keep walking.[14]
- [ ] **Go all the way outside.** Your hotel shuttle, private transfer and rental car shuttle are all waiting outside the airport building. That means walking past immigration, baggage claim, customs and the sales hallway first. Do not stop until you are through the exit doors.[14,19,2]

Who is waiting for you outside

- [ ] **Private transfers.** A driver with a company badge and a sign with your name, or a company spot in the numbered umbrella area across from Terminal 2. Straight to your hotel with no extra stops. This is what I do: my Cabo Airport Shuttle pickup was at Awning 5, and code CABOCONKATY gets you a discount.[12]
- [ ] **Shared shuttles.** Around 120 pesos a seat. They leave every 30 to 45 minutes and make several hotel stops, so plan on about an hour to Cabo San Lucas.[12]
- [ ] **Hotel and resort pickups.** If your hotel set up your ride, look for their driver or rep holding a sign with your name outside.
- [ ] **Rental car shuttles.** Rental desks are just past customs, and the company shuttles take you out to their car lots.[12]
- [ ] **Authorized airport taxis.** Buy your ride at the official ground transportation counter, then head to the taxi area outside. Fares go by zone, around 1,200 to 1,800 pesos to Cabo San Lucas, so confirm the full price first.[15,12]
- [ ] **Uber can drop off, not pick up.** Be advised that Uber cannot pick you up at the main terminal at SJD. To catch one you would have to meet your driver outside airport property off the highway, so book your shuttle or transfer ahead. Uber can drop you off right at the terminal curb when you fly home.[2,18]

While you are in Cabo

- [ ] **Check the beach flag first.** Lifeguards raise a colored flag for the day's conditions. See my flag guide and swimmable beach list below.[7]
- [ ] **Tip like a local.** Plan on 10 to 15% at restaurants, and check the bill first in case service is already included.[5]
- [ ] **Dollars or pesos?** You can pay in US dollars or Mexican pesos almost everywhere in Cabo, but you will usually get a better exchange rate paying in pesos, since places that take dollars often use a rate that favors them. When a card machine or ATM asks, choose to be charged in pesos.[16,17]
- [ ] **Eat where locals eat.** Start with my food guide for taco spots, beach seafood and the best Sunday brunch.
- [ ] **Save with my codes.** Use CABOCONKATY for a discount on your Cabo Airport Shuttle ride, 10% off SunRider Tours and 10% off an IV drip. All my codes are listed below.

My codes for your trip

Cabo Airport Shuttle
Private SJD transfers
Discount with code CABOCONKATY

SunRider Tours
Sunset dinner cruise, whale shark adventures and more
10% off with code CABOCONKATY

Cactus Tours
UTV, ATV, camel and horseback tours
Book through my link

IV Drip
IV therapy delivered in Los Cabos
Say CABOCONKATY in the chat for 10% off

Partner links and codes: CaboConKaty may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. All codes and links live at caboconkaty.com/travel-tips-discounts.

Beach day: flags and swimmable beaches

Lifeguards raise a flag every day for the conditions, so always check it before you go in. All beaches in Mexico are public, but not all have lifeguards, so swim with a buddy.[7,8]



Green
Calm conditions. Swimming is generally safe.



Yellow
Moderate surf and currents. Swim with caution and stay close to shore.



Red
Dangerous conditions. The water is closed to swimmers.



Purple or white
Jellyfish or other hazardous marine life spotted nearby.



Black
Full beach closure. No swimming, no wading, no going in at all.

SWIMMABLE BEACHES WHEN THE FLAG IS GREEN

From Land's End and the Cabo San Lucas marina all the way to San José del Cabo, west to east. These sit on the calmer Sea of Cortez side.

1	**Lover's Beach (Playa del Amor)** Land's End, Cabo San Lucas	Swim on the calm Sea of Cortez side only. Get there by water taxi from the marina or Medano.[8,10]
2	**Medano Beach** Cabo San Lucas bay	The main town beach and a Blue Flag beach, with soft sand and clear water.[8,9]
3	**Santa María Beach** Corridor, km 12 to 13	Blue Flag bay hugged by cactus covered cliffs.[8,9]
4	**Chileno Beach** Corridor, km 14	Blue Flag cove with lifeguards watching over swimmers.[8,9]
5	**Playa Bledito** Corridor, km 19.5	Swim inside the breakwater at Cabo Real.[10]
6	**Palmilla Beach** Corridor, km 27, near San José	A long stretch of white sand with a Blue Flag flying.[8,9]
7	**La Playita** San José del Cabo, by Puerto Los Cabos	Right next to the Puerto Los Cabos marina.[10]

ONLY ON CALM DAYS, WITH CAUTION

Monuments Beach (km 5), Shipwreck Beach, Barco Varado (km 11), Las Viudas, Twin Dolphin (km 12), El Tule (km 16), Playa Cabo Real (km 19.5), Acapulquito (Blue Flag surf beach), Costa Azul.[9,10]

LOOK, BUT DO NOT SWIM

Divorce Beach, Solmar, Pedregal, Playa Buenos Aires, Westin Beach, Playa Hotelera, Zippers. These face strong surf or currents, especially on the Pacific side.[10]

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@caboconkaty on Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest and YouTube

Sources. Rules, fees and seasons can change, so double check before you go. Checked November 2026.

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