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LOS CABOS · BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR · 2026 EDITION

The Buyer's Guide

Everything you need to know to buy a home in Los Cabos with confidence, from the first showing to the day you get the keys.

WHERE
Eight market zones, from Palmilla to La Paz

HOW
Fideicomiso, corporations and the Restricted Zone

WHEN
A typical closing runs two to three months

WHAT IT COSTS
Closing costs, taxes and owning here

SCAN TO EMAIL US
Ask us about buying

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A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Buying a home in Los Cabos

Buying in Mexico follows a different process from the US and Canada: foreign ownership runs through a bank trust or a Mexican corporation, a Notary Public formalizes the sale, and closing costs are paid by the buyer.

This guide explains each part of that process in the order you will meet it. We have helped buyers from the United States, Canada, Mexico and around the world make Los Cabos their home **since 1997**.

Your Engel & Völkers Snell advisor will confirm everything specific to the property you choose.



29
YEARS IN LOS CABOS
FOUNDED 1997

5 to 7%
TYPICAL CLOSING COSTS,
PAID BY THE BUYER

2 to 3
MONTHS, TYPICAL, FROM
OFFER TO KEYS

52
ADVISORS, BACKED BY
18 SUPPORT STAFF

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

01 **Why Los Cabos**
The lifestyle and the seasons

02 **Where to buy**
Eight zones and their price points

03 **How we work with you**
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Fideicomiso or Mexican corporation

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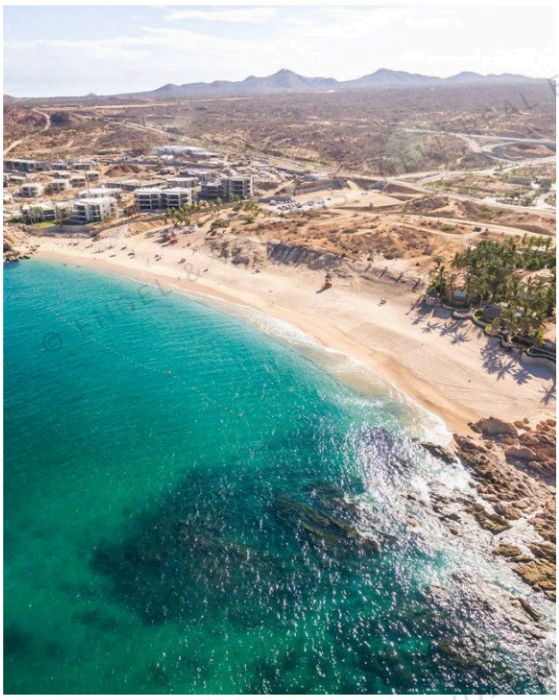
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01 · WHY LOS CABOS

Living in Los Cabos

Los Cabos sits between the Pacific and the Sea of Cortez. A 25 minute corridor connects San José del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas, with golf, marinas, beaches and an established dining scene along the way.











Easy to reach

Los Cabos International Airport (SJD) has direct flights to major US and Canadian cities. Cabo San Lucas airport serves private aviation.

Low carrying costs

Predial, the annual property tax, is a single payment and exceptionally low compared to US and Canadian benchmarks.

A market with depth

From $400,000 in La Paz to branded oceanfront estates above $50 million, there is a right fit at almost every budget.

WHEN BUYERS COME · THE LOS CABOS CALENDAR

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

Peak buyer activity · High season · Shoulder, often best for serious investors · Quieter, more domestic buyers

Tip: inventory and negotiating room are often better outside January to March. If your timing is flexible, ask your advisor about the shoulder months.

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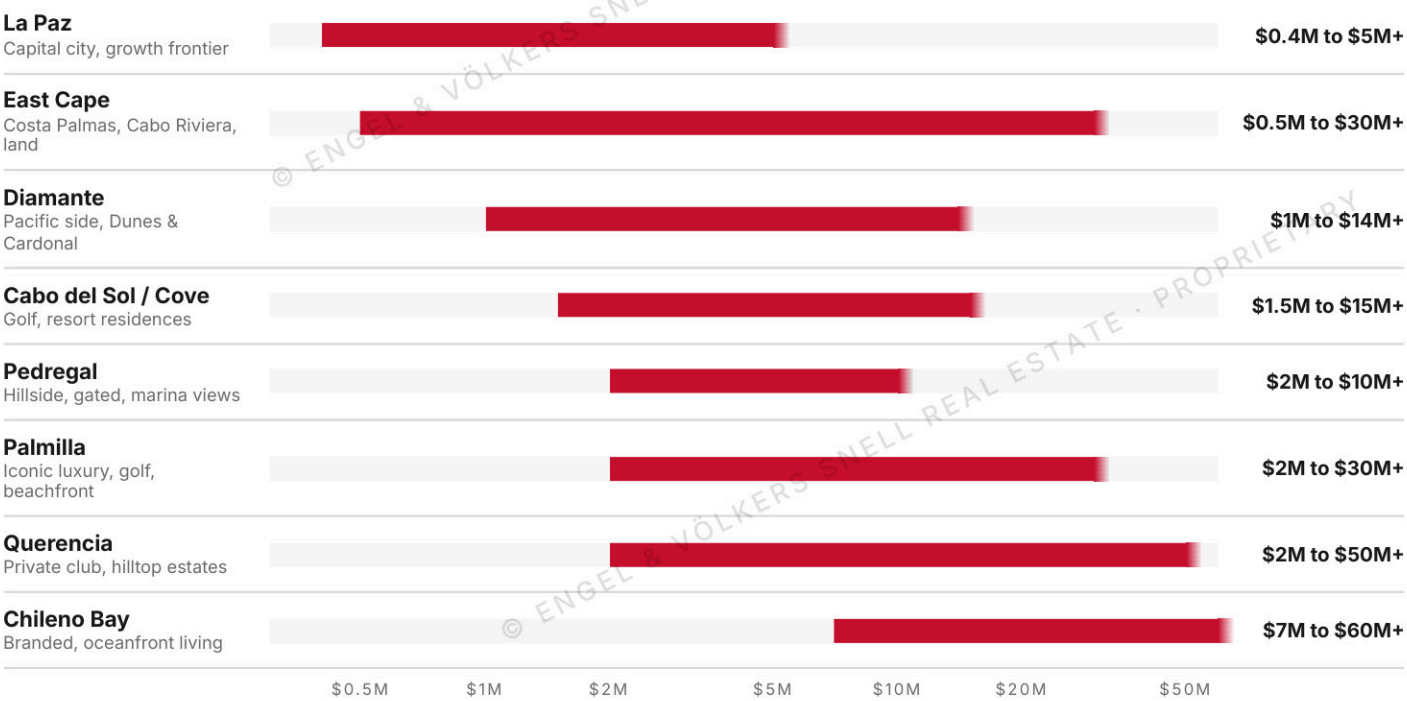
02 · WHERE TO BUY

The market by zone

Each community has its own character, price range and typical buyer. Your advisor will narrow the options to the zones that fit your budget, use and timeline.



TYPICAL PRICE RANGES, USD · LOG SCALE



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03 · HOW WE WORK WITH YOU

How we work with buyers

Most of our clients fit one of five profiles. Each weighs price, lifestyle and returns differently, which shapes what we show and how we negotiate.

The second home

Lifestyle first, often planning retirement, usually a cash buyer, wants it turnkey.

The investor

Returns first. Asks about CAP rates, occupancy and rental management, and wants rental friendly HOAs.

The Mexican family buyer

Often from Mexico City or Monterrey, family driven. Can own directly, and many also use a company or trust.

The land buyer

Looking for entitled or buildable parcels, where zoning and permits matter most.

The trade-up owner

Already owns in Cabo and is moving up in price, location or type of home.

THE PROCESS

1

REGISTER

We get to know you

A short registration form captures your budget, timeline, zones and priorities, and formalizes our representation of you.

2

QUALIFY

We sharpen the brief

Price band, source of funds, how you will use the home, how you will hold title, and who else decides.

3

CURATE

We build a short list

Five to eight homes selected for your brief, with about 45 minutes per property.

4

OFFER

We negotiate

Deposit, due diligence window, inspections, financing if any, closing date and possession, all written in.

5

CLOSE

We see it through

Costs in writing before closing day, a final walk-through, utilities and HOA set up, and a check-in at 90 days.



OUR STANDARD

Every closing cost is presented to you in writing before closing day.

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04 · HOW FOREIGNERS OWN

How foreign buyers hold title

Mexican law restricts direct foreign ownership near the coast and the borders. Essentially all of Los Cabos sits inside that Restricted Zone, so foreign buyers hold title through one of two well established structures. Both give you full ownership rights.

50 km FROM ANY COASTLINE IS INSIDE THE RESTRICTED ZONE

100 km FROM ANY BORDER IS INSIDE THE RESTRICTED ZONE

MOST FOREIGN BUYERS

The Fideicomiso

A Mexican bank holds title as trustee. **You are the beneficiary**, with full rights to use, lease, sell, remodel or leave the property to your heirs.

- ☐ **50 year term**, renewable indefinitely
- ☐ Requires a Foreign Affairs (SRE) permit, handled during closing
- ☐ Annual trust fee, typically **$333 to $666 USD**
- ☐ Best for homes, condos and personal use

INVESTMENT AND COMMERCIAL

A Mexican Corporation

A company you own holds the property directly. **Common for investment, rental and commercial property**, and for Mexican family buyers.

- ☐ The corporation owns the asset outright
- ☐ Adds annual filing and tax obligations
- ☐ Requires corporate documents and a legal representative
- ☐ Talk to your accountant before choosing it

START THE TRUST EARLY

Begin the fideicomiso application **as soon as your offer is accepted**. The bank trust is set up in parallel with due diligence and can take several weeks, so an early start keeps your closing date safe.



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05 · FROM OFFER TO KEYS

The closing timeline

A typical closing in Los Cabos runs two to three months. Your funds sit in escrow the whole time, and a Notary Public, a senior attorney appointed by the State, certifies the transfer.

DAYS 2 TO 14 | DAYS 16 TO 60 · TRANSFER OF TITLE | 60 TO 65

1

DAY 1

Offer accepted

You and the seller sign the Offer to Acquire, and you sign an escrow agreement. Both sides provide IDs and KYC forms.

2

DAYS 2 TO 14

Due diligence

You wire the **initial deposit** within three business days. Inspections and inventories happen now. Withdraw in this window and the deposit is refunded.

3

DAY 15

Earnest money

You fund the earnest money, less the deposit already paid, plus a **pre-closing cost fee** credited against your closing costs.

4

DAYS 16 TO 60

Transfer of title

The notary and trustee bank prepare the deed, the SRE permit is requested, and the trust is drafted. You do not need to be in Mexico.

5

DAYS 60 TO 65

Closing

You wire the balance to escrow, both sides sign the settlement, the notary transfers title, and escrow releases funds within two business days.

PAYMENTS DURING CLOSING

$5K to $10K
INITIAL DEPOSIT, PLUS ESCROW FEE
WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS

Day 15
EARNEST MONEY
5 DAY GRACE PERIOD TO CURE

$3K to $6K
PRE-CLOSING COST FEE CREDITED TO CLOSING COSTS

Balance
WIRED TO ESCROW WITHIN 5 DAYS OF NOTARY'S CALL

WHO IS AT THE TABLE

Your advisor	Manages the transaction and keeps you informed
Notary Public	Certifies and formalizes the deed
Closing lawyer	Prepares documents, coordinates with the notary
Escrow agent	Holds your funds, releases them per terms
Closing coordinator	Owns the timeline. Provided by us

YOU CAN CLOSE FROM HOME

The trustee bank instruction letters grant a proxy, so **neither buyer nor seller needs to attend closing**. Those letters need an apostille or consular certification and a certified translation, and your closing coordinator walks you through it.

PROTECTING YOUR WIRE

Always confirm wire instructions **by phone** with a number you already know before sending funds. Never rely on instructions that arrive only by email.

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06 · WHAT IT COSTS

Closing costs: plan for 5 to 7%

In Mexico, closing costs are assessed to the buyer. Unlike the US and Canada, they are not negotiated onto the seller. Everything you pay in Mexico, except title insurance and outside legal fees, is added to your cost basis, which lowers your tax when you sell one day.

WORKED EXAMPLE · A $1,000,000 USD PURCHASE



Roughly **$50,000 to $70,000** all in. Illustrative only. Every fee is calculated on the peso value of the registered price, so figures move with the exchange rate. Your closing coordinator gives you the exact figures in writing.

ITEM	TYPICAL RANGE	WHAT IT IS
ISABI (acquisition tax)	3%	Baja California Sur rate, assessed by the municipality
Notary fees	Varies	Formalizes the transaction
Public Registry	Varies	Records your Trust Deed or deed
Avalúo (tax appraisal)	Small fixed fee	Sets the base for ISABI and future predial. Not a market appraisal
Fideicomiso setup	Varies by bank	Initiation fee, generally equal to the annual fee
SRE permit	Fixed fee	Foreign Affairs permit, paid through the trustee bank
Certificates	Small fixed fees	No liens, no tax debt and no water debt
Translation and transaction fee	Per page / flat	Certified translation, courier and foreign notary authentication
Escrow fee	Varies	Holds and releases your funds
Title insurance	Optional	Strongly recommended
Legal fees	Varies	Your closing attorney

WHAT THE SELLER PAYS

All debt on the property, their capital gains tax, their own legal fees, the real estate commission, and prorated property tax, HOA dues and utilities.

GET IT IN WRITING

Your closing coordinator issues a **closing cost estimate** in the first two weeks. Your advisor will walk you through it line by line before closing day.

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07 · OWNING HERE

After closing and ownership

CLOSING DAY

Title passes

Legal ownership transfers at signing. Escrow releases funds within two business days.

10 TO 14 DAYS

A working copy

A simple copy of your Trust Deed, so you can transfer utilities and finalize club memberships.

FOLLOWING WEEKS

Registration

The notary records the deed with the registry and tax offices and pays the acquisition tax.

3 TO 4 MONTHS

Your closing package

Certified original deed, certified English translation, final settlement statement and all receipts.

Property tax

Predial is a single annual payment, and exceptionally low by US and Canadian standards. Keep every receipt.

HOA dues

They vary by community and by what is included. Your advisor will confirm current numbers for any home you consider.

Your trust

An annual fee to the trustee bank, typically $333 to $666 USD, keeps your fideicomiso in good standing.

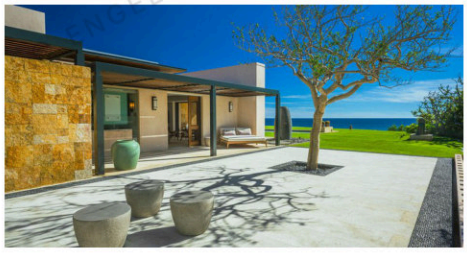
FINANCING

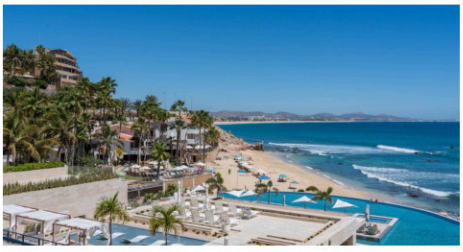
Most purchases here are cash, always sent by bank wire. There are two financing paths: **developer or seller financing**, privately negotiated, and **bank financing** through select Mexican lenders that work with foreign buyers. Both use a fiduciary guarantee, and terms vary. We can connect you with current providers.

AFTER YOU MOVE IN

We help set up **utilities and HOA registration**, refer you to property management if you plan to rent, and check in at **90 days** to make sure everything is working as it should.







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08 · YOUR CHECKLIST

Buyer checklist

Having these ready keeps your closing on schedule. Anti-money-laundering law requires identity and KYC documents from both buyer and seller on every transaction in Mexico.

BEFORE YOU START

- [ ] Signed **Buyer Registration & Representation Form**
- [ ] Your budget, timeline and must-haves shared with your advisor
- [ ] Source of funds confirmed: cash by bank wire, or financing
- [ ] Decided how you will hold title: fideicomiso or corporation
- [ ] Everyone who will decide included from the start

WHEN YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED

- [ ] **Passport** and driver's license copies
- [ ] **Proof of address**
- [ ] **KYC form** and signed Privacy Notice
- [ ] **Escrow agreement** signed
- [ ] Initial deposit wired within three business days
- [ ] Fideicomiso application started right away
- [ ] Corporate documents and RFC, if buying through a company

DURING DUE DILIGENCE

- [ ] Inspections and inventory completed
- [ ] Closing cost estimate reviewed with your advisor
- [ ] Contingencies removed in writing
- [ ] Earnest money and pre-closing cost fee funded

THE FINAL WALK-THROUGH

- [ ] Air conditioning, water heaters and pool equipment running
- [ ] Appliances, lighting and plumbing tested
- [ ] Inventory and included furniture present
- [ ] Keys, remotes, access cards and manuals handed over
- [ ] Utility and HOA accounts ready to transfer

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

What are the HOA dues and what do they cover? Are short-term rentals allowed? When was predial last paid? Is anything excluded from the sale?

PRIVATE COMMUNITIES

Chileno Bay, Cove Club, Twin Dolphin, El Dorado and Costa Palmas are private communities with their own sales offices, and each asks that buyers be registered by their advisor before a first visit or call. Let us register you before you tour. **Engel & Völkers Snell is fully licensed and qualified to show and sell property in every one of them**, so one advisor can represent you across every community you consider.

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LOCAL ROOTS, GLOBAL REACH

About Engel & Völkers Snell Real Estate

Snell Real Estate has been part of Los Cabos since 1997. As Engel & Völkers Snell, we pair that local knowledge with one of the most recognized luxury real estate networks in the world.

1997	Nearly $4B	4	70
SERVING LOS CABOS SINCE	IN SALES CLOSED	OFFICES	ADVISORS AND STAFF







01 Local mastery

Number one in MLS BCS by sales volume for nearly two decades. We know the communities, the developers, the notaries and the HOAs.

02 A full team

Your advisor is backed by an in-house closing department, a closing coordinator on every file, marketing and accounting.

03 A global network

Engel & Völkers connects you to buyers, sellers and referrals in markets around the world, before and after your purchase.

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CONTACT

Speak with an advisor

Your advisor's details are below. Our Palmilla office can help with anything else.

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This guide is general information to help you prepare, not legal, tax or financial advice. Figures are typical ranges at the time of writing and are confirmed for each transaction by the notary and our Closing Department. Each brokerage is independently owned and operated.

EVSRE · THE BUYER'S GUIDE · v1.3 · 14 OCT 2026

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