

# LA PAZ RESORT GOLF COURSE

Designed by: Richard Sugarman

Course file name: La Paz.course

Flags: Two (Flag2.bmp is the Seal of Baja California Sur - [Seal of Baja California Sur - Wikipedia](#))

Course type: Fictional, desert

Location: Near La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico

Acknowledgements:

- I modified the background and a few textures from Devil's Dunes by Michael "Babybull" Conner, who in turn had used some objects and textures from Brian Silvernail and Paul O'Brien. I also used a few bushes and trees from our Snuffy's Den design and an object or two from the Corona Cove project. Other non-stock textures and objects were created from scratch or from pictures on the internet (e.g. the clubhouse, shelters, and bathroom).
- Playtesters Brad Lanagan & Charlie Roberts – they gave me some great advice and suggestions. A \*huge\* thank s for their support to both me and the GBC community!

Overall course description and design philosophy

This course actually started out with trying to do a British links course loosely based on Machrihanish ([Machrihanish Golf Club - Wikipedia](#)), but after a while I decided to transform it into this desert "links-like" course set in Baja California. I felt like I could still use those links elements, like mounds and ground-play, while giving my own spin on a desert course. (By the way, the La Paz clubhouse is from a picture of an actual B&B across the street from the 18th green of the real Machrihanish – just to acknowledge the theme. 😊)

To add to the difficulty of the course, I surrounded each hole with the "hazard" terrain, as I really like the penal nature of that as a primary hazard rather than lots of bunkers and water. I have actually played a few desert courses that do play the desert as either hazard or OB (for example, Troon North); also think of Hawaiian courses surrounded by lava (e.g. Hualalai). So it is definitely not unrealistic for a designer to do this, and I hope that it's clear enough where you can hit and where you can't hit. This also makes it even more difficult in strong or gusty wind conditions. I did make the red tees such that there is no or very little carry required over the hazard.

I should also note that I've tweaked my character skill settings in the game to be a bit more realistic with my scoring – Power = 17, Accuracy = 11, and Sand + Around Green + Putting = 0 (yes, zero). This gives me enough of a challenge that I can still shoot under par most times, but it's not a given every time I play, and no more rounds in the 50s (except a few times on really easy courses). I mention this because for the courses I've designed, I play-tested them primarily with this setup, as opposed to firewall 20s for all skills, which I think is unrealistic. (No offense to those who play like that, but I hate seeing scores in the 50s on sites like the GBC1 Tour.) I've also play-tested my courses with numerous computer golfers from all tees with varying skill numbers. So if La Paz, or other courses I eventually release, perhaps seem too easy for someone with skills set to all 20s, it's probably because they are.

**I hope you have as much fun playing La Paz as I did designing it!**

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
Par	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	3	5	35	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	71
Black Tees	485	184	448	587	160	425	462	193	557	3501	535	345	240	460	591	162	372	403	435	3543	7044
Blue Tees	448	174	418	561	133	419	427	182	521	3283	533	325	230	428	568	156	364	394	392	3390	6673
White Tees	407	141	361	508	114	409	387	161	477	2965	491	296	203	379	536	150	310	351	374	3090	6055
Red Tees	358	87	283	473	100	379	331	99	418	2528	456	263	146	330	473	80	271	321	296	2636	5164

### Individual hole descriptions:

Hole 1 – The opening hole mimics the opening hole of Machrihanish ("The best opening hole in the World"). A drive over the water down the left side leaves the shortest and best look at the green. Tee shots right of center (safely away from the water!) leave a second shot over the large dune front-right of the green. I made the beach playable, so it essentially plays as a long sand trap buffer between the hole and water. The second shot can play anywhere from a mid to a long-iron or even wood depending on tee shot placement. The rather deep green angles to the right from the fairway line, and slopes from right-to-left.

Hole 2 – The challenge in this medium-length par 3 are the slopes on the green. A pin on the right is fronted by a bunker that must be carried, but not by much. Putting can be tricky.

Hole 3 – I think this is a tough hole off the tee. With the wind coming off the water from the left, I find it hard to force myself to aim far enough left or draw the ball into the wind. Miss right, and you'll find either hazard or a large fairway bunker (one of few on the course). It doesn't help that the fairway slopes from left-to-right as well. The uphill second shot distance can be deceiving to the eye. The green is very large and slopes from front-to-back.

Hole 4 – This is a great par 5 (in my humble opinion!). While it's listed at 587 from the black tees on the card, it is reachable in two with a drive to the end of the fairway. Power drivers may even want to try to cut across where the fairway bends to the right, although that's a long way out there. As I tried to do with all the par 5s on La Paz, the toughest decision is with the second shot. If you want to challenge the hazard along the left side, you can go over it at the green. If not, then placement is key for the second shot to avoid a few bunkers and that ever-present desert hazard, especially if you go long across the fairway. The wide green is set up tight against a mound around the entire back.

Hole 5 – I would call this a "signature hole" of La Paz. This hole plays downhill to a large green, with the water as a beautiful backdrop. The large green means it can play anywhere from a short-iron to a long-iron. Beware the large deep bunker short right. Once on the green, the challenge continues with a lot of slopes and levels.

Hole 6 – Placement of the tee shot is critical here. Something less than driver can be hit here, especially if the ball is kept to the left side. There is a bunker right to catch drives that go long of the fairway. The second shot is to a green that slopes from back-to-front.

Hole 7 – The drive is straightforward, as opposed to hole 6. Long drives can go through the fairway at the end, putting you in rough, so long hitters may want to drop to a fairway metal or long iron off the tee. The green visually sits at an odd angle to the fairway, making the second shot slightly tougher than the mid-to-short iron typically used. This can make it very easy to go long or through the green, as it also slopes slightly to the back and left.

Hole 8 – This long par 3 is an homage to the great links courses with blind shots and greens sitting inside of dunes. Hole 8 is a long iron to a circular green sitting in a hillside with mounds around the front-right and whole right side. Pin placements on the right side are thus blind. Bailouts to the left leave a long putt. Tee shots that run long can catch the deep bunker behind.

Hole 9 – The first of back-to-back par 5s marking the turn. This one starts off straightaway to a somewhat narrow, bumpy fairway. Once again, the second shot requires thought. Long hitters can try for the green, but there is hazard in front of a very deep bunker right front of the green. Shots too far left can catch slope and run into rough or into the desert. Laying back with a mid-to-long iron should leave a short-iron slightly uphill to this hourglass shaped green.

Hole 10 – This par 5 starts with staring at a huge collection of trees right in the middle of the fairway. The decision from the back tees is to go over it, which a high tee shot should easily clear, or to bend something around them. (Designer tip: I usually aim just right of the trees, hit a high driver, and let the right-to-left wind bring it back to the middle). A good tee shot can leave a decision to go for the green in two, but beware the water left. A long bunker short-right of the green can be a bailout spot but leaves a really tough third. The water and bunker flank the narrow neck leading into the green if attempting to run it on. As with number 9, laying back leaves a short iron, which is the less risky play if just thinking birdie versus eagle.

Hole 11 – I like this tricky little par 4. It's short but can be tough if the uphill tee shot isn't well executed. The further to the right the tee shot is, the shorter the second shot but that also brings the water more into play. Going too far on the tee shot can take you through the fairway and into the desert hazard. The second shot is slightly uphill to a green fronted by a very deep bunker and water.

Hole 12 – This is a long par 3 that plays significantly downhill. There are no bunkers on the hole; it's all about judging the distance correctly and executing. I really like long downhill par threes that require the golfer to consider elevation, wind, pin position, and the bounce-and-roll of the ball once it hits the ground. With a very large green, it is not too difficult to hit, but getting it close can really be tough. Depending on pin position, it could be as little as a 4 or 5-iron that runs onto the green to a 3-iron or more to get it to back pin placements.

Hole 13 – I'll admit that this hole started out significantly different than the final product. I always liked the idea of having a sand pit area in the middle of a fairway to hit over or around on this course. I played with the design for a long time, finally settling on the uphill shot to carry up onto the plateau above the pit. The tree in the sand pit is more for aesthetic purposes and should typically not come into play. Perhaps not a completely realistic tee shot in real life, but I like the way it looks and the challenge to get up the hill if you want to get past the sand and slope. The second shot is taken over or between two trees flanking the fairway in front of the green. Despite the 460-yard length on the card from the black tees, this is a gettable birdie with a good second shot.

Hole 14 – The final par 5 presents a visually challenging tee shot. The shot sets up as a bit of an uphill Cape Hole. The further right you go, the shorter the second shot but the more desert you have to carry. Aim too far left or pull your shot left, and you can be through the fairway and into desert. As I've noted with all of the par 5s, I really tried to make the second shot the key decision point (side note: which I think is significantly lacking in most real course designs). There is a deep swell from about 220 to 165 yards out from the green, causing you to consider the best option. If the tee shot didn't go as planned, it may be best to lay back and not try to carry the swell. Long tee shots down the right side of the fairway can leave a small chance of getting home in two, but a large bunker right can catch wayward

shots. The green is set below the median height of the fairway, so the approach can be blind and actually play shorter than the yardage indicates.

Hole 15 – I was looking to squeeze a shortish par three in at this point and just used some free space next to 13 tee for this hole. I like the finished product, though. The green is narrow and deep, though it does widen the further back you go. Depending on pin position, club choice can range from a pitching wedge to a 5-iron. Despite its relative shortness, it can actually be really difficult to hit this green, especially in strong wind.

Hole 16 – The tee shot on this hole is a bit of an homage to the PGA West Stadium Course, with a very deep bunker staring at you on the left side of the fairway. The fairway also slopes heavily from right-to-left and the wind pushes that same way, so that leaves a decision off the tee. It's not a very long par 4 at only 372 yards from the black, so laying back short of the gaping bunker is a possibility, though it leaves a long-iron approach. Long hitters can possibly get over it but need to stay to the right if they want to hit the fairway, and it is really uphill. A left-to-right fade into the fairway with driver or 3-wood is often the best strategy. The second shot is also uphill to a wide green with several levels. It can be hard to aim far enough right to avoid going left of the pin or even the green; aim further right than you think!

Hole 17 – The slightly downhill tee shot does not need to be a power drive, as the fairway ends just shy of 300 yards at the ditch. So the decision is what to hit instead to a rolling fairway. The second shot is uphill to a squarish green that runs up into the 2<sup>nd</sup> green if you go too far. The green primarily slopes from back-to-front and is harder to putt than may appear.

Hole 18 – The final hole leaves a decision off the tee – play safe right out to the large fairway shared with number 1, or challenge the three bunkers, rough, and desert on the left for a shorter approach. A bunker fronts the angled green, which comes less into play with tee shots down the left side. The large green sits slightly above the fairway. A high shot that holds the green can get close for that final birdie!