

**BCA Rio Sonora Tour**  
**Wednesday October 28th - Monday Nov 2nd 2026**

Welcome to the Border Community Alliance 2026 Rio Sonora tour. This is the land the early Spanish and Basque explorers described as a land of bountiful maize and beauty. It was to become the heartland of Spanish colonial Sonora from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

The geographer Carl Sauer described it in the 1930s - "Beautiful and fertile beyond anything else in this part of the country, perhaps no other area in the New World comes close to the physical conditions of the Old World Fertile Crescent as does this one."

Sauer was referring to the Rio Sonora, one of the several valleys located in a region known as the Serrana. It is an ecological transition zone of considerable ecological diversity between the pine-covered Sierra Madre mountains and the coastal plain of the Gulf of California.

This unforgettable travel experience begins in Cucurpe, Sonora, a farming and ranching village on the Río San Miguel where Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino launched his evangelization of the Pimería Alta. From there we will continue to the historic Río Sonora, México. We will explore and celebrate Sonoran history and culture through guided day trips to the major towns along the river beginning in the north at the town of Arizpe that was once the capital of Spain's Provincias Internas. We will continue down river ultimately to the town of Ures where the lower part of the river gives way to the lowlands at Puerta del Sol, the gateway to eastern Sonora.

The agropastoralist frontier society that took root in the 1600s evolved was based on a fusion of Old World and Indigenous crops. Along the way we will share the local food traditions, spirits, history, music, and culture of the region with the ranchers, farmers and bacanora makers who have sustained a way of life for more than four centuries.

Our base of operation will be the lovely Hotel Posada del Rio Sonora in Banamichi that is located adjacent the historic Plaza Miguel Hidalgo and the main church. The food will be excellent, the atmosphere with the beautiful rooftop terrace makes for most easy conviviality, refreshment and relaxation.

*Your guide will be Bill Steen, cultural anthropologist and director of the non-profit organization The Canelo Project that is dedicated to Connecting - People, Culture and Nature*

## ITINERARY

### Wednesday - October 28

**8:00** - Meet and assemble in Tubac

**9:00** - Drive to Nogales, cross the border and proceed through the customs inspection to Km 21 for tourist permits. Driving time. - **1 hr 30 min**

**11 am** - Tourist permits - **30 - 45 min**

**11:45** - Leave Km 21 for Cucurpe

**1:15 pm** - Arrive Cucurpe - comida at the house of Eva Cruz. Visit the ruins of the original mission church and continue up-river to look at the head gates for the irrigation canals and some original rock art and contemporary murals. - **2 hr**

**3:15 to 3:30 pm** - Depart Cucurpe

**5:00 pm** - Arrive Banamichi

## **Thursday - October 29**

**9 am to 10 am** - Drive to Arizpe - Arriving Arizpe we will go to go to where the the Bacanuchi river that originates in Cananea meets the Bacoachi river to form the Rio Sonora.

**10 am** - Tour the town of Arizpe.

**12:00 pm** - Drive down Rio Sonora to the small pueblo/ejido Bamori - Arriving Bamori we will have our comida at the home of the Daniel Montijo family. Daniel's daughter Bere will serve Sonoran style enchiladas. They have always been an agricultural family currently growing mostly garlic and fava beans. There we will see the site of the bacanora still and the spring water that feeds it.

If the road between Arizpe and Bamori is in good condition we might be able to visit the historic flour mill in Bamori.

**2:30 to 3 pm** - Depart for Banamichi

**4:30 to 5 pm** - Rooftop happy hour Hotel La Posada

## **Friday - October 30**

**7:30 am** - Depart for the town of Ures. Driving time will be approximately 1 ½ hours. We will visit the plaza and beautiful church in Ures and the well preserved Molino Harinero (flour mill). Our guide will be Delia Maria Pina Aguirre, the cronista/historian of Ures. In addition we will have a presentation by biochemist Antonio Romo in his family's historic home about the Rio Sonora mine spill that occurred in 2014 and the remediation that is finally taking place after many years.

After our tour of Ures we will go to an area just south of town called Visit to Guadalupe de Ures for the comida and see the sugar cane processing operations.

The town of Mazocahui is the transition point between the middle Rio Sonora Valley is the lower Valley and passes through a very scenic area that is called the Puerta del Sol.

**3:30 pm** - Return to Banamichi

**4:30 to 5 pm** - Happy Hour

**Evening** - The Day of the Dead celebration traditionally happens November 1st and 2, however depending upon local traditions, travel and work, those days are often changed to accommodate people's schedules. Banamichi typically celebrates these days on Friday and Saturday nights. The details of this year's celebration will be known when as we get closer to those dates, but typically Friday night will be the main night of activities.

## Saturday - October 31

**9 am** - On the third day of our trip we will spend in and around the town of Banamichi. We will visit several old homes that have been restored by Jesus Romo and Bill Harmsen and his wife Irma Rojas, the original owners of the Hotel La Posada

We will then go to the other side of the river to pay a visit to the little homestead of Stevan de la Rosa and his partner Lucia Gomez. to hear about their homesteading exploits over recent years.

**12:30 to 1 pm** - From there we will drive to our main destination for the afternoon Ranchito La Martina. The comida will be a complex array of traditional local foods along with a demonstration of how the large tortillas are made along with the bacanora or mescal still will be running simultaneously. We will give a full explanation of how it is made including preparation, baking, fermentation and distillation. The meal will be accompanied by the oldest traditional music group from the Rio Sonora Los Cuates.

**6 00 pm** - Sonora's award winning folkloric dance group will perform on the historic plaza across from the Hotel La Posada.

## Sunday - November 1

**9 am** - Sunday takes us south along the river to visit the towns of Huepac , Aconchi and Baviacora. We will visit the churches and plazas and will be given a tour of the church at Huepac by the town cronista (historian) Jose Omar Montoya. Close to Huepac we will stop briefly at the site where the name Sonora originated.

**12:30 pm** - We will be eating at the home of Olivia Jimenez and her husband Jesus Maldonado in the little hamlet of El Rodeo which parallels small farm fields along the river. This general area was the site of the largest Opata settlement in the Rio Sonora Valley complete with ball court. Olivia is famous for her gorditas which will be served along with the meal. Her husband Jesus is also a producer of well crafted bacanora.

Note - Driving time to Baviacora excluding stops is 30 min.

## Monday - November 2

**9 am** - Our schedule will be somewhat different on our return to Tubac. We will be served a very light breakfast at the Hotel La Posada and then drive to the town of Bacoachi.

**10:45 am** - Arrive Bacoachi where we will be served what you could call brunch along side the Rio Sonora. Our meal will be prepared by an old friend Lupita Madero. Participants will have a chance to purchase locally grown chile, membrillo (quince, oregano and other local products.

**11:45** - Leave Bacoachi and Drive to Naco passing through the the copper mining town of Cananea.

**2:00 pm** - Arrive Naco

**2:30 pm** - Drive to Tubac from Naco

**4:30 pm** - Arrive Tubac

*Please be advised that the Itinerary is subject to change at a moment's notice. Be aware that when traveling there are dozens of "best laid plans" that are always variable to a multiple of factors beyond our control. Likewise, be assured you will have an exceptionally fine time!*