

The Best Beaches in Mexico (You've Never Heard of Them)



My top four beaches in Mexico. You'll find them on no tourist trail, and your friends have probably never heard of them. That's because I believe the best beaches are the ones still undiscovered.

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Mexico is a big country. More than 750,000 square miles, and three different time zones. You'll find primo examples of mountains, deserts, forests, plains, fertile valleys, sophisticated cities, and quiet villages. And of course, those famous beaches.

But we don't go in much for "famous" beaches--too many gringos, too few good deals.

We haven't been everywhere in Mexico. It would take a lifetime to do that (and we're going to give it our best shot). But we've been all over this country, along as much beachfront as we could find, and spent time in most of the 31 states.

So, we know what we're talking about when we say a beach is good.

My top five beaches in Mexico are:

1. The beaches near **San Blas**, on the Pacific Coast.
Mexico Insider Rating: 76/100

Beautiful beaches (a surfer's paradise!) and the town of San Blas is charming, quiet, and laid-back. The nearby La Tovara estuary is an exquisite ecological experience. This is a place to get away from it all and be close to nature. But this part of Mexico is known for its *jejenes* (little biting bugs) and mosquitoes.

2. The beaches of **Puerto Escondido**, on the Pacific Coast.

Mexico Insider Rating: 69/100

This is an extremely beautiful beach town...a surfing Mecca on the Pacific Coast. It attracts a young, beautiful Bohemian crowd. The beaches are gorgeous and there plenty of sheltered coves where swimming, in very warm water, is safe. We were so smitten we were almost tempted to overlook its shortcomings and stay here. Those shortcomings included no real cultural activities and hard to find top quality health care.

3. **La Paz**, on the lower east end of the Baja Peninsula.

Mexico Insider Rating: 87/100

Not far from San Jose del Cabo, but far enough from the tequila-swilling tourists who frequent Cabo San Lucas. *Money Magazine* recently named La Paz one of the best places in the world to retire...and we can see why. Residents here claim the highest per-capita income in Mexico and the flourishing economy is reflected in the city's clean, well-kept homes, businesses and streets. There is an interesting mix of foreigners who live here, and as for tourists, it attracts mostly people who come to fish or scuba dive in the warm waters of the Sea of Cortez. The beaches are fine white sand and the beautiful bay attracts yachtsmen who give La Paz a truly international flavor. Housing and daily living costs are much less than in Los Cabos, and the health care here is excellent. For some, it may be too hot here in summer, yet not as uncomfortable as in many areas of the U.S.

4. The **Riviera Maya** (especially near Tulum), on the Caribbean coast.

Mexico Insider Rating: 84/100

Laid back, and some areas have enough nightlife, restaurants, golf courses, etc. that you won't feel you've left civilization behind. These areas (like Playa del Carmen) are tourist destinations but not overwhelming like Cancún. The rest of the Riviera Maya has less tourist infrastructure. An interesting mix of foreigners live here, attracted mostly by fishing or diving. Proximity to Cancún means excellent health care and an international airport nearby. Housing can be hard to find and expensive to come by.

5. The **Gulf Coast** (where we bought the lots I told you about earlier in the week).

Mexico Insider Rating: 83/100

Progreso is a world-class city is less than an hour away from an international airport. It has beautiful beaches with warm, calm water, and great inexpensive seafood restaurants. But if you are looking for a resort destination the Yucatán Gulf Coast is not for you.

You may see a pattern here...all these, with the exception of the Riviera Maya, are not on the tourist trail. Even Caribbean Tulum is not yet a tourist Mecca. We tend to prefer the beaches that are small and relatively undiscovered, where you rarely see any other beachcombers and never find camera-toting gringos. Maybe just a couple of fish palapas with rustic tables under a couple of umbrellas...

Suzan Haskins

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P.S. We've rated scores of locations with the unique *Mexico Insider* Ratings System. The criteria included: weather and climate, health care, overall ambience, housing costs, availability of quality real estate, accessibility to an airport, cultural activities, things to do, communications, and daily living costs. This ratings system is completely unbiased--the highest ranked beach town (scored 90 out of 100) is not a place I would want to live. But it fulfills the main criteria our readers tell us

are important to them. Rosarito Beach is just south of Tijuana. Lots of folks love it for its proximity to California. I think it is ugly.