



OLD TOWN IS A HISTORIC GEM AND INCLUDES THE DRAMATIC CATHEDRAL BASILICA

EVENTS FOR EVERY SEASON

Mazatlan is known as a city of celebration, thanks to the numerous special events that take place throughout the year.

The highest-profile gathering is CARNAVAL (www.carnavalmazatlan.net), the pre-Lenten festival comparable to Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Locals and vacationers alike partake in traditions that date back more than 100 years—including beauty pageants, concerts, fireworks displays and a lively parade along the waterfront boulevard.

Anglers should consider visiting during BISBEE'S BILLFISH CLASSIC or the LONG BEACH INTERNATIONAL REGATTA, held in November.

Golfers may be interested in the JESÚS ARNOLDO MILLÁN INTERNATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT, held in early December at the El Cid Country Club.

The city's cultural side is in full view during the SINALOA FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS, which takes place every October in Mazatlan's historic city center, with an array of performances of theater, opera, classical music and ballet.

Soon after is the MAZATLAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL (www.culturamazatlan.com), which runs from November 1 through December 15, with rock concerts, ballet, film competitions and art gallery tours among the scheduled activities.

Rightfully called the "Pearl of the Pacific," Mazatlan is a gem on Mexico's Pacific coast. With its wide stretches of beach, idyllic offshore islands, world-famous fishing and diverse array of lodging options, it has all the ingredients for a memorable vacation. And savvy agents don't stop at the sand when they're selling Mazatlan. After all, this oceanfront city is Mexico's only resort destination with a large historic center, where pristinely restored 19th-century architecture lines the streets, open-air restaurants beckon foodies, and live music, dance and theater fill the air with artistic magic.

Clients may choose to stay in the fast-growing, beachfront Nuevo Mazatlan area, the ever-popular Zona Dorada (Golden Zone), or the traditional downtown, but regardless of where they hang their hats, travelers will enjoy multifaceted Mazatlan.

SANDY SANCTUARIES

Square one for vacationers in Mazatlan is usually the Zona Dorada, the Golden Zone, where hotels sit along a stunningly wide stretch of golden sand. Gaviotas Beach, in the heart of the Zona Dorada, has soft white grains and gentle waves that are excellent for swimming, kayaking, parasailing and banana boat rides.

From the shores of Gaviotas Beach, it's hard to miss the three islands that lie just off the coast. Small boats shuttle vacationers from Gaviotas to Isla de Venados (Deer Island), which has an unspoiled, uninhabited beach and calm waters for swimming and snorkeling. Clients looking for a more organized excursion can take a catamaran from nearby Marina El Cid; these day trips usually include lunch, drinks and use of snorkeling equipment. These cruises usually also pass by the two other islands, Isla de Pajaros (Bird Island) and Isla de Lobos (Wolf Island), where the water is good for diving.

Mazatlan's Malecón, the broad waterfront boulevard, is home to yet another beach, which is especially popular with locals; just a couple blocks away sits the soon-to-expand Mazatlan Aquarium (www.acuariomazatlan.com.mx), where visitors may view a variety of marine life, attend a sea lion show and even swim with sharks in a gigantic tank.

In addition to Isla de Venados, one of the city's most pleasant beaches reachable by boat is Isla de la Piedra (Rock Island) about 2.5 miles south of Mazatlan's port. In spite of its name, Isla de Piedra is actually not an island—but it feels like it is, since most visitors arrive by small launch from Mazatlan's harbor.

MAZATLAN'S HISTORIC HEART

Mazatlan is a truly multidimensional vacation destination. In addition to its miles of beautiful beaches and out-

standing resort hotels, the city has a historic heart dotted with ornate, finely restored 19th-century buildings that bear witness to its long-standing importance as a port city. Continued investment in renovation and upgrades have made this neighborhood—often called Viejo Mazatlan, or Old Mazatlan—more beautiful than ever.

Whether on a guided tour or independently, visitors may explore the city's many architectural treasures. Walking tours may begin at the soaring, yellow-hued Immaculate Conception cathedral, which overlooks the Plazuela de la República, a charming city square with lush vegetation and a large gazebo. Just a few blocks away is Plazuela Machado, one of the oldest plazas in the city and the heart of local restoration efforts. Fine cuisine and upscale shopping alternatives abound in the blocks surrounding Plazuela Machado, but the neighborhood's crown jewel is Angela Peralta Theater (http://www.mazatlan.com.mx/cultural/angelateater.htm), a gorgeously restored performing arts



LUXURY HOTELS DOT MAZATLAN'S ZONA DORADA, OR "GOLDEN ZONE."

Despite the global economic downturn, overall visitation in Mazatlan rose to more than 19 million in 2009, an increase of more than four percent over the previous year. This marks the city's seventh consecutive year of tourism growth.

facility that dates back to 1881. Today, this classically styled gem hosts music, dance and theater events, and is open during the daytime for guided tours.

Nearby is the Casa Machado Museum, which showcases luxurious furnishings, photographs and clothing that was typical of local 19th-century life. Clients visiting between November and May should consider participating in Art Walk Mazatlan (www.artwalkmazatlan.com), a free, self-guided tour of artist studios and galleries that takes place on the first Friday of every month.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

In many ways, heading into the foothills of the nearby Sierra Madre Mountains is like going back in time, thanks to the picturesque, centuries-old villages and mining towns that offer a

fascinating glimpse of the region's rich past. Multiple tour companies operate guided day trips to towns including El Quelite, Copala, Concordia and Cosalá, as well as the historic mining town of Rosario.

Even closer to Mazatlan is La Hacienda de los Osuna, a 130-year-old blue agave tequila distillery and plantation, where visitors learn about the process used to create this popular spirit, followed by tastings and live music. Adjacent to the hacienda is Huana Coa Canopy Tour Adventure (www.huanacoa.com), where adventurers soar above the trees by zip line, which runs between 12 sky-high platforms.

About 160 miles north of Mazatlan is Los Mochis, a major agricultural trading center set between two fertile valleys. Top attractions here include Sinaloa Park, a botanical garden, and Valle del Fuerte Regional Museum, which highlights the important role of the sugar industry in the region. Just south of the city, clients can take a

scenic boat ride across Topolobampo Bay to Farallón Island, a flora and fauna refuge often compared to the Galapagos Islands.

SELLING MULTI-FACETED MAZATLAN

Countless beach destinations around the world lure travelers to their sunny shores with promises of soft sands and warm waters. But clients may not be aware that in Mazatlan, memorable experiences go way beyond the beach. Cultural activities and events, interesting day trips and the city's own historic center make Mazatlan a destination unlike any other. Not many places can offer clients a prime place in the sun, followed by a box seat at the opera. By highlighting what makes Mazatlan special, agents can more easily close the sale.

MAZATLAN MAKEOVER

Mazatlan is known for its wide beaches and historic charm, and the city is dedicated to enhancing that experience for visitors. A combined effort by local, state and federal governments has revitalized several sections of the city popular with travelers.

In the Zona Dorada, or Golden Zone, where many of the city's largest and most luxurious hotels are located, a US\$5.4 million restoration project is making the area shine brighter. In addition to lush landscaping, the initiative will create a new sidewalk lighting system comprised of theatrical spotlights similar to those in the Old Mazatlan, adding a sense of safety and security throughout the district.

Old Mazatlan has benefitted from its own refresher to the tune of US\$17 million, as of 2010. Included in the latest upgrades were historic Plazuela Zaragoza—one of three park-lined squares in the district—and the bustling Pino Suarez open-air market, which has operated for 110 years.



CLIENTS ZIP THROUGH THE TREES ON A CANOPY TOUR.

MAP TO MAZATLAN

Mazatlan's Rafael Buelna International Airport, about 30 minutes from the city, receives nonstop flights from major U.S. hubs, including Denver, Houston, Los Angeles and Phoenix.

Rental cars are available at the airport and in the main hotel zones, and there is also a bus terminal just outside of downtown that offers connections to other parts of Sinaloa state and beyond.

Taxis operate throughout the city, although the most unique—and fun—way to get around locally is by pulmonia, a vehicle that resembles an overgrown golf cart. First introduced in the 1960s, these open-air transports offer lots of fresh ocean breezes and better views than regular taxis, since they have no windows.



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