



LOS CABOS, MEXICO

Cabo San Lucas never goes out of style. The area on the bottom tip of Baja has been attracting Hollywood celebrities and West Coast glitterati since the 1970s when the first of a long line of in-demand beach resorts first opened with the Hotel Bajo Colorado along what is now considered the Tourist Corridor.

Now dozens of sprawling properties and Los Cabo villas line the beaches from the lazy fisherman's village and tourist mecca of Cabo San Lucas to the historic art town of San Jose del Cabo. And with the explosion of development in Los Cabos has come a focus on safety for travelers going to Mexico and the building of modern infrastructure to ensure smooth travels from arrival to departure.

LOS CABOS LOCATION

Those looking for luxury villas in Mexico will find them in Los Cabos, at the bottom of the Baja Peninsula in Mexico where the Sea of Cortez meets the mighty Pacific Ocean. Los Cabos actually refers to the two towns of Cabo San Lucas, at the peninsula's point, and San Jose del Cabo, around 20 miles north along the coastline. Between the two points are continuous strands of high-end resorts, exclusive golf courses and residential developments amid seemingly endless beaches, all within in a half-hour's drive from the international airport and two hours from top California gateways.

BEACHES IN LOS CABOS

While some properties abut cliffs and crashing waves -- the Sea of Cortez, also called the Gulf of California, brings strong breakers and powerful undercurrents -- Los Cabos is otherwise known for some otherwise extremely

welcoming and swimmable beaches. Many of these have been designated “Blue Flag” beaches after passing rigorous eco-certifications based on strict environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria. Top swimmable beaches in Los Cabos include Chileno Beach, Palmilla Beach, Medano Beach, Santa Maria Beach, Lover’s Beach, La Playita Beach, and the Cannery Beaches of Coral Negro and Balconcito.

THINGS TO DO IN LOS CABOS

While a vacation in Los Cabos is mostly a laid back affair requiring a comfortable chaise and a sizable salt-rimmed frozen margarita, the destination actually brims with activities, tours and bragworthy adventures. Here is a shortened list that skims the bounty of the best things to do in Los Cabos.

- **Whale Watching in Los Cabos:** October to March, humpback whales take to the warm waters off the tip of Baja. You can watch them from your pool deck or take a tour to get up-close. You can even swim with the whales – well, rather, make that whale sharks. These little behemoths can fill more than 30 feet of length but are the gentlest of herbivores that populate the tepid waters in the Sea of Cortez from September and April. Find willing tour guides for this activity during a day trip to La Paz, an easy two-hour drive away. Afterwards, head to the malecon in La Paz for lazy shopping and café dining while gazing at the numerous islands just off the coast.
- **Take a Water Taxi or Boat** Tour at the Bottom of the Baja: Move around the famous Los Arcos or Arch at the end of the peninsula. Stop at Lovers Beach for a romantic swim.
- **Go Snorkeling or Diving at Cabo Pulmo:** The Sea of Cortez is a veritable visitable aquarium and is the only living coral reef in North America. It has an estimated age of 25,000 years. Swim with frisky sea lions at Los Islotes, north of La Paz.
- **Go Sailing/Enjoy a Sunset Cruise:** Rent a yacht and bring family and friends, or book one with a crew that will arrange everything. Enjoy dinner and a show – the slow dip of the sun below the horizon and the night full of stars that follow, watching for curious dolphins along the way. Afterwards, head to Cabos San Lucas for the swell of nightlife to be found around the marina.
- **Hop a Camel:** Go inland and explore the Baja Desert – maybe not like a local, perhaps like a nomad, on the back of a camel. Guides extol the wonders of the Baja that often go unseen by beach dwellers. And the camels, well, they bump along and snort and offer no shortage of instagrammable shooting opportunities. Outfits such as Cabo

Adventures ensure that desert thirst is quenched with a tequila tasting session and a tortilla making lesson, and beer is also included.

GOLFING IN LOS CABOS

Find some 18 golf courses, most with spectacular views and challenging scapes, many of them private but for the help of your local concierge. In Los Cabos these emerald green fairways fall away from cactus-studded foothills to rolling escarpments that meet the sea. Golfers tee it up on world-class layouts built by such design legends as Jack Nicklaus, Tom Fazio, Greg Norman and Robert Trent Jones, Jr. for bragworthy games that often come with some measure of celebrity spotting.

SHOPPING IN LOS CABOS

No beach resort in Mexico would be complete without an epic luxury shopping experience, and Cabo San Lucas is no exception for all the regular celebrity visitors it receives. Head to Puerto Paraiso Mall right on the marina in Cabo San Lucas. There you can find all the fun souvenirs, trinkets, gifts, beach fashion you seek as you then head into Luxury Avenue, which houses all the high-end designer brands such as CH Carolina Herrera, Montblanc, Salvatore Ferragamo, Pandora Jewelry, Swarovski, Yandi Morando Art Gallery, Maliparmi, ViX by Paula Hermann, Vilebrequin, Sunglass Hut, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and YSL. For a more artsy time of it, head north to the preserved colonial town of San Jose del Cabo. Walk the stone cobbled streets amid brightly hued historic buildings housing art galleries, creative notion boutiques, clothing stores and museums. Watch it all from an outdoor bistro serving colorful fruit margaritas and inventive takes on tacos.

RESTAURANTS IN LOS CABOS

Los Cabos has been at the forefront of Mexico's rise in recent years as a quintessential dining destination. Mexico's world famous traditional cuisine was officially placed on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2012 and since that time, the chefs of the Baja have been getting busy.

Among the top dining spots are Flora Farms – an organic farm compound near San Jose del Cabo that has made its name for its artful fusions in both beverages and entrees using only local ingredients. Diners eat outside near vegetable and flower gardens and can tour the prototype eco homes that are showcased there.

El Farallon is a must-do restaurant tucked into the cliffs of Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal – all overlooking the crashing Pacific Ocean. The ocean-to-

table menu bounty comes from the daily catch of local fishermen offered for selection on shaved ice displays. Experienced “entree sommeliers” assist with side dish pairings. Sips on the Champagne Terrace ahead of the meal complement the experience with a selection from 15 different Champagnes, served with a selection of moles and artisan salts.

Other restaurants to be considered: Malibu Farms at Nobu offers an exquisite menu of vegan, vegetarian and organic dishes with the taste of Mexico in a poolside café setting. In San Jose del Cabo make it Don Sanchez for inspired moles and fresh catch plates along with unusual cocktail blends in a colorful cucina setting.

Don't miss the Saturday San Jose del Cabo Mercado Organico, a carnival atmosphere of jugglers, face-painters and live folk music concerts surrounding stalls of local produce, fragrant home-crafted soaps, handmade jewelry, and delicious aguas frescas. Sample the works of food vendors selling cotilla cheese-topped sopes and warm loaves of jalapeno-and-sprouted quinoa bread.

LOS CABOS AIRPORT AND TRANSPORTATION

Los Cabos International Airport (SJD) is the primary airport for commercial flights from the US and other parts of Mexico. The international airport is around 30 miles from Cabos San Lucas and eight miles from San Jose del Cabo. There is also the Cabo San Lucas airport (CSL) that is a small airfield used by private jets and shuttles located slightly inland, around five miles from Cabos San Lucas.

Los Cabos International Airport is now a modern facility with two terminals and a customs desk that has upped its game in recent years from a two-man desk and two-hour-long line to a six-person desk and speedy 25-minute line on any given day. A no-hassle airport exit takes passengers to a room of hotel and transport kiosks and, of course, eager asks regarding transport needs. However, the hard-selling timeshare pack is now long gone and most of the inquiries travelers get are honest and even helpful. These include options for on-the-spot private VIP transportation to Los Cabos beach villas.

The airport is served by around a dozen North American airline companies. Travelers need to be cognizant of the documents handed out on the flight before landing. These need to be filled out and the torn receipt saved for the return flight to avoid unnecessary hassles.