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[Hawaii Big Isle](#)

[Hilton Head](#)

[Ixtapa - Zihuatanejo](#)

[Jamaica](#)

[Kauai, Hawaii](#)

[Las Vegas, Nevada](#)

[Manzanillo, Mexico](#)

[Maui, Hawaii](#)

[Mazatlan, Mexico](#)

[Mediterranean Cruise](#)

[New York City](#)

[Oahu, Hawaii](#)

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[Palm Springs](#)

[Puerto Vallarta,](#)

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[MAZATLAN MEXICO](#)

Known as the "Pearl of the Pacific," Mazatlan is located on the Pacific west coast of Mexico at the base of the Gulf of California, directly across from the southern most tip of Baja California. Mazatlan means "land of the deer" according to ancient Indian language. Mazatlan is rich with history. You'll find many historic Spanish and French influences though out the city. This is evident in the beautiful old downtown historic zone with its many restored colonial-style buildings that host many shops and lovely sidewalk cafes. The Spanish founded the port city in the 16th century because of its proximity to gold and silver mines. Later, Germans immigrated to Mazatlan in the 1800s and developed it into a flourishing seaport. Today Mazatlan is Mexico's largest commercial port. The city is fruitful with authentic Mexican culture and arts. The city has many monuments, statues, historic landmarks, plazas and churches.



OLD MAZATLAN CHURCH



Mazatlan is one of Mexico's most popular tourist destinations for its affordability, 10-miles of sandy white beaches, warm water, warm climate and many luxury resort hotels that line the coast north of the city. More than a million tourists a year visit Mazatlan. Most of the beach resorts are located in the

Zona Dorada (the Golden Zone). Because of the strong economic engine of the commercial port and local industry you'll find less of the typical tourist hustle. This makes for a more relaxed atmosphere for tourists.

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The Golden Zone is where you'll find most of your restaurants, bars, shopping and nightlife. The most popular tourist beaches and resorts are located here. Along the beaches you'll find excellent beachfront restaurants, cantinas and plenty of water sports activities to indulge in. The Golden Zone is located just north of Fiesta Land, a large Moorish style complex that serves as "Party Central." You'll find a lot of nightlife in and around Fiesta Land. This area comes alive every evening and is a great place to people watch. There are dance clubs, bars and various music venues. The real nightlife in Mazatlan starts very late and goes till early morning. In the Golden Zone everything is within walking distance and walking around is generally safe. If you want to venture out of the Golden Zone you can take one of the plentiful open-air cabs that are reasonably priced and dependable. These are a great way to get a personal tour around the city.



FIESTA LAND, PARTY ZONE



VALENTINO'S

The most popular nightspots in Mazatlan include Valentino's, Joe's Oyster Bar, Bora Bora, and Senor Frog's. Valentino's is the most popular disco in Mazatlan and is located at Fiesta Land. Joe's Oyster Bar is on the beach and is the most lively beach nightclub. Joe's is located beachfront at the Los Sabalos Resort near Fiesta Land. Joe's features a broad mix of music, dancing, good food, and is always a lively party spot. Bora Bora is another popular nightclub located next to Valentino's at Fiesta Land. Senor Frog's is the traditional tequila-shooting dance on the tables party spot that features live music and good Mexican food. Senor Frog's is located in the Golden Zone in front of the El Cid Resort.



JOE'S



BORA BORA



SEÑOR FROG'S

Mazatlan's Golden Zone has very calm waters that are excellent for swimming and all water sports. The beach waters get deep very gradually so you can touch bottom for quite a distance out. Calm waters are a result of a channel that is formed by several small islands less than a mile off the beach. These



islands are known as Goat Island, Deer Island and Bird Island. Deer Island has a very nice beach that faces the Mazatlan shoreline. Its easy to kayak or sail to the Deer Island Beach. Tour operators will also take you there and offer water sports activities from the Deer Island Beach.



Water sports activities are found everywhere along the beaches in the Golden Zone. Here you can rent waverunners, jet skis, kayaks, Hobie Cats, take a banana ride or go parasailing. Mazatlan is a well-known sport fishing Mecca bringing fishing enthusiasts from around the world. Mazatlan has a large sport fishing fleet, active commercial fishing fleet and has the largest shrimp fleet in Mexico. Succulent prawns are abundantly served around town. You can charter a fishing yacht in the Golden Zone at Marina El Cid or Marina Mazatlan. Charters are also available at the old harbor by the lighthouse.

The seafood restaurants in Mazatlan serve some of the best seafood you'll ever taste, fresh off the boats daily. They also serve up some of the finest steaks, prime rib and poultry dishes. Some of the finer restaurants are located in the Golden Zone, along the beaches and in the resorts. Some of the "funky" little establishments in the Golden Zone often serve some of the better seafood. You can't leave Mazatlan without trying some of the local fresh prawns or grill Pacific Lobster. Dining in Mazatlan is usually an entertaining experience as many of the restaurants offer live music.



Here are VoyageMonkey's favorite dining spots in Mazatlan:



Pancho's - Located on the beach in the heart of the Golden Zone's shopping district, Pancho's is one of our favorite beachfront dining spots. They specialize in seafood, meats and traditional Mexican. The catch is always fresh and delicious. Pancho's grill fish stuffed with shrimp and scallop wrapped in bacon is superb. The food portions and the Margaritas are generous. The service is excellent, the prices are reasonable and the atmosphere is cheerful in this nicely decorated beach grill.

Cilantro's - Cilantro's is one of the best beachfront restaurants in Mazatlan featuring quality seafood and steaks. It's located on the beach at the Pueblo Bonito Mazatlan Resort. The thatched hut palapa style dining room has a warm casual elegant feel as you watch the waves roll up on the sand below. They serve a popular grilled seafood platter for two that includes lobster, shrimp, calamari, octopus and grilled catch of the day. Cilantro's has a nice wine list



and excellent drinks. It's a romantic place for a sunset dinner. The service is excellent and the prices are moderate.



Los Arcos - We asked the locals for their favorite nice seafood restaurant with excellent seafood at reasonable prices. Los Arcos was mentioned often. Located on the main boulevard in the Golden Zone about a block north of the El Cid Resort, Los Arcos proved to live up to its reputation. The menu is fairly extensive with excellent choices of seafood dishes and meats. If your hungry the grilled fish served whole will do the trick. The spacious dining room is decorated in festive Mexican colors. The staff is friendly and provides great service. If your tired of eating on the beach and want great food at reasonable prices try Los Arcos.

The Shrimp Factory - If it's good shrimp you are craving along with a few tequilas at a casual open-air eatery, the Shrimp Factory serves awesome fresh Mazatlan shrimp prepared any way you want it. You can get a bucket of peel and eat shrimp or tasty butterfly-cut prawns grilled with garlic and melted butter. Portions are generous and the waiters are always ready to serve you. The Shrimp Factory is located in the heart of the Golden Zone's shopping district. It's our favorite casual place to stop for lunch and take a break from shopping.



La Concha - Breakfast on the beach at La Concha is always a great way to start the day. La Concha is a giant thatched palapa style restaurant on the beach at the El Cid Resort in the Golden Zone. They serve a reasonably priced traditional Mexican buffet breakfast with a make-to-order omelet station or a la carte menu. They are open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Lunch and dinner include fresh seafood, steaks and traditional Mexican dishes. The fajitas are excellent. It's a great place to catch a sunset with a few cocktails.

Other popular restaurants located on the beach in the Golden Zone include: Papagayo at the Inn at Mazatlan; Adobe's at the Costa de Oro Resort; La Costa Marinera (northern Golden Zone); Chili's Pepper (northern Golden Zone); and, Tony's on the Beach located at the northern end of the Golden Zone next to Chili's Pepper. Off the beach along the main boulevard in the Golden Zone near the El Cid Resort you'll find a few popular choices. Los Zarapes, Palapa Del Mar, Carlos & Lucia's and Casa County. Carlos & Lucia's is a small family run restaurant that serves excellent Cuban dishes along with traditional Mexican. Casa County is one of the best steak houses in Mazatlan and features entertainment. If you are going to venture into Old



PAPAGAYO

Mazatlan in the downtown area we recommend trying Pedro & Lola located on Machado Square. If you're in the downtown beach area known as Olas Altas we recommend the Olas Altas Steak House. This is said to be the best steak house in Mazatlan.

There is plenty of shopping in the Golden Zone near the resorts. Shopping around town includes modern shopping malls, open-air markets featuring crafts and unique local Mexican art. La Gran Plaza Shopping Mall in the Golden Zone includes a movie cinema and a food court. If you venture to the center of downtown you'll find the Mercado Central (central market), a one-square-block traditional Mexican market place offering everything from meats and vegetables to clothing, arts and crafts. It's a fun experience in authentic Mexican shopping.



Downtown's old historic Mazatlan is worth a visit. Have one of the open air taxi's drop you off at Machado Square and then walk the neighborhood near the cathedral, central market place and historic Angela Peralta Theater. The area has undergone much restoration of its historic colonial buildings.

Here you'll find shopping, sidewalk cafes, and beautiful architecture. The area is very nice in the evenings for a romantic stroll and dinner. Try dinner at Pedro & Lola at Machado Square.



Mazatlan has activities for every one. Mazatlan has two championship golf courses, Estrella del Mar and El Cid, designed by top course designers Robert Trent Jones and Lee Trevino. There is also a 9-hole golf course. The El Cid Golf & Country Club also has a 13-court tennis complex that is open to the public. For

the thirsty traveler, the Pacifico Brewery, one of the largest breweries in Mexico, is located in Mazatlan. Some of Mexico's most popular beers are brewed here. The brewery offers tours and beer tasting. Kids will enjoy Mazatlan's Mazagua water theme park with its water slides or visiting the Mazatlan Aquarium with its exotic sea life, many exhibits, shark tank and entertaining sea lion shows. Mazatlan's Aquarium is the largest in Mexico and includes a botanical garden. There is always plenty to do in Mazatlan. If you are not into water sports or shopping you can watch the local cliff divers, catch an authentic Bull Fight, or go horseback riding on Stone Island.



Mazatlan hosts one of the world's largest Carnival Mardi Gras celebrations in the world. This event occurs around the end of February and has been going on for over 100-years. Hoards of people are drawn to this event each year. If you intend to visit Mazatlan that time of year you will want to make reservations early as hotels tend to book up quickly. It's the next best thing to New Orleans Mardi Gras, done Mexican style.



PUEBLO BONITO EMERALD BAY

There are many great hotel choices in Mazatlan. VoyageMonkey recommends the Pueblo Bonito Resorts or the El Cid Resorts for their nice beach properties, their reciprocal resort privileges at each sister resort and convenient shuttle services. The Pueblo Bonito Resorts include Pueblo Bonito Emerald Bay and Pueblo Bonito Mazatlan. Both of the Pueblo Bonito Resorts are very nice and are VoyageMonkey's top picks. The El Cid Resorts include El Cid Castilla Beach Hotel, El Cid El Moro Beach Hotel (adjacent to each other with one connected super pool), and El Cid Marina Beach Hotel. El Cid offers an all-inclusive option that is a great deal for those wanting plenty of food and drinks. The El Cid Marina Beach Hotel is located on their private marina and includes beach access.



PUEBLO BONITO MAZATLAN



EL CID CASTILLA BEACH



EL CID MORO BEACH



EL CID MARINA BEACH

Other recommended hotels include the Inn at Mazatlan, the Royal Villas, Los Sabalos Resort, and the Costa de Oro. All are conveniently located on the beach in the Golden Zone (Zona Dorada). These are some of the best hotels in the Golden Zone.



INN AT MAZATLAN



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ROYAL VILLAS

LOS SABALOS

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