

# Los Cabos – Mexico's Tip of Luxury

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COURTESY OF LOS CABOS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Puerto Paraiso Mall, a prime location for shopping, dining, golf, fishing and more, is located in the heart of Cabo San Lucas.

**W**hen some of Mexico's wealthiest families vacation, many stay in Mexico and head for Los Cabos, which is located at the southernmost tip of the Baja Peninsula and below California. The Zen quality of the destination is being bolstered along by the area's aptly named "Leave It All Behind" ad campaign. And since the Tropic of Cancer crosses the peninsula 50 miles north of Land's End, many visitors claim to have had the best night's sleep in ages. Known as Los Cabos, the two main tourist areas are Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo, which are connected by a four-lane, 18-mile Tourist Corridor highway.

Luxury resorts overlap one another along the corridor, interspersed with championship golf courses; rental villas and pristine water views – all anchoring the two towns. Renting a car is necessary unless visitors stay close to town; otherwise, a round-trip cab ride into Cabo San Lucas averages \$40.

With water everywhere and Mexico's policy that all beaches

are public, Los Cabos has 50 golden miles of them but, surprisingly, few allow swimming, mainly due to the rough seas and rocky coastline. Don't venture into the water blindly and do bring beach shoes since the sand can range from coarse to small pebbles. Stick with favorite beaches such as Médano, which is the safest for swimming and close to beachside bars and restaurants. Chilean Bay has fewer waves, plus the public restrooms and showers are a bonus. And then there's Lover's Beach located on the Sea of Cortez side of Land's End at Cabos San Lucas. It's reached by water taxi where the remarkable rock formations out there include El Arco and others nicknamed Scooby-Doo and the Pregnant Witch. There is no fishing in the Bay of San Lucas, which is the third deepest bay in the world and where the cruise ships dock.

Baja Wild Outfitters are both tour guides and raconteurs that offer half- and full-day kayaking and snorkeling excursions that can include equipment and lunch. \$65-\$130 pp. Other tours include Jeep expeditions on back roads, surfing lessons

and even a "turtle release" program where your client can adopt a turtle. Manta Scuba Diving has a respected safety record and PADI-trained divers who offer three-tank diving expeditions to Cabo Pulmo and two-tank trips to Gordo Banks, \$175-\$235 includes transportation, food, tanks and weights; dive gear, \$25 extra.

**Baja Wild Outfitters, [www.bajawild.com](http://www.bajawild.com);  
Manta Scuba Diving, [www.caboscuba.com](http://www.caboscuba.com)**

For some vacationers, it might be worth the \$173 pp fee to tickle, pet or be pulled through the water by a dolphin at Cabo Dolphins located at the Cabo San Lucas Marina. Travel agents can book online. The 30-minute program is well supervised and all participants wear life jackets. Take home a \$25 professional photo and CDs begin at \$99 for eight shots. A kids' program is available as is a well-stocked gift shop.

**Cabo Dolphins, [www.cabodolphins.com](http://www.cabodolphins.com)**

Choosing a Los Cabos accommodation could be the hardest part of any itinerary. So many are award winning. *Condé Nast Traveler's* '2008 Gold List' named more Los Cabos hotels than any other Mexican destination: One&Only Palmilla was first with Esperanza, Las Ventanas al Paraíso, Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Holistic Retreat & Spa and Pueblo Bonito Sunset Beach included.

During a recent visit, several hotels were reviewed for *Travel World News*. Sheraton Hacienda del Mar: This Starwood property is designed in the Mexican-colonial, seaside-village style with multiple pools and lounges that face the ocean. Tomates restaurant serves an excellent buffet breakfast. All 270 spacious rooms have the luxurious Sheraton Sleeper Bed, a Jacuzzi and private balcony or patio. Now through March 31, 2009, for every night paid at a regular rate, the next night is 50% off.

**Sheraton Hacienda del Mar,  
[www.sheratonloscabos.com](http://www.sheratonloscabos.com)**

The Villa Group: Three hotels, each catering to a different clientele, make up a sprawling complex beside swimmable Médano beach and are within a 20-minute walk to downtown Los Cabos. A trolley transports guests within the complex that also has a tiny square complete with a deli and shops. Villa del Palmar is family-friendly with a fully supervised, age-specific Kids' Club and twice-weekly Kids' Nights that includes dinner. Villa Estancia is decidedly upscale, which translates to quiet, relaxing and private one-, two- and three-bedroom villas. LaTasona, the only restaurant in Los Cabos to offer Kobe beef, serves an 8 oz. Tenderloin for around \$75. Villa del Arco is the brand's deluxe, five-star, beachfront resort (also family-friendly) that includes the Desert Spa. It's the largest in Baja with 19 treatment rooms, beauty salon, pedicures with a view and couples' massages. Their Eminence products are from Hungary, but the lime-scented one is made in Mexico (\$10 for 250 ml). The 4500-square-foot gym offers \$20 day passes for non-Villa hotel guests.

**The Villa Group Resorts, 877-845-5247,  
[www.villagroupresorts.com](http://www.villagroupresorts.com)**

Esperanza – An Auberge Resort: When a property such as this 234-bed, totally refurbished gem offers a personal concierge for every guest, the rest is equally superb. The beds are luxuriously high, rose pedals float in the bathtub, valuable art and sculptures for sale decorate throughout and famous personalities often stay here. The Art Gallery shop is renown for the Mexican artists it represents; plus the hotel offers art classes for an extra charge. And the award-winning Spa is sheer heaven.

**Esperanza Resort, 866-311-2226,  
[www.esperanzaresort.com](http://www.esperanzaresort.com)**

Fiesta Americana Grand Los Cabos: Six floors (one handicapped) and 250 rooms encircle and protect this extra-large property with its five swimming pools in addition to a white-sand beach. The hotel is the grandest of the group's four properties. Treatments at the year-old spa are a cornucopia of innovative products: wine-based, chocolate, olive oil, coconut oil, avocado, lavender, hot stones, bamboo and other organic products. Golfers will like the two, on-site courses. Agents can receive a booking incentive reward up to \$50 for a three-night stay.

**Fiesta Americana, [www.fiestamericana.com](http://www.fiestamericana.com)**

Dining in Los Cabos is first-class, complete with hand towels before dinner, and a wealth of menu choices. The daring should set aside one night for Casianos in San Jose del Cabo. Chef Casiano Reyes serves a five-course, no-menu, no rules, surprise dinner focusing on Mexican gastronomy and universal trends. Food allergies are respected.

**Casianos, 866-440-0073, [www.casianos.com](http://www.casianos.com);  
Los Cabos Tourism Board,  
866-LOS-CABOS (567-2227),  
[www.visitloscabos.travel.com](http://www.visitloscabos.travel.com)**

## LOS CABOS 2009 HOTEL SPECIALS

Esperanza – "Luna del Miel Honeymoon Package" includes 4-nights deluxe accommodations in an Oceanview Casita with infinity-edge hot tub, private round-trip airport transfers, daily breakfast for 2 at El Restaurante, one dinner for 2 at El Restaurante and a 120-minute couples' spa treatment. Price is \$5,263.50; valid January 2 - June 15, 2009.

**Esperanza Resort, 866-311-2226, [www.esperanzaresort.com](http://www.esperanzaresort.com)**

Las Ventanas al Paraíso – "Runaway to Paradise" includes 3-nights in an Oceanview Junior Suite with private round-trip airport transfers, welcome margarita for 2, daily breakfast for 2, one 50-minute Swedish or Deep Tissue Massage per person, unlimited use of the Spa and Gym facilities and a complimentary Las Ventanas Air Meal upon departure. Price is \$4,909.10; valid January 2 - May 26, 2009.

**Las Ventanas, 800-ROSEWOOD (767-9663),  
[www.lasventanas.com](http://www.lasventanas.com)**