

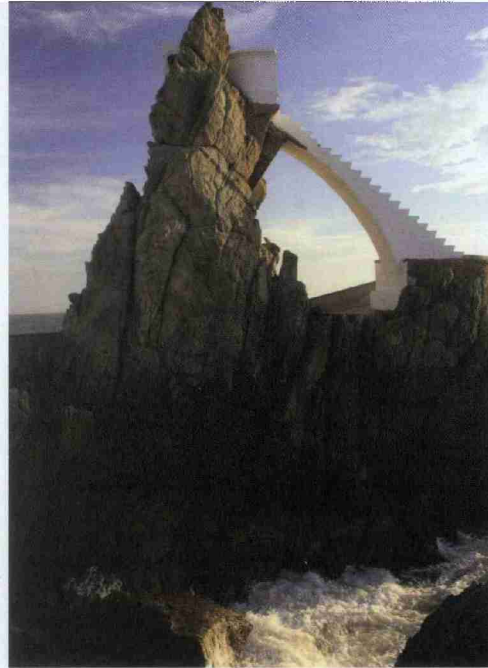
Mazatlan

The "Pearl of the Pacific" embraces its 19th century landmarks in a well-kept historic center while attracting beach-and-sun visitors with miles of beautiful shorelines. Sportfishing and golf are main draws, although foodies might know it best for its famous juicy shrimp.

Mazatlan's wealth of ancient buildings, protected as national landmarks, pepper colorful streets and house cafes, art galleries and shops throughout the city's historic center. A must-stop is the Angela Peralta Theater, a beautiful opera house built in the 1870s that offers a year-round roster of live performances, and *Plazuela Machado* for people-watching. Just a few blocks away is the famous Mazatlan boardwalk or *malecon*, which weaves alongside the Pacific shoreline and is busy with visitors day and night. A walk down this romantic boardwalk or a ride on one of the open-air *pulmonias* also reveals a number of monuments celebrating the city's homegrown Pacifico beer, fishermen life, and more. Across from the Mexican singer-actor Pedro Infante monument is **Casa Lucila**, an intimate hotel of just eight rooms that is a short walk away from the heart of the historic center.

The city's Golden Zone, just a few minutes away, is known for its swimmable beaches, clubs and affordable hotels. This is the place to stay for baseball lovers who come to enjoy Mazatlan's famous team during season, as the stadium is not far off. Farther away from the city is the ever-growing New Mazatlan, which has plenty of beachfront hotels for every budget and taste.

Mazatlan's *Carnaval*, as big as Mardi Gras and second only perhaps to Rio's, is a week-long extravaganza that combines the spirit of a great big fiesta with the region's customs and traditions via giant floats, parades and plenty of live music, entertainment and folklore. This year, the 114th edition of Carnaval takes place Feb. 16- 21.



Mazatlan offers some of the Pacific Coast's most enchanting sites.

Mexico City is one of the world's most dynamic destinations.

Mexico City

Mexico's capital, one of the world's most populated, is a seemingly unconquerable maze of modernity and tradition. Most visitors spend most of their time around *Colonia Centro*, which covers the 34-block area of the city's historic center, built on the ruins of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec empire. The entire area is a mismatch of landmarks and sites from different eras. Chief among these are the remains of the Aztecs' Templo Mayor, the breathtaking Metropolitan Cathedral—which took about 300 years to build—and the National Palace, home to the famous murals that depict the history of Mexico up to the Mexican Revolution. This is also the site of the largest square in the Americas, the Plaza de la Constitucion—also known as *El Zocalo*—a massive place with a Mexican flag flapping in its center that hosts concerts and gatherings throughout the year, including the annual *Festival de Mexico*. Here, too, are many museums covering everything from Aztec artifacts to beer.

Over in the *Bosque de Chapultepec*, the capital's largest park, is the Chapultepec Castle, the former residence of Spanish viceroys and Emperor Maximilian that now houses a museum, as well as two interconnected lakes with paddleboats. Here, you'll also find the National Museum of Anthropology and the National Museum of Modern Art, two of Mexico's finest repositories, and, spilling over into Colonia Polanco, one of the city's coolest hotels, the **Camino Real Polanco**, which has hosted dignitaries from around the world. Another necessary experience in Mexico City is a visit to Xochimilco, which has a good souvenir market and where folks line up to traverse the area's canals aboard colorful *trajineras*, with the tunes of nearby music boats floating by. Visitors will also need to step outside of the city for a day and go to the vast archaeological site of Teotihuacan, home to the iconic pyramids of the Sun and Moon.

