

## More of the Best



Traveler's Top Hotels Around the World

## Tips



How to Get the Perfect Hotel Room

The most authentic and unique hotels in Mexico, chosen by National Geographic Traveler editors for the 2011 Stay List

### Casa Natalia, San José del Cabo, Baja

Intimate off-the-beach inn facing the plaza, across from 17th-century mission. Palm trees, waterfalls. Each room with a hammock-slung terrace, where breakfasts are served. Open-flame braziers enliven pool courtyard and alfresco restaurant. Nouvelle Euro-Mexican cuisine. Shuttle to private beach club. Better yet, canoe nearby nature preserve. 16 rooms; from \$250, incl. breakfast.

### El Encanto de Cabo Pulmo, Baja California Sur

Art-centric inn with palm-thatch roofs, high-arching windows, and patios ushering the outside in; gardens boast native plants culled by owners—both with masters degrees in botany. Locally crafted furniture, whimsical sculptures. Close: Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park. 3 casitas; from \$90.

### Hotel Posada de las Minas, Mineral de Pozos, Guanajuato

Restored 19th-century mansion breathing energy into a mining village that went bust during the Mexican Revolution. Rooms showcase regional crafts. Village women cook  *típico*  meals in the rustic cantina. On premises: cactus garden. Off: historic mines, rapidly disappearing village life. 8 rooms; from \$48, incl. breakfast.

### La Casa Que Canta, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero

A reclusive cliff-dweller stair-stepping its way down to the swirling surf. Big romantic rooms (flower petal designs on bed) with terraces and balconies poised for views. No real beach (Playa La Ropa is 100 yards away). Languorous alternative resort: Infinity-edge pool mimics ocean horizon; walking the grounds is a folkloric tour of Mexico. 29 rooms; from \$392.

### Las Alamandas, Costa Alegre, Jalisco

Escapist beach fantasyland plopped down on 1,500 acres, far from madding crowd. Six radiantly painted villas ventilated by sea breeze. Additional drama comes from four-mile stretch of untouched coastline: four private beaches, bird island sanctuary, wetlands preserve. Celebrate mango-colored sunsets by releasing hatched turtles into the waves (more than 6,000 launched in 2008). 14 rooms; from \$371, incl. an hour horseback ride.

### Villa Ganz, Guadalajara, Jalisco

Urban refuge celebrates Mexico's 1930s golden era on city's hip west side. Chill spots: garden terrace, small library. Breakfasts served anytime. Antiques and crafts filling large suites are all Mexican origin. Exception: duvets from Switzerland. A hundred flickering candles romance the night. 9 rooms; from \$200.

### Hacienda San Angel, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco

Richard Burton's former abode plus three more villas, amid gardens and fountains in PV's colonial heart, overlooking cupolas of famous Guadalupe church. Tolling church bells and dreamy panoramas from rooftop whirlpool, alfresco restaurant. Rooms with regionally sourced antiques and colonial artifacts. Mariachis serenade at cocktail hour. Lots of private niches for romance; illuminated at night by hundreds of candles. 20 rooms; from \$285.

### Verana, Yelapa, Jalisco

Organic modernism in a Crusoe setting on Banderas Bay, an hour's journey south of Puerto Vallarta. Reached by boat, then 15-minute hike through jungle to your hillside roost destination. Design-conscious open-air bungalows, compost toilets, infinity pool hued to color of ocean. Candles provide most nighttime lighting. A tropical chill spot with drop-dead ocean vistas. 8 houses; from \$480 for two, incl. all meals.

### Mesón Sacristía de la Compañía, Puebla, Puebla

Petite artisanal hotel in historic student district full of clubs and bars. A generations-old family of antiques traders stitched it together: 300-year-old bathroom doors from local jail, gold-leaf detailing, wrought-iron bedsteads. Garden courtyard sanctuary; cooking classes, Bar el Confesionario (two of their margaritas and you'll confess to anything). 8 rooms; from \$118.

### Balamku Inn on the Beach, Mahahual, Quintana Roo

Simplicity on the beach in gadget-free Maya-style cabanas nestled among the palms and sea grapes. Textile art, built-in bancos (benches), windows louvered to catch the breeze. Solar and wind generation powers this low-wattage encampment: composting toilets, wetlands constructed for gray-water dispersal. Kayak offshore, then roll overboard to snorkel the reef. Lack of a dinner restaurant encourages in-town exploring. 9 rooms; from \$75.

### Copal, Tulum, Quintana Roo

Yoga-centric Maya-style thatch-hut resort, nestled among tropical flowers and coconut palms two miles from ancient Maya ruins. All natural: no phones, no electricity (except in restaurant and bar). Tip: Breezy sea-view cabanas much cooler than ones in jungle. Organic room amenities, antioxidant meals, holistic treatments in spa. Coral reef offshore. 47 cabanas; from \$30.

### Esencia, Xpu-Ha, Quintana Roo

Former beachside retreat of an Italian duchess; 50-acre estate sitting on two sweet miles of empty beach. All-white rooms. Organic spa—the first in the area—with Maya-style domed steam rooms and traditional treatments using herbs grown right there. Complimentary yoga classes. 29 rooms; from \$459, incl. breakfast.

### Casa de Sierra Nevada, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato

Nine statuesque mansions evoke colonial past with traditional arts and crafts. Hand-painted tile baths, quarry-stone fireplaces in rooms. Bolero trio serenades diners at one of two restaurants; Sazon cooking school for do-it-yourselfers. In heart of expat enclave with cobblestone streets and pealing church bells. 37 rooms; from \$248.

### Hacienda Chichen Resort & Yaxkin Spa, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán

A 16th-century corn-colored hacienda built by Spanish conquerors of stone "recycled" from Maya temples. Functioned as archaeologist accommodations in 1920s. 200-acre jungle preserve and bird refuge; a 10-minute walk to archaeological park. Maya immersion: attend "sacred" rituals, sign up for cooking classes, submit to treatments at the holistic spa. Craft boutique donates profit to Maya Foundation. Environmental policies. All in all, as green as the jungle. 28 rooms; from \$120, incl. breakfast.

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