

Get Thee to a Beach

Eight beach hideaways to make your heart skitter

Need a beach where the two of you can really get away from it all? The sort of place so far removed from typical itineraries that Starbucks wouldn't consider setting up shop there? Not that we hold anything against Starbucks or spots like Waikiki, but we were looking for secret pocket beaches, mile-long stretches of powdery sand, tucked-away waterfalls, world-class waves—essentially, spots for the perfect tryst.



KAUAI, HAWAII

Think *From Here to Eternity*, hit the refresh button and you've got **Maha'ulepu Beach**, a cosseted strip of sand on the south shore near Poipu. The dramatic coastline framed

by majestic Ha'upu Mountain is flat-out inspiring. But there's more to do here than just ogle your better half. Bring a board since there's a surf spot for advanced surfers—you may even spot a pro out for a solo practice. Post-splash, hike the Mahaulepu Heritage Trail or look for humpback whales; that moves the enchantment into 3-D territory. (poipubeach.org) —Neal Turnage



PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO

You don't have to be a royal to vacation like one. Just check in to **Esencia**, the seaside estate-turned-luxury hotel of Italian duchess Rosa d'Ferrari. A magnet for Hollywood royalty (think Gwyneth Paltrow and Uma Thurman), there is *one* standard hotel feature you'll have to do without—the bill. To ensure

guests feel as much at home as the *duchessa*, they're never presented with one. If you insist on keeping track of how many mimosas you've had, a report can be delivered to your room, but Prince Harry would likely skip it. (hotelesencia.com) —Shooka Shemirani

SAMANA, D.R.

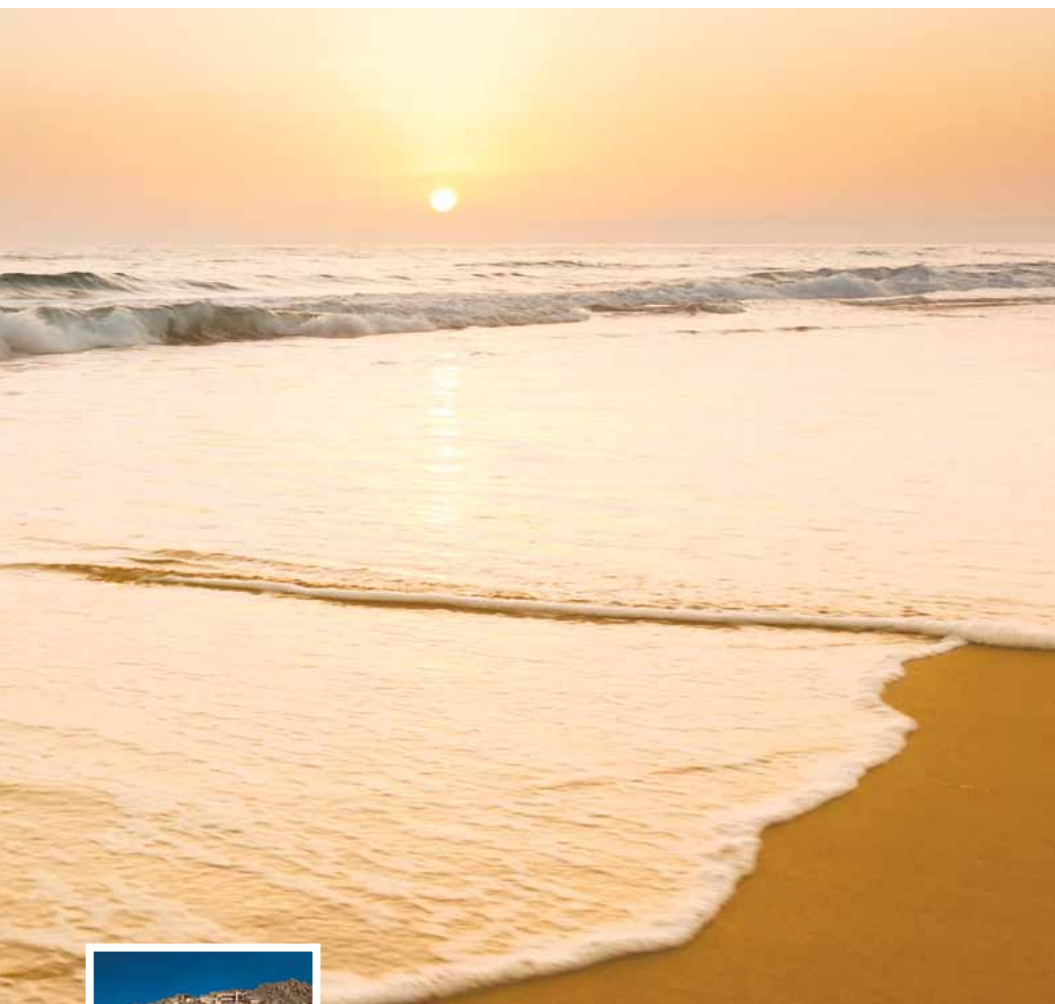
So remote is the **Playa Rincon** beach, it requires stamina and desire just to get there. First, you must get to a tiny fishing village called Las Galeras. Then you must bargain with the locals to take you on a 20-minute boat ride to this secluded spot. (You can drive, but the road is ripped with potholes and can be muddy.) Dubbed the second best beach in the world by *Conde Nast Traveler*, this enclave of milk powder-fine sand has comforts from lounge chairs and umbrellas to cocktails—not what you'd find at most inaccessible beaches. (samana.destilino.com) —Margaret Swaine



MAUI, HAWAII

The **Paani Point Treehouse Apartments** coddle the north shore of Maui, far removed from the hustle of the usual tourist traps on the western edge of the island. Enjoy the seclusion and privacy of your very own seaview paradise, relax in one of the hammocks in the tropical gardens or crank up the activity meter and jog down the steps that lead to the sea where you can windsurf, kitesurf or paddlesurf. Don't miss the hippy-chic town of Paia, just down the road, for funky restaurants and quirky boutiques. (mauiconnections.com/paani_point_tree_house) —Tez Plavenieks





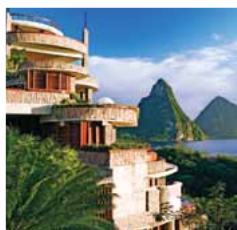
BAJA, MEXICO

Minutes from the Vegas-meets-Mexico bustle of Cabo San Lucas's downtown marina, **Capella Pedregal** has the luxe-hideaway thing all figured out. Just to get to this new 66-room resort, you drive through a gated, 300-m. torch-and chandelier-lit tunnel blasted through Pedregal Mountain. On the other side, you'll

find the bold Pacific Ocean smashing the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula, along with a personal assistant waiting just for you. Privacy, here, is a suite with a plunge pool and its own sectioned-off beach and cabana for personal oceanside dining. (capellacabo.com) —*Sarah Staples*

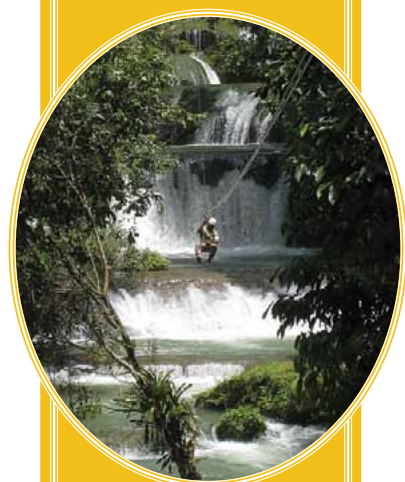
ST. LUCIA

You can spot **Jade Mountain Resort's** scalloped private pools that appear like waves carved out of a mountain from the southern town of Soufriere—but the tooth-rattler of a road to get to the place may just blot out that pretty picture. Endure the bumps and what awaits is a 29-suite jaw-dropper, worth *Esquire* magazine's award for "best place to skinny dip" in 2008. These 1,400-sq.-ft. suites, featured in the UK version of *The Bachelor*, have three solid walls, with the fourth being open air. Yes, birds can flit through your idyll as you skinny dip in your private pool. (jademountain.com) —*Deb Cummings*



JAMAICA

For a bit of barefoot bohemia far from the crowds, **Jakes** is a boutique hotel on the unspoiled southern coast, in the fishing village of Treasure Beach. Think outdoor showers and brightly painted adobe cottages in fuchsia and turquoise to red and pumpkin, with mosaic floors and coloured wine bottles inlaid into the walls and headboards. Cozy up in the private spa or oceanfront restaurant and reconnect by candlelight on the private terraces, just above Jack Sprat Beach. It's easy to see why even *Vogue* calls it "the chicest shack in the Caribbean." (jakeshotel.com) —*Lynda Sea*



Most Memorable Place to Pop the Question in Jamaica

For old-school romantics or adventure types, **YS Falls** in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, is a postcard-perfect backdrop for swoon-worthy proposals. The seven-tiered waterfalls, 40 m (120 ft.) tall, cascade down in a lush tropical setting with pools at each level. Not only can you grab a private moment by the waterfalls, but there are also pools you can jump into. To get to the waterfalls, a tractor-pulled jitney takes you from the entrance. Pack a romantic picnic and wander along walkways punctuated with bursts of colour from red ginger lilies. There are many secluded spots to pop the question here. Once the answer is yes, dive into the pools or take a canopy zipline tour 12.5 m (40 ft.) above the waterfalls. You can also swing off a rope, Tarzan-style, into the gushing waters. (ysfalls.com) —*LS*