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10 Ways to Discover Puerto Vallarta, Where Mexico Comes to Life

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If you're looking for the perfect holiday or travel destination in **Mexico**, then Puerto Vallarta is the answer to all that you seek. For families, couples, retired, students, luxury or backpackers, Puerto Vallarta has something to offer for everyone, from adventure to ecotourism, golf to fine dining, street food stalls to canopy tours in nearby rainforests and the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Forget Cabo, Cancun or Cozumel! This week, [TripAtlas.com](#) is bringing you "10 Great Ways to Discover and Experience Puerto Vallarta, Mexico." Then, you'll understand why this is the place where Mexico truly comes to life! For more on hot destinations in the Caribbean, be sure to check out our [5 Hot All Inclusive Destinations this Fall & Winter 2008-09](#).

10 Great Ways to Discover & Experience Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Overlooking Banderas Bay, rated one of the most beautiful bays in the world, **Puerto Vallarta** is where the heart and soul of Mexico comes to life – and it's where you can get the true experience of what Mexico is all about in its culinary delights, activities, nightlife, history, and more.

With more cruises than ever anchoring in Puerto Vallarta and new flights from California and Canada flying into Puerto Vallarta's Gustavo Diaz Ordaz International Airport, visiting or traveling to Puerto Vallarta in Mexico has never been easier or more accessible! Read more about [Why You Should Go on a Cruise Holiday this Winter](#) to destinations like Puerto Vallarta, the Caribbean, Europe and more!

Art Comes to Life in the Streets of Mexico

As home to over 30 art galleries in Mexico, Puerto Vallarta offers an outstanding display of local, national, and international art. In the past few years, it has become home to a cosmopolitan group of resident artists who offer everything from native indigenous art to Mexican silverware, glasswork, pottery and folk art, as well as contemporary painting and sculptures.

When walking through Puerto Vallarta's malecon, you'll see the famous 9-foot tall "Caballeo del Mar" (or The Seahorse) by Rafel Zamarripa that has been a sight for locals and visitors since 1976. Another famous sculpture is "La Nostalgia" by Ramiz Barquet, which tells the story of the sculptor's own love story of a woman that he long loved, lost and later married.

From October 2008 to May 2009, art lovers can indulge in 17 of Puerto Vallarta's finest galleries while they host special events that include discussions and cocktails with artists about their showcased work.



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Gourmet Dining and Fine Food

For a delectable culinary experience, Puerto Vallarta offers a wide array of selection: from traditional Mexican dishes to contemporary tastes from around the globe. You'll find family-owned taco stands to sophisticated top-rated restaurants, all which will appease and tease your gastronomically sensitive palette.

Every November, gourmet food lovers can experience the best culinary delicacies that Mexico has to offer at the Annual Festival Gourmet International. This year, the festival will take place from November 13 to 23, 2008 and will be its 14th year of celebration. Later in May 2009, Restaurant Week 2009 will take place where 3-course prix fixe meals are offered for up to 50% off the regular menu price.



Golfing in Mexico's Premier Golf Destination

Puerto Vallarta is quickly becoming Mexico's premier golf destinations. This resort town is home to seven world-class golf courses and has hosted a number of PGA events in the past.

Its complex and challenging 71 & 72-par courses were designed by Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf, and are perfectly complimented by the surrounding Pacific Ocean and the Sierra Madre Mountains.



Visiting the Wixarika (or Huichol Indians) in San Andres Coamihata

The Wixarika are believed to be descendants of the Aztecs and are perhaps the last indigenous group in North America to live with ancient pre-Columbian traditions. Also known as the **Huichol Indians**, they reside in San Andres Coamihata which is a remote mountain village found high in the Sierra Madre Mountains.



The Wixarika are respected by locals as knowledgeable healers using medicinal plants, as well as for their ritualistic, symbolic and celebratory practices during the harvest. Artwork and beadwork provide the Wixarika with income to preserve their community. San Andres Coamihata can be reached via a one-hour flight from the Puerto Vallarta airport.

Exciting Outdoor Adventures for Ecologists, Naturalists and Adventurers

For the best ecological and natural experiences in and around Puerto Vallarta, be sure to visit the Marietas Islands and San Blas, two spots that are surrounded by rich tropical wilderness, plants animals, fish, whales, and more.

Outdoor adventures include ATV back road tours near Puerto Vallarta, bungee jumping at the Sierra Madre Mountains, eco hikes, horseback riding through waterfalls and canyons, jeep safaris, kayaking, mountain biking, parasailing, sailing, and scuba diving and other water activities like snorkeling, surfing, wind surfing, and water or jet skiing.



If you're looking for something more natural, consider taking a Canopy Tour. The tour will take you up into the heights of the rainforests near Puerto Vallarta where you can observe and look out over the tropical forests, wildlife and daredevil your way around on zip lines.

Family Friendly Activities & Attractions

A great outdoor adventure spot, the Marietas Islands also offer activities and attractions for children and teenagers. Spotting for wildlife like turtles, dolphins, tropical fish and seabirds; along with snorkeling, scuba diving and kayaking



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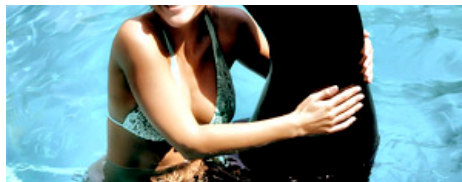
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are just a few of the things to enjoy in Mexico's Marietas Islands.

Other wildlife activities in and around Puerto Vallarta include swimming with the dolphins, meeting sea lions, whale and dolphin spotting, and more. Puerto Vallarta also offers 26 miles of beach along Banderas Bay, perfect for a relaxing day in the sun. Go karting, ATV tours, as well as water parks are also abundant in Puerto Vallarta.



Another way to bring the family together is to visit a Traditional Mexican Ranch for a day or taking part in Mexican Fiestas hosted by towns as well as many of Puerto Vallarta's hotels. You'll learn about customs, traditions, traditional Mexican foods, interact with locals, hear some mariachi, learn how to dance like the locals in Mexico, and more.

When It Gets Dark: Nightlife in Puerto Vallarta

Be warned, Puerto Vallarta is no boring place at night, nor will you find bar after bar with only mariachi bands. The city streets come alive at night with live theatre ranging from Shakespeare to Broadway; corn on the cob and marinated pork skin sold in stands on the sidewalk to sit down cozy restaurants; relaxed lounges to loud bars; mariachi and Latin Music to blues, hard rock, reggae, and pop.



Sit and relax on a patio terrace near the malecon with a margarita while you look on at passerby's and listen to the ocean waves lapping the shores near the boardwalk.

Throw Back some Tequila in Tequila

Mexico is the home of Tequila! So what better than to drink Tequila in the place it was first made and distilled? While there are many distilleries all over the Jalisco region, including in Puerto Vallarta, just a short 35-minute flight away, you'll find the authentic town of Tequila, the very heart and home of the drink.



Perfect Day & Overnight Trips to Experience More of Mexico: Guadalajara, San Sebastian, Mascota, Talpa de Allende, and Magic South

Not only is Puerto Vallarta's Banderas Bay a sight to behold and a treat to experience, but the area also offers a number of day trips or overnight tours that will take you through the surrounding sights to be had in Mexico's west coast.

Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city, is located a 5-hour bus ride from Puerto Vallarta or a short plane ride away. A great expression of Mexican culture, **Guadalajara** offers mariachi, tequila, beautiful architecture and lots of fantastic shopping for authentic Mexican arts, crafts, ceramics, jewelry, glassware, and more.

The small colonial town of **San Sebastian** with a population of 600 was first settled in 1605 in the Sierra Madre Mountains. Just a 15-min flight or a 90-min drive from Puerto Vallarta, the once silver mining village is cobble-stoned with colonial buildings and offers rich coffee and chocolate treats.

For a similar small farming town feeling, be sure to visit Mascota, where you can sit back and relax while eyeing the colonial haciendas. For small sleepy fishing villages, be sure to visit "Magic South" which includes the towns of Las Animas, Quimixto, Majahuitas, and Yelapa that all have beautiful tropical beaches.



Finally, one sight to be sure to visit is Talpa de Allende, a pilgrimage site for Christians in Mexico located 4,000 feet above sea level in the mountains. It is said that this is a sacred place where many come to visit the Virgin "Rosario of



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Talpa."

Events, Festivals & Tournaments

Besides the 14th Annual Festival Gourmet International in November 2008 to the Art Walk from October 2008 to May 2009, many other festivals and events will be taking place in Puerto Vallarta.

From November 12-15, 2008, the 53rd Annual Sailfish and Marlin Tournament will take place. Be sure to check out the 7th Vallarta Golf Cup taking place November 16-17, 2008 that attracts international golfers and will be featured on the Golf Channel. In April 2009, the 11th International Symposium of Fireworks will draw members of the pyrotechnic industry from all over the world for this competition that will light up the skies. Finally, in 2011, Puerto Vallarta is also gearing up to be co-host to the Pan American Games that will draw athletes from 42 countries in the Americas.



Viva Puerto Vallarta & Mexico!

For more information on visiting Puerto Vallarta, go to: www.visitpuertovallarta.com.

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