



SKIPPING TOWN >>

FOR THE CURIOUS AND THE ADVENTUROUS, DARE TO JOURNEY OFF THE SANDY, BEATEN PATH TO DISCOVER A NEW SIDE OF MEXICO AT THESE UNDER-THE-RADAR TOWNS, PERFECT FOR A QUICK DAY TRIP FROM POPULAR DESTINATION CITIES.
BY SUZANNE KOCH



CANCUN >> ISLA MUJERES

Cancun is filled with large resorts and a busy scene which is why it pays to escape for a day to a quieter destination. Meaning "Island of Women," Isla Mujeres is a small fishing village located just off the coast of Cancun. The island is frequented by laidback travelers, avid divers and couples. At 500 meters wide and 4.6 miles long, visitors can easily experience the entire island. Water activities include swimming with dolphins and diving among shark caves and coral reefs. Acquired by the same company that operates Xcaret, the Garrafon Natural Reef Park offers a variety of experiences from zip lining and snorkeling to kayaking and more. Other things to see include the Isla Mujeres Turtle Farm, a federally protected sea turtle protection center and Punta Sur, a natural formation of carved cliffs, enhanced by a variety of modern sculptures from international artists. The island's downtown area can be found on the north end of the island and includes Hidalgo Street, where dining and entertainment abound.

HOW TO GET THERE: Ferries regularly depart every hour from Cancun's Hotel Zone and every 30 minutes from Puerto Juarez with a travel time of 15-20 minutes. *Cancun.travel*



LOS CABOS >> TODOS SANTOS

For a less-crowded way to explore the Baja Coast, head to Todos Santos, a small town up the Pacific Coast and the perfect destination for a day trip. A short 50-minute drive from Los Cabos, the town dates back to the early 18th century when it was established as a mission and today, is made up of quaint shops, inns and art galleries. Home to some of the top surf breaks in the country like at Los Cerritos, the town also dishes up some top eats as well. For a farm-to-table experience, visit Hierbabuena or Jazamango, both inspired by the flavors of the Baja land. For film enthusiasts, The Annual Todos Santos Film Festival, taking place every spring at the Hotel California, features films from Spain, Mexico and Latin America.

HOW TO GET THERE: Los Cabos visitors can book with Transcabo, one of Los Cabos' top transportation services who offer city tours and expert guides complete with insights into the city's history and what it has to offer. transcabo.com

TIP: For some of the best fish tacos visit Taqueria El Parguito and to satisfy your ceviche craving head to Mariscos El Compa Chava.





PUERTO VALLARTA >> SAYULITA

Travel about 45 minutes north of Puerto Vallarta to find the eclectic, bohemian town of Sayulita. The colorful town is known for its great beaches, great surfing and colorful atmosphere. Ideal for any level of surfing, Sayulita's waves are at their best from December through March. Year-round shoppers can find a surplus of unique shops and boutiques full of handmade items lining the narrow cobblestone streets plus plenty of art galleries, including Galeria Tanana that's packed with indigenous Huichol art. In addition to surfing, Sayulita has plenty to keep travelers active like fishing and snorkeling. The surrounding landscape and village provides endless opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding along with local day spas and retreats. For the ultimate yoga getaway visit Haramara Retreat or Playa Escondida, the latter of which you may recognize from multiple seasons of *Bachelor In Paradise*.

HOW TO GET THERE: For a private guided tour of the town plus round-trip transportation, book a tour with Vallarta Adventures who offers fully customizable experiences with a personalized itinerary. vallarta-adventures.com

TIP: For fresh beachfront eats visit Don Pedros Restaurant & Bar, a local favorite for more than 23 years. donpedros.com

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