



Central Pacific Coast

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Best Places to Eat

- » Las Hamacas del Mayor (p531)
- » Zihuatanejo Cooking School (p545)
- » Molika (p491)
- » Red Cabbage Café (p515)
- » Rollie's (p506)

Best Places to Stay

- » Vallarta Sun Hostel (p511)
- » Quinta Erika (p549)
- » Casa del Encanto (p548)
- » Mar de Jade (p504)
- » Hotel Hacienda Flamingos (p500)

Why Go?

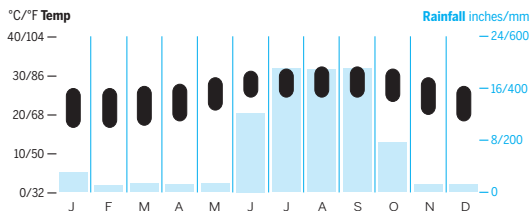
Those gigantic aquamarine waves keep rolling in, as they have forever along Mexico's central Pacific coast. It's the primal rhythm that backs any visit to this land of stunning beaches and giant sunsets.

Sit yourself down in the sand and spy humpback whales breaching on the horizon, pelicans flying in formation or a pod of dolphins rising from the waves. Surf the world-class breaks, kayak through mangrove-fringed lagoons, trade stories with expatriates in a ramshackle fishing village, or hang onto the back of a pickup packed with locals roaring inland toward the blue silhouette of the lofty Sierra Madre. Or switch into resort mode, margarita in hand and salsa blaring on the poolside sound system, at a world-class luxury hotel.

Whether you're here for a week of cushy beachfront decadence, or months of down-to-earth exploration on the cheap, the good life on Mexico's central Pacific coast means finding your own rhythm.

When to Go

Puerto Vallarta



Feb Perfect beach weather reigns everywhere, and Carnaval brings exuberant new life to Mazatlán's historic center.

Jun–Aug Surf's up and prices are down at Pacific Mexico's prime surfing destinations.

Nov–Dec Puerto Vallarta celebrates everything from sportfishing to mariachis, gay pride to the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Central Pacific Coast Highlights

- 1 Take the pulse of the new **Old Mazatlán** (p490) in its gorgeously renovated historic center
- 2 Stroll streets pungent with drying shrimp in **Mexcaltítan** (p496), thought by some to be the Aztecs' ancestral homeland
- 3 People-watch and promenade on the beautiful beachfront *malecón* (oceanfront promenade) in **Puerto Vallarta** (p508)
- 4 Surf the aggressive barrel swells in **Boca de Pascuales** (p531)
- 5 Thrill at the fearless finesse of **La Quebrada Clavdivistas** (cliff divers, p552) in Acapulco
- 6 Soak up the mellow party vibe along the surfer-happy sands and the cafe-encircled plaza in **Sayulita** (p505)
- 7 Shop for ingredients you've never heard of and learn to make the perfect *chile relleno* (chili stuffed with meat or cheese) at a cooking class in **Zihuatanejo** (p545)
- 8 Watch sunrise over the lagoon and sunset over the Pacific in **Pie de la Cuesta** (p549)

