

Mazatlan – Mexico’s Most Affordable Beach Town

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The steady breeze off the Pacific Ocean fans my face as I sit in the cool shade of the café’s awning. Across the road, on the boardwalk that runs along the shore, families and couples stroll arm-in-arm, sometimes with a dog in tow. From where I sit I can hear—but not quite see—children calling to each other as they run in and out of the low surf.

“My wife and I come here every year for six months,” says my neighbor at the next table, a

weather-beaten Canadian in Bermuda shorts and Ray-Bans. “We finally bought an apartment here in Mazatlan a few years ago. I can’t imagine going anywhere else.”

Mazatlan, on Mexico’s Pacific Coast, seems to inspire the kind of loyalty that brings people back year after year. And no wonder. To a growing number of full- and part-time expats, this city has proved the perfect blend of beach-bum comfort and urban sophistication, at a price they can afford. Mazatlan has miles of beach, a warm climate, first-rate sports fishing, and all the conveniences of home, from ample shopping choices to many English-speaking locals. It’s even easy to reach (there’s an international airport with direct flights from the U.S.).

And it remains one of Mexico’s most affordable beach towns. Here, for \$500 a month you can have your choice of rentals within an easy walk of the beach. Prefer to buy? Average prices for a two- to three-bedroom home run \$150,000 to \$200,000. I saw one hilltop home, for instance, with expansive views of the Pacific Ocean and a rooftop terrace where I could imagine sipping my morning coffee while gazing out to sea...all for well under \$200,000.

For a little more money, you can live in Mazatlan’s Old Town, a historic center filled with stately colonial homes that have been converted to chic restaurants (like the popular Pedro and Lola, on the main square), trendy shops, condos, and private residences. There’s even a renovated opera house, the wow-worthy Angela Peralta, where theatre and concerts are held.

But the word is out about Mazatlan. Just last October, *Travel + Leisure* magazine named it one of 25 up-and-coming beach resorts. Expats and snowbirds are pouring in, lured by Mazatlan’s amenities and affordable real estate.

For now, though, Mazatlan remains very reasonably priced—I recently went there to track down the best real estate deals for Mexico Insider. You’ll be amazed at what I discovered. (...)

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