

Beat the Winter Blues with an Escape to Mazatlán, Mexico

Written by: Karla Erovick

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This time of year a tropical get-away becomes more appealing every day. Try sunny Mazatlán where you can enjoy a beach holiday in a relaxing Mexican city. Alaska Airlines offers flight and hotel packages that are impossible to resist (...)

Mazatlán, appropriately named Pearl of the Pacific, boasts a tropical comfortable climate year round, perfect for the open-air taxis called “Pulmonías” to experience the charms of this Port City. Beautiful vistas abound, locals are friendly and hospitable and anxious for visitors to experience its many charms. This is one

of the easiest Mexican cities to enjoy while being relatively free from the “hustlers”. Breathing the sea air and admiring beautiful ocean views from the Pulmonías transforms transportation into a daily highlight.

The fact that Mazatlán isn’t promoted by the Mexican government like the more famous sisters – Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta, Ixtapa and Cancún makes it the perfect destination. While other cities in Mexico are better known and more tourist friendly, Mazatlán offers an authentic glimpse into Latin America’s charms. Old Mazatlán boasts beautiful restored large homes with ocean views and lovely shops, while New Mazatlán, known as the Golden Zone, provides sparkling beach-front resorts and shopping galore.



The Colonial District offers thriving restaurants and bars in painstakingly renovated colonial architecture surrounding picturesque plazas. Luxury is easy to find but so are the deals if you know where to look. Old Mazatlan features colonial architecture with rich colors and textures in tree shaded plazas. Strolling around **The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception**, are vendors selling snow cones, barbeque meats and locals enjoying the beautiful weather. The mercado has every type of produce, meats, fish and dry goods. The colors, textures, smells and sounds in the busy marketplace are overwhelming. Traditional clothing, leather sandals

in many hues, belts, handbags, fresh juices, and fresh tamales, are only a few of the items for sale.

One evening’s dinner was interrupted by the crowds dissipating from the striking, Angela Peralta Theatre which frames the ever lively **Machado Square**. They stay to enjoy the vitality of the plaza at night filling the air with voices calling out in Spanish and footsteps echoing from the cobblestones. The locals have a love of life which is manifested in their appreciation of food, music and beauty. Music is everywhere and competing to be heard: traditional mariachi strains, pop and disco music echo in the plaza. The locals are dressed more formally while the visitors are more relaxed in their clothing choices. The night is heavy with warmth and humidity, aromas of spicy food, perfume, laughter and music.

Fresh seafood is in abundance since Mazatlán is a port city. It isn't hard to find fresh fish caught that afternoon offered on the menus. At the beach-front palapas the fish vendor delivers the goods to the restaurant. You can order fish prepared any number of ways in a matter of minutes. And if you know where to go you can dine on lobster, all you can drink margaritas and soup or salad for less than a take-out meal back home. Mexican wines are surprisingly delicious so do not be afraid to try them.



A trip to Mazatlán would not be complete without participating in the Corona/Pacifico Brewery Tour. The tour guides are beautiful Latinas who take their job seriously. This is the only brewery tour that allows guests to see the entire process. The reward at the end of the tour is the tasting room with free ice-cold Pacifico and 360 degree views of Mazatlan.



For jewelry lovers, Joyeria Jewelry Yoler in Olas Altas offers an overwhelming selection of beautifully crafted stones and metal work. The prices are negotiated depending on how much is purchased. It is difficult to choose among so many beautiful original pieces of jewelry with emeralds, rubies, sapphires, coral, turquoise, topaz, opals and diamonds. Should you wish to sell your jewelry back to them in the future they are happy to oblige. They even supply certificates of authenticity.

Most people speak English, but speaking Spanish endears one to the locals and really helps getting around and asking for what you want. A quick history lesson reveals that Mazatlán was settled by German immigrants with Italian influences thrown in. Mazatlán shares a strong connection with San Francisco, having provided a staging point for overland transportation during the Gold Rush to Panama where Sea Voyages commenced. This has resulted in a Latin American city with a cultural richness.

Evening promenading along the 12-mile malecón is the best way to experience the city. Local's flank the ocean-front-walk lined with graceful statues and fountains to meet and greet and to enjoy the wonderful beaches. If dancing is more your style visit Valentino's - a series of restaurants and nightclubs conveniently located all in one complex built to resemble a sand castle.

There are more activities than one can possibly have time for in a 5-day visit. There are two nearby islands (Stone Island and Deer Island) both of which can be reached by ferry or Catamaran trip and provide ample water sport adventures, as well as horse-back riding. Pacifico and Corona Brewery and Tequila Distillery Tours are a fun way to enjoy Mexico's finest beverages and learn something at the same time. The Aquarium, while small has an amazing collection of coral, sea-lion show and aviary.



Many of the resorts would take days to explore all of the restaurants, pools and beach clubs available. Staying at El Cid properties allows use of all four resort properties with a continuous shuttle between. They also have a championship golf course and a golf and country club to keep everyone entertained. Should you tire of one pool or dining option there are more than enough to satisfy the adventurous (...)

There are so many restaurants to choose from: **Pedro y Lola** is located in Old Mazatlán with outdoor tables overlooking the plaza; they have delicious food, generous portions and great people watching. **Villa Italia**, located at one of the El Cid properties features authentic Italian cuisine and great wine selection. Try the Mexican wines they are surprisingly good. **El Paraje** is the best lobster deal in town including all you can drink margaritas, baked potato, salad or soup and large lobster tails that are nearly impossible to finish. If you are expecting ambiance and beach front location –go elsewhere and pay twice as much. **Antonio's**, located in Pueblo Bonita this is a fancy Italian restaurant and pricey but well worth it; they have entertainment most evenings.



Once you discover Mazatlan, you will return often for the sunshine, beaches, and the welcoming environment.

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