

SOUTHERN COMFORTS

MEXICO OFFERS RESPLENDENT RETREATS FOR EVERY KIND OF WINTER GETAWAY

BY JEANNE COOPER

Mexico's elegant resorts provide the gift of getaways that can warm the heart of all types of travelers. These five recently updated oases include options ideal for an invigorating wellness retreat, an all-ages vacation, cultural or culinary itineraries and a romantic idyll.

ROMANCE

BANYAN TREE MAYAKOBA

Amid a profusion of tropical greenery in Playa del Carmen, Banyan Tree Mayakoba's 118 stylish villas — with private pools, rainfall showers and outdoor soaking tubs — make the perfect couples' hideaway. Complimentary bikes in villas allow exploration of the vast, beachfront grounds. The hydrothermal experience at the Banyan Tree Spa, including an herbal steam bath, Swiss shower and warm dip pool, is another reason to venture outside villas, although in-room spa treatments are available, too.

Coming in late 2020: six overwater villas with private pools and 34 beachfront pool suites, part of a \$50 million expansion for the resort's 10th anniversary. Villas from \$619; banyantree.com/mayakoba

Guests can float along in an *Ixchel*, a traditional trajinera boat, while sampling a meal made by Banyan Tree chefs. Photo by Banyan Tree Mayakoba



Guests at Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach resort, above, can explore Mayan heritage at Chichen Itza, below. Photos by Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach

CULTURE GRAND FIESTA AMERICANA CORAL BEACH CANCUN

The length of this Cancun resort's name almost matches its wealth of lavish facilities, including an oceanfront lagoon pool, a new high-tech Coral KidZ Club, highly regarded restaurants and 602 oceanfront suites with private terraces. But guests can also delve into the area's Mayan heritage through excursions to the ancient wonders of Chichen Itza and Tulum, an immersive experience in a nearby Mayan village, and an expert-led tour of the Mayan Museum in Cancun, home to some 400 artifacts.

Afterward, relax courtesy of traditional healing practices at the 40,000-square-foot Coral Beach Gem Spa. Grand Club suites from \$463; coralbeachcancunresort.com.



FAMILY FOUR SEASONS RESORT PUNTA MITA

About an hour's drive north of Puerto Vallarta, Riviera Nayarit's landmark resort recently refreshed its 177 casita-style rooms. But it's the cornucopia of children's amenities — from a lazy-river pool to a teen hangout in shipping containers, and a churro cart — that multigenerational travelers will relish most. Adults can sample mezcal in the new Dos Catrinas restaurant, while all ages may enjoy liberating newly hatched sea turtles at sunset. From \$508; fourseasons.com/puntamita

Large families may book the neighboring, nine-bedroom Palmasola compound and enjoy a private beachfront pool, custom catering and access to all Four Seasons facilities. From \$12,250, plus meals; palmasola.net.



At Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita, families can drift together on the lazy-river pool. Photo by John Russo / Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita

WELLNESS RANCHO LA PUERTA

This 4,000-acre compound in the Valle de Guadalupe wine region, about an hour south of San Diego, debuted in 1940 as a rugged wellness camp. Now revered for its three- to seven-night fitness programs with spa treatments and vegetarian cooking classes, Rancho La Puerta recently upped its luxury quotient by adding

three handsome villas with private pools to the 83 gracious casitas. It also opened an organic juice bar (drawing from the onsite six-acre farm); designed 14-day detox retreats with juice cleanses and spa therapies; introduced mini-trampoline and aerial yoga fitness classes; and created an organic skin-care line. Seven nights from \$4,500 (\$4,000 double occupancy), including meals and spa treatment. rancholapuerta.com



Visitors to Rancho La Puerta's wellness retreat will find yoga, spa therapies, vegetarian cooking classes and more. Photo by Rancho La Puerta



Above, Montage Los Cabos provides a peaceful place to view the sunset, and dine on lobster with an ocean view, below. Photos by Montage Los Cabos

CUISINE

MONTAGE LOS CABOS

The 122 guestrooms and 52 resort-style residences of year-old Montage Los Cabos claim an enviable spot on one of the region's few swimmable beaches. Just as appetizing, though, are the resort's chic restaurants: Mezcal specializes in modern interpretations of Mexican cuisine and tastings of Tequila, agave and Mexican wines, while dramatically perched Marea showcases seafood and aged meats.

Nearby Los Tamarindos, an organic farm (lostamarindos.mx), offers cooking classes and tours year-round, while elite chefs such as Gerald Hirigoyen and Charles Phan fly in bimonthly for Montage's weekend culinary series of special dinners and get-togethers. From \$787; montagehotels.com/loscabos

