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PHOTOS COURTESY OF RANCHO LA PUERTA



# DESTINATION WELLNESS: RANCHO LA PUERTA

From the moment I stepped off the bus, I could feel the soft pulse of magic. It quickly became clear to me that something special was at work. It was as if each breath I took started to dance with this omnipresent serenity.

Rancho La Puerta feels like a dream — one with opportunity to live as your best self. Sitting on 4,000 acres in the mountains of Baja California, the intimate spa and fitness resort invites travelers on week-long journeys of self-discovery with its world-renowned programming, facilities and staff. Located an hour from San Diego in Tecate, Mexico, “The Ranch,” as frequent guests call it, offers 40 miles of hiking trails, 32 acres of landscaped gardens, an organic farm and even a cooking school, in addition to its numerous fitness centers and spas (yes, multiple). 86 private casitas, each adorned with distinct personality and unique architectural flair, make for perfect nooks to end each packed-full day.

Since its founding in 1940, The Ranch has stayed firm in its roots as a family owned and operated retreat center. Having been to a handful of retreat centers in my life, I can confidently report Rancho La Puerta is the real deal. With so many returning visitors, they even constructed permanent residences in its outskirts, so for some, the dream just never stops.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Accompanied by my mom, I’d start my mornings with the sun. As early as 6 a.m., a handful of colorful options line the daily schedule by the hour. The true treasure is the Organic Breakfast Garden Hike; no matter your skill level, this excursion may be the most memorable part of your Ranch experience. Signing up in advance is required, and it includes a sustainability tour of the garden with farmers who’ve worked on the land for decades.

Throughout their stay, guests at The Ranch are invited to choose their own adventure. A wellness concierge can help you plan your days exactly as you envisioned

them, or you can take a more laidback approach. Most classes are first-come, first-serve, but as The Ranch sees anywhere from 150 to 200 people a week, it’s best to arrive on time. The pool areas and plentiful spa treatments are always available during down time — and some may argue are just as important as the scheduled activities for a true retreat experience.

The instructors are truly the best in their field, sharing everything from Pilates, yoga and weight training to guided hikes, meditation, pickleball, water jogging, tai chi and so much more. Presentations on topics like breathwork and mental resilience frequent the schedule. Each week at The Ranch often revolves around a certain theme, like sound bathing or Gyrokinesis, a form of yoga that increases spinal mobility.

The dining hall serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, and there are snack breaks in between. The food at The Ranch deserves a glowing review on its own; it’s what elevates the experience to be a complete mind, body and spirit rejuvenation. The fresh and delicious meals are served buffet-style except for dinner, where you have the option to sit with other guests to instill community. Some people may choose to partake in a silent meal, where mental stamina is really put to the test. All dietary preferences are accommodated; as a vegan myself, I felt completely taken care of.

Inspired by the quality of the cuisine, I enrolled in a cooking class and admit it was worth the added ticket price. A traveling chef shares specially crafted recipes in the world-class cooking facility, and the lessons I learned about preparing food still inspire me in my home kitchen over half a year later. The Ranch is all about bringing your experience home, and it’s what really makes the investment worthwhile.

## BOOK THE RANCH

What started as a grassroots wellness camp over 80 years ago has become the go-to destination for a modern fitness retreat. As a luxury wellness destination, Rancho La



Weeks later, sitting in my noisy, I-25-facing Denver apartment, I got a notification that a letter arrived — one I wrote to myself my last day at The Ranch:

*“I choose balance,  
I will be balanced, I am balanced.*

*I prioritize my health and wellness,  
so I can share my gifts with the world.*

*I have all the tools to make  
this happen.”*

Puerta is truly an investment in your health. While it’s recommended to check in on Saturday and stay for the week, three- and four-night stays are also available to book.

The property is colorful, beautiful, authentic — and massive. Be sure to go to the beginner’s orientation to learn the lay of the incredibly bountiful land. Take the time to explore The Ranch and listen to its soft, but powerful messages. Embrace the Wi-Fi-free zone (if you really need connection, the main lounge has access). It genuinely feels like a once in a lifetime experience that never stops giving and inspiring. +

[rancholapuerta.com](http://rancholapuerta.com)



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