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'WHAT HAVE I GOT TO BE AFRAID OF?'

MICHELLE YEOH



Style

Travel

Go to Cabo and 'Switch Off'

Los Cabos is more appealing than ever with the arrival of new resorts that entice guests to never leave the property: 'Mexican hospitality is just off the charts' *By Ramona Saviss*

Thanks to a spate of new properties, Hollywood-beloved getaway spot Los Cabos is bigger and better than ever before. "Cabo continues to reinvent itself," says Smartflyer travel consultant **Kara Slater**, adding that her L.A. clients love the sunny Mexican hotspot — anchored by the towns of San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas — for its "stunning views of the sea meeting the mountains, reliable hospitality and unparalleled culinary offerings."

WHERE TO STAY Cabo's luxury additions include Zadún, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve (rooms from \$1,499 a night), just east of San Jose del Cabo. The biggest draw at the contemporary resort — one of only five Reserve properties in the Ritz-Carlton portfolio — is its 115 ultra-private, freestanding rooms, suites and villas. These indoor-outdoor havens offer dramatic views of the Sea of Cortez and the Puerto Los Cabos coastline. The property stands out with distinctive amenities including the 30,000-square-foot Spa Alkemia, which has a Savasana room where sound therapy and a vibrational floor combine to provide guests with a unique meditation practice.

Cabo also has expanded further into Baja's East Cape with the ongoing development of Costa Palmas, a 1,000-acre destination (about an hour-and-15-minute drive north from

San Jose del Cabo). Spearheaded by L.A.-based developers Irongate, the resort and residential community — where CAA's **Bryan Lourd** has been spotted vacationing — includes 2 miles of swimmable beach and the Four Seasons Costa Palmas (from \$1,235), which opened in late 2019 and includes a Mexico outpost of famed NYC restaurant Estiatorio Milos. Many Angelenos have bought second or third homes there, according to luxury travel adviser **Michael Torbiak** of Genuine Access. There's even a new harbor with a marina village featuring Mozza Baja at Costa Palmas — chef **Nancy Silverton**'s first venture in Mexico. In 2024, Aman Resorts' highly anticipated Amanvari property is slated to debut there, and a Costa Palmas private airport is in the works.

"If they weren't flying private pre-COVID, they are now," says lifestyle and travel guru **Jaclyn Sienna India**, founder of Sienna Charles membership club, of her clients (who include former President **George W. Bush**, studio titans and major producers). Of the destination's appeal, she says, "Cabo was always huge with the L.A. market, but it became even bigger in the last year and a half. The pandemic has really made people value [traveling] far away, but close."

Adds Torbiak, "You're going to Cabo because you want the comfort and safety of feeling



like you're in Hawaii, but it's a shorter flight. You go there and switch off, you don't have to leave your resort." Many resorts in Cabo are known for their personal concierge and butler services. "Mexican hospitality is just off the charts," says Torbiak.

And, as though one Four Seasons resort weren't enough, there's another slated to open in 2023. Four Seasons Cabo Del Sol, located between Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo, is in development within the exclusive Cove Club, a 500-acre private club and community. The project will have hotel rooms as well as villas and residences, which will range between \$4.8 million and \$15 million.

Another newer kid on the block is Nobu's first hotel in Mexico, Nobu Hotel Los Cabos (from \$321). Only 20 minutes from downtown Cabo San Lucas, it opened in late 2019 just before the pandemic. The hotel includes an outpost of Malibu Farm and a Nobu restaurant, so Angelenos will feel like they're home — minus the PCH traffic.

These newer hotels join luxe Cabo favorites including serene Las Ventanas al Paraíso (which celebrates its 25th anniversary in July and has added a speakeasy piano bar, La Botica), Auberge Resorts' Esperanza, One & Only Palmilla (where **Jennifer Aniston**, **Ashton Kutcher** and **Eva Longoria** have vacationed) and the Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal.



The Mozza Caprese salad at Mozza Baja.



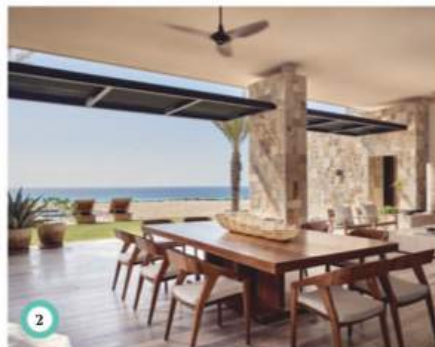
A tequila and culinary pairing at Clase Azul's tasting room.



A traditional temazcal hut, similar to a sweat lodge, at One & Only Palmilla resort.



1 & 2 The spa pool at Zadún, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, and the property's 2,900-square-foot, two-story Grand Reserve Villa, which includes up to five bedrooms, an outdoor shower and private plunge pools (from \$10,282 a night).
3 An outdoor lounge at Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas
4 Dining spots at Nobu Hotel Los Cabos.



WHERE TO EAT The area continues to up its game on the culinary front. Farm-to-table fare is common at most high-end resorts, like at the picturesque Arbol at Las Ventanas or award-winning chef **Enrique Olvera's** Manta at The Cape, a Thompson Hotel. Restaurants worth venturing off resort for include Flora Farms (where **Adam Levine** and **Behati Prinsloo** tied the knot); the bustling Office on the Beach; chef **Thomas Keller's** favorite taco spot, La Lupita; and Acre Baja, located on a tree-house-only resort, where chef **Larbi Dahrouc** gets ingredients from the on-site garden.

Following a partnership last year with chef **Dominique Crenn**, Montage Los Cabos — which boasts one of Cabo's few swimmable beaches — will debut a new dinner series in 2022 with a spotlight in June on Mexican chefs (including **Javier Plascencia** of Tijuana's Misión 19) and a later installment that will see the return of Crenn to the property. Similarly, Auberge Resort's Chileno Bay, which includes a private 18-hole golf course, regularly brings in culinary talent for its monthly Taste of Auberge: Baja Lab Kitchen, which kicked off this year. The event's tasting menus are prepared for one-night-only dinners by world-renowned chefs like **Virgilio Martínez** of Peru's Central (fourth on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list).

And in 2021, tequila brand Clase Azul unveiled an invite-only dining experience at

its A Taste of Culture experience (located in The Shoppes at Palmilla), where rare pours are paired with delectable eats (\$300 a person).

WHAT TO DO Slater, who is married to WME partner **Brad Slater**, recently helped plan a trip for a top talent agent who wanted to take a small group of friends away for a long weekend. "The convenience of a quick flight from L.A. along with something spiritual and unique to add into the mix was the request. A shaman fit the bill," Slater says. The One & Only Palmilla's Temazcal Ritual (starts at \$410) was her solution. The stunning property's iconic spa features a traditional temazcal hut where the resort's dedicated shaman leads groups in the ancient Mayan ceremony with drumming, chanting and intense perspiring. Slater's other option for her clients was at Chileno Bay, which has a shaman-led spiritual cleanse called Boca de la Sierra (\$1,500).

HOW TO FLY Beginning in November 2021, semi-private luxury jet service Aero, popular with everyone from **Emma Roberts** to **Diplo**, began touching down in Los Cabos from Van Nuys Airport. Service on the shared 16-seater planes (\$1,950 one way) includes wines and cocktails curated by Wally's Wines and Catch LA. And Cabo's Waldorf Astoria has teamed with SoCal-based Schubach Aviation to offer guest packages (from \$25,896) that include a weeklong stay in a two-bedroom villa and round-trip private jet flights (for four to eight people) into Cabo from anywhere in the U.S.

"There are so many different properties to choose from depending on what kind of experience you're looking for — maybe you go and celebrate an anniversary at Las Ventanas, but then you take your kids on spring break to One & Only because there's a swimmable beach there," says Torbiak. "It's just that ease and the variety — there are so many different places to try that you'll never get sick of Cabo." **VIA**

All Around Mexico: 5 New Resorts to Check Out

Étéreo, Auberge Resorts Collection, Riviera Maya

With a name that means ethereal and a Mayan life-cycle motif woven into the interior design, this luxury resort within Riviera Maya's new Kanai development puts a focus on open-air experiences, spa treatments and dining that embraces the culture of the Yucatan Peninsula; from \$1,299 a night, aubergeresorts.com/etero

Casona Sforza, Puerto Escondido

Designed by famed Mexican architect **Alberto Kalach** with asymmetric arched vaults, this independent boutique hotel in a Oaxacan surf town is sun-washed and sand-hued. It features locally made decor and seasonal cuisine, plus private yoga classes; from \$320, casonasforza.com

Playa Viva, Zihuatanejo

When sustainable and eco-friendly aren't enough, there's truly regenerative travel, like this high-end, off-the-grid resort that practices permaculture (a holistic approach to land management), grows cacao on site and claims a pristine mile-long beach, a sea turtle sanctuary and an Aztec archaeological site. A recent expansion added seven oceanfront bamboo tree houses; from \$630 (meals, ground transportation and daily yoga included, double occupancy), playaviva.com

Four Seasons Resort Tamarindo, Costalegre, Jalisco

The fourth Four Seasons due to open in Mexico is a lush beachfront escape on 3,000 acres of jungle, where on-site biologists are rewilding the ecosystem. Reservations go live in July; from \$1,550, fourseasons.com/tamarindo

Susurros del Corazón, Auberge Resorts Collection, Punta de Mita

Located on the pristine Riviera Nayarit, this breezy 59-room boutique resort (soft opening in April) features three scalloped pools, four culinary concepts and an 11-room spa, where local Huichol heritage and healing inspire the treatments; from \$900, aubergeresorts.com/susurros — KATHRYN ROMEYN



An oceanfront bamboo tree house (from \$630 a night) at Playa Viva in Zihuatanejo.