



ELITE MEXICO EXPERIENCES

GOING FOR THE GREEN: THE BEST OF GOLFING MEXICO

With all that sun, sand and surf—not to mention premier hotels, spas, restaurants and resorts—a luxury vacation experience in Mexico is just par for the course. And when you add in some of the world's best course designs, developed by the likes of von Hagge, Smelek & Baril, Tom Fazio and Jack Nicklaus, you're guaranteed to enjoy the elite golf experience of a lifetime. Consider this your guide to Mexico's finest greens.



www.visitmexico.com



CABO REAL / CABO SAN LUCAS

Over 700,000 golf enthusiasts flock to Mexico each year to take a swing at one of its many world-class courses. With 212 golf resorts currently in operation, and another 30 under construction now, there's never been a better time to tee off in Mexico.

Here, perfectly manicured and maintained courses collide with the nation's stunning natural features, from the Sea of Cortez's shimmering waves to the dense palm forests and rolling hills further inland. World Champion pro golfer and Mexican icon **Lorena Ochoa** sums up the appeal perfectly: "In addition to magnificent golf courses, [Mexico] has an immensely rich cultural heritage and natural attractions well-appreciated by golfers and all its visitors." While you'll find these great greens all across the country, three key areas for golfers are **Puerto Vallarta**, **Los Cabos** and the **Riviera Maya** region, Cancun in particular. You're sure to find the courses below, all designed by some of the golf world's top talent, up to par—and then some.

PUERTO VALLARTA

Thanks to the establishment of seven world-class courses, **Puerto Vallarta** enjoys a reputation as Mexico's premier golfing destination. Visitors can play like the pros while enjoying a range of fantastic views, from lush jungle settings to shimmering oceanside holes.

Conveniently located near the Puerto Vallarta International airport is a complex of great golf at **Vista Vallarta**, which features courses designed by legends like Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf. Nicklaus' cre-

ation was the site of the **2000 World Cup** while the Weiskopf-designed green is considered by many to be the best 36-hole complex in Mexico (www.vistavallartagolf.com).

Puerto Vallarta's newest green, **El Tigre at Paradise Village**, is already considered one of the region's best. It's also the most aptly named: Director of Golf Jesus Carmona actually keeps his own tiger cubs here. With 18 holes spread over 7,239 yards, the course consists of a total of eight bodies of water and was designed to be Mexico's most exciting place to play (www.paradisevillagegolf.com).

LOS CABOS

There's something for everyone in this red-hot vacation spot: You can party until dawn in one of the fabulous beachfront resorts, or you can wake up early to start a great day of golf.

Built in 1993 by Robert Trent Jones Jr., Cabo Real is an 18-hole, 7,037-yard course that has been home to a host of prestigious tournaments, including two **PGA Senior Slams**. Widely considered to have the toughest front nine of golf in Los Cabos, the course's popularity surged to new heights following the 1996 Senior Slam, when cameras captured the magnificent sight of whales breaching in the background as pros played its three oceanfront holes (www.caboreal.com).

Award-winning architect Tom Fazio is responsible for the design of **Querencia**, a private golf club in Los Cabos. Each one of the 18 holes



EL CAMALEÓN MAYAKOBA / RIVIERA MAYA

boasts spectacular views for games that are as enjoyable as they are challenging. With an onsite spa, beach club, pool and tennis facilities, even nongolfers will be kept entertained all day long (www.loscabosquerencia.com).

Also based in Los Cabos is the **Palmilla Golf Club**, a mainstay on lists of the best golf courses both within Mexico and throughout the continent. The first Jack Nicklaus-designed green in Latin America, this challenging 27-hole course offers staggering glimpses of the Sea of Cortez at every stop (www.palmillagc.com).

RIVIERA MAYA

Famous for drawing a crowd with its bounty of beautiful resorts, this region has become increasingly popular with the golfing set over the past few years—so much so that **Cancun** was recently named the most popular golf destination in Mexico. While international press coverage from major tournaments like the PGA's **Mayakoba Classic** and the **Canadian Professional Golf Tour** has certainly helped bring new visitors to the area, it's the abundance of fantastic, near-flawless courses that keeps golfers coming back each year.

To golf enthusiasts, Greg Norman's El Camaleón Mayakoba is more than just a course—it's a work of art. Located on the luxurious **Fairmont Mayakoba** resort, this stunning par-72 green boasts a landscape that's ever-changing—from dense mangroves and lagoons to seaside stretches of sand—paying homage to its namesake lizard. (www.mayakobagolf.com).

Another resort offering gorgeous golf facilities is the Hilton Cancun Golf & Spa Resort, where you'll tee off at holes bordering the ancient ruins of El Rey (www.hiltoncancun.com).

The Jack Nicklaus-designed Cozumel Country Club is the island's first-ever golf course, taking five years to reach completion. Suitable for both seasoned players and those who are new to the game, this green weaves through Mayan jungle, saltwater marshland and tropical rainforest for the ultimate golf excursion (www.cozumelcountryclub.com.mx).

TOP TOURNAMENTS

It's no wonder Mexico has played host to so many of Hollywood's heavyweights. With its perfect weather, selection of five-star accommodations and active nightlife, Mexico is the ideal destination for VIPs looking to relax and unwind. Add in world-class golf courses, and you've got the formula for the ultimate celebrity golf tournament. Case in point: The star-studded 2009 **Puerto Los Cabos World Cup and Celebrity Golf Tournament**. Attendees like former Atlanta Braves All Star (and hall of famer) Dave Justice were clearly impressed by the caliber of the courses. "[It] was the place to be, all of the golf courses are fantastic," said Justice of his experience in Los Cabos, before encouraging fans to "come on down and see for yourself."

For more on golf in Mexico, visit Chuck Kinder's www.golfinmexico.net. To plan your elite golf experience in Mexico, check out www.visitmexico.com.



EL PARAISO / TAMAULIPAS

COURSES TO COME

Get ready for the next wave of bar-raising greens from some of the world's best course designers—all of which are already under construction across Mexico.

PUNTA BRAVA / TIGER WOODS

Where | Bay of Todos Santos, near Ensenada

When | Expected mid-2010

Why | They say the third time's the charm, and Punta Brava—course number three from golf's greatest icon—is no exception. Holes 16 to 18 will be situated along the Pacific Ocean, making for a memorable finish to every game.

www.puntabrava.com

CAMPECHE PLAYA / JACK NICKLAUS

Where | Campeche, Yucatan Peninsula

When | TBD

Why | Touted as the first eco-friendly golf course in Latin America, this eye-popping par-72 course bears Jack Nicklaus' Signature stamp.

www.campecheplaya.com

EL PARAISO / VON HAGGE, SMELEK & BARIL

Where | Barra del Tordo, Tamaulipas

When | Expected fall 2010

Why | Consistently named one of Mexico's best course architects, this trio creates courses that are as beautiful as they are challenging. Located on a luxury retreat overlooking the San Rafael river, this par-72 course is sure to draw a crowd.

www.elparaiso.com.mx

BAY VIEW GRAND / GREG NORMAN

Where | Bajamar, Ensenada

When | Early 2010

Why | World-famous Aussie golf pro Greg Norman is designing the onsite 18-hole championship golf course for this buzzworthy new property, located along the breathtaking Baja coastline.

www.lapuntabvg.com.mx



QUERENCIA / LOS CABOS

WHAT CELEBS ARE SAYING

"Mayakoba is truly a special place, and I am thrilled that it will be showcased to the world with the first-ever PGA Tour event in Mexico. With three distinct landscapes and a commitment to preserving the delicate ecosystem of the Yucatan, there is uniqueness to each hole. I am also very excited to be starting our next Mexican course in Litibu." - Greg Norman

"Until now, golf projects in Mexico have mainly targeted tourism. But, players like Lorena Ochoa are bringing more awareness to the game. This coupled with an incredible inventory of landscapes and impressive resources mean Mexico is poised for a rich golfing future." - Rick Baril; von Hagge, Smelek & Baril

"In addition to magnificent golf courses, [Mexico] has an immensely rich cultural heritage, and natural attractions well-appreciated by golfers and all its visitors." - Lorena Ochoa

"We have been fortunate to design some wonderful golf courses in Mexico, and one of the chief reasons for that is that it's such a beautiful country, with lots of ruggedness but also lots of softness. And just as important, we've formed a lot of close relationships down there that have grown over the years and will only continue to strengthen in the coming years. I really couldn't be happier with the way things have panned out in Mexico." - Jack Nicklaus

"Once I experienced this land, I knew it was an extraordinary setting for world-class golf." - Tom Fazio

"As soon as I got on site, I was in. We tried to incorporate the viewscapes and rock formations to make sure that you felt like you were part of this amazing peninsula the entire time you play." - Tiger Woods on Punta Brava

ELITE SLEEPS

When you're looking to get the most out of tee time, the ultra-luxurious accommodations below will ensure that you get a great night's sleep before taking to the green for a great day of golf. With world-class facilities onsite—many designed by the pros themselves—you can channel your inner Nicklaus or Norman with every swing.



ONE&ONLY PALMILLA

Blending Mexican traditions with modern amenities, the rooms and suites at this luxurious resort are both elegant and inviting. After enjoying a day on the world-renowned greens of the Palmilla Golf Club, unwind by one of the beach-facing infinity-edge pools, stop in at the spa or take part in a yoga session—they even offer a special “Qi of Golf” class to improve your game.

Carretera Transpeninsular, Km 7.5, San Jose del Cabo; 52-624-146-7000; www.oneandonlyresorts.com



FOUR SEASONS PUNTA MITA

Featuring the 81-acre, Jack Nicklaus-designed Pacifico golf course, and located just an hour from golfing hotspot Puerto Vallarta, Four Seasons Punta Mita is a golfer's dream. You'll savor the beautiful Punta Mita peninsula landscape, whether you're taking it in on the green or enjoying the view from the comfort of your room or suite—all of the resort's accommodations face the ocean.

Punta Mita, Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit; 52-329-291-6000; www.fourseasons.com/puntamita



FAIRMONT MAYAKOBA RIVIERA MAYA

While golf-loving guests may come for the neighboring Fairmont-managed El Camaleon course, they stay for the amazing amenities offered at this luxurious resort: From the world-class, 20,00-square foot Willow Stream spa to the selection of mouth-watering fine dining establishments, the Fairmont Mayakoba has something to offer every guest.

Playa del Carmen Km. 298, Playa del Carmen, Solidaridad; 52-984-206-3000; www.fairmont.com/mayakoba

ELITE SLEEPS



HILTON CANCUN GOLF & SPA RESORT

With a beautiful—and challenging—par-72 golf course located right onsite, this stunning resort is the ideal getaway for golf enthusiasts. Non-golfers will also find plenty to keep them occupied: A full-service spa complete with boutique and beauty salon, five restaurants, sightseeing tours and breathtaking beaches, for starters.

Boulevard Kukulcan, Km. 17, Cancun; 52-998-881-8000; www.hilton.com



MOON PALACE GOLF & SPA RESORT

This breathtaking resort offers a top-of-the-line Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course and a world-class full spa to match. Rooms are just as opulent—not to mention romantic: With private balconies and two-person Jacuzzis, the accommodations at Moon Palace were made for an intimate rendez-vous à deux.

Carretera Cancun-Chetumal Km. 340, Cancun; 52-998-881-6000; www.palaceresorts.com



FAIRMONT ACAPULCO PRINCESS

No list of Mexico's top golf-oriented accommodations would be complete without mention of this luxury resort, which just underwent a \$30 million renovation. When you're not taking in the exquisite accommodations, swimming in one of the five pools or strolling the lush gardens, take in a game at the exclusive on-site Turtle Dunes Country Club.

Playa Revolcadero, Acapulco; 52-744-469-1000; www.fairmont.com/acapulco