

You've already met a few of the brilliant designers (p. 38) and upstart entrepreneurs (p. 44) who are tapping into Mexico's groundswell of creative energy. Just as compelling are the chefs, architects, and distillers paying homage to their country's past while fueling its modern day cultural renaissance. Here's how to take it all in (and still make time for a few siestas at the beach).

52
WHERE TO
STAY

58
WHERE TO
EAT

60
WHERE TO
DRINK

MEXICO



Inn Style

Whether it's a secluded ocean-view stay or a charming bed and breakfast in the bustling capital, Mexico's 10 best hotels blend distinctly individual design with impeccable hospitality.

La Valise Hotel

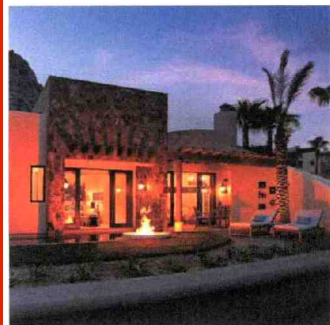
MEXICO CITY

At this tiny urban oasis, there are three spacious suites—one on each floor. On La Terraza, the top level, the bed rolls onto the rooftop deck so you can stargaze.

From \$290; this page and at right

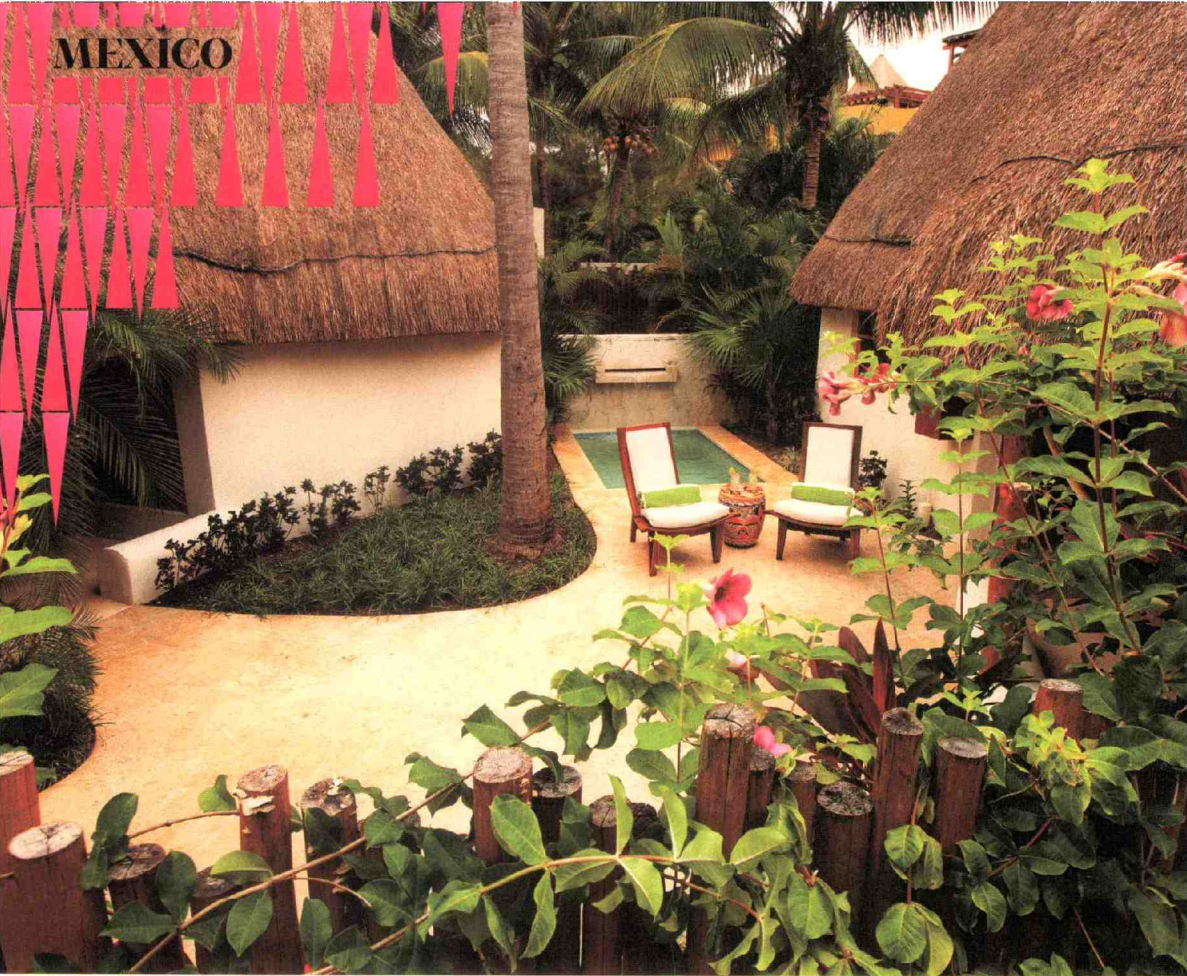
**CHAYA BED AND
BREAKFAST
MEXICO CITY**

Begin each morning at this trendy downtown B&B with traditional Mexican cuisine and views of Alameda Park. *From \$80; below and right*



**THE RESORT AT
PEDREGAL
CABO SAN LUCAS**

Carved into the cliffs, these luxe digs offer everything from personalized concierge service to cooking classes. On the ocean-front champagne terrace, sample 15 types of bubbly. *From \$600; above*

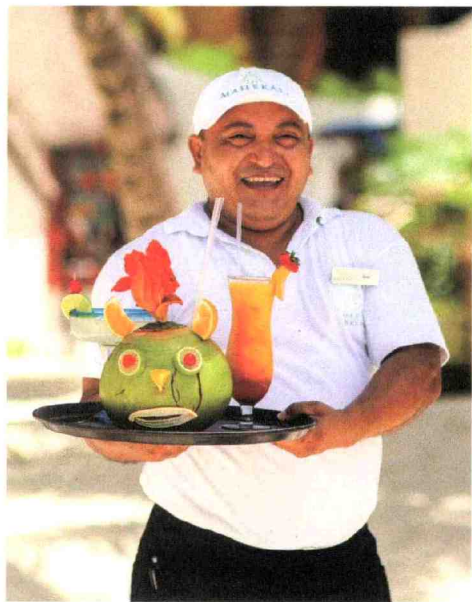


Mahekal Beach Resort

PLAYA DEL CARMEN

Palapa-style beach houses put you just 10 steps from crystal-clear waters and total bliss.

From \$200; this page



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MAHEKAL BEACH RESORT



**ESPERANZA
CABO SAN LUCAS**

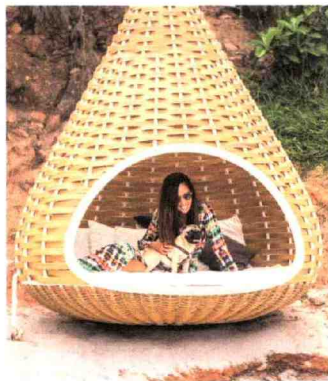
The area's only private beach resort sits on 17 acres and is minutes from five celebrated golf courses. The two-tiered infinity pool overlooks the Sea of Cortez. *From \$590; above*

**LAS ALCOBAS
MEXICO CITY**

In the upscale Polanco shopping district, settle into a chic multi-bedroom suite and indulge in the custom five-fixture shower. *From \$280*

**ZAMAS HOTEL
TULUM**

No matter where your room is—in the coconut grove, on the beach, or next to the jungle—there's no beating the views at this romantic getaway. Also top-notch: the on-site dive shop. *From \$150*



**FOUR SEASONS
RESORT PUNTA MITA
PUERTO VALLARTA**

The infinity pool at this five-star stay offers the area's most alluring views, and kids will delight in the tropical lazy river. Pets are also welcome to lap up the luxury. *From \$500; above*

**VERANA
PUERTO VALLARTA**

After you catch a private boat to reach this secluded hotel, mules carry your luggage on the 10-minute hike through lush jungle to one of the 10 individual houses. *From \$260*



**AZULIK HOTEL
& MAYA SPA
TULUM**

Unplug at this eco-friendly escape south of Cancun. The 39 treehouse suites don't have electricity, but comfort abounds. Schedule time at the spa, which incorporates ancient Mayan techniques. *From \$500; above*



The Secret Beaches of Cancun

If you're not paying attention, you'll miss the turnoff to **SOLIMAN BAY**. Right after kilometer 241 on Highway 307 between Tulum and Akumal, look for the mile-long gravel road marked with iguana crossing signs. You'll have to dodge a handful of potholes, but your reward is a glittering cove with timid waves and sugar-white sand. Between snorkel trips to the ocean (there are patches of coral where tropical fish come to feed), you can dine at the toes-in-the-sand Chamico's restaurant (lunch for two, \$20). Wash down guacamole and whole fried fish with spicy *micheladas*, beers mixed with lime juice and hot sauce, and then retreat to the siesta-enticing hammocks.

Adventurers will want to sign up for guided boating trips through **SIAN KA'AN**, a 1.3 million-acre ecological reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site, with UnikGo (from \$149 a person). Along with spotting manatees and Mayan ruins, you'll jet to a beach where river waters meet the Caribbean. As you walk along the pristine sands, keep an eye out for pelicans diving for fish.

If you're looking for white-glove service on the water, head south of Playa del Carmen to **XPU-HA BEACH** (above), anchored by the plush Hotel Esencia. A day pass to the empty shoreline (there isn't another hotel in sight) is \$100, which can be put toward food and drinks like avocado fries, ceviche, and margaritas made with Casa Dragones tequila.

—Stirling Kelsou