



Forget Cancun: 2019's big beach break is all about Los Cabos

Los Cabos has become a magnet for luxury hotel openings, with the launch of the first direct flight from London bringing in a new era of popularity for this lonely little corner of Mexican paradise



BY [ELEANOR HALLS](#)

Follow her on Twitter [@eleanorhalls1](#)

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This month, the first direct flight will connect London Gatwick and Los Cabos, Mexico, via Tui Airlines. Until now, it has been a go-to for US holidayers, but too much of a slog for Europeans, who take one look at a five-hour layover in [Mexico City](#) and book the [Seychelles](#) instead. Los Cabos' tourism boom has been a long time coming – set back by the area's deadly and destructive hurricane in 2014 and, in early 2017, a spate of turf violence from warring drug lords. However, in the last 12 months, Los Cabos has been a magnet for new luxury hotel openings from big brands such as Luxury Collection and Marriott, as well as refurbishments from Rosewood. Below, we road test the best...



Solaz, a Luxury Collection Resort

This four-star resort from The Luxury Collection is the newest of the Los Cabos pack, occupying a desert-like sprawl of land between the Sea Of Cortez and Baja California Sur, and set apart by its brutalist architectural design: the granite building juts out from the skyline like a piece of memorabilia from the industrial revolution. It's an acquired taste, but it was designed to reflect the "dry jungle" of the Los Cabos landscape and certainly brings character to an area where the resorts all tend to bow to the same principles of soft pastel colours and low-rise structures. Separated by metres of cacti, guest rooms are spacious, featuring narrow patios with sofas, tables and plunge pools that look out over the sea.



Each room, decorated with original pieces of art by the famed Mexican artist César López Negrete, an expert on the Baja's landscape and folklore, welcomes guests with a [chocolate](#) structure handmade by the on-site pâtissier. Come 5pm, complimentary sweet treats, such as small pecan tarts, are ferried over fresh from the kitchen.



The hotel, which features a spectacular 50-metre beachfront infinity pool made of sea-green granite, also hosts Los Cabos' only thalassotherapy pools, as well as a Himalayan salt igloo to increase your oxygen levels. The hotel's best highlight: a tiny on-site museum, which exhibits regional artefacts, including a 13-metre whale skeleton. Your cultural activity ticked off without even having to leave the premises, you can now slink back to your poolside [Negroni](#).

From £500 a night. [solazlocabos.com](https://www.solazlocabos.com)



The Resort at Pedregal

With an impressive status as Mexico's No1 luxury resort, Pedregal has a lot to live up to, but it manages to surpass expectations the moment a member of staff takes your welcome drink order (a Margarita, naturally), before you've even made it up the driveway. Pocketed between giant theme park-like mountains, (you won't believe they're real until you touch them) and the Pacific, this small, intimate resort is delightfully child-free, with families quarantined to a specific part of the resort, out of sight of the adult-only infinity pool with its swim-up bar from which you can hear the reassuring jingle of a cocktail shaker well before breakfast is over. While the resort caters to those with deep pockets (*GQ* overheard one Texan woman suddenly remembering she owned a third

house halfway through her fifth Jalapeno Margarita), it makes a point of treating guests to thoughtful freebies. At 4pm, for instance, two Corona [beers](#) and a generous portion of guacamole and tortilla chips are delivered to every room – already kitted out with a complimentary bottle of tequila – for guests to enjoy on their balconies while watching the sun set.



Poolside, attentive waiters make the rounds with coconut popsicles and shooters of flavoured Margaritas to enjoy on the house, while fresh coffee, ice tea and doughnuts are provided in the beautiful open-air lobby around the clock. Access to the gym, a small (but very good) library and tennis courts are also included in the room rate. The Ocean Deluxe Rooms make for unforgettable views (and sightings, with the help of in-room binoculars, of humpback whales come early December) from the large balcony on which sits a seafront pool. At night, fall asleep to the rhythm of the waves falling hard on the beach, where swimming is off limits.



Make a special reservation at Pedregal's utterly romantic fine dining restaurant El Farallon, perched on the cliff face a short walk from the resort. It offers a unique [Champagne](#) tasting experience with a trio of flavoured salts and serves a brilliant selection of fresh, locally caught fish, from lobster to sea bass.

From £630 a night. theresortatpedregal.com



The Cape, a Thompson Hotel

From Pedregal, The Cape is only a 20-minute drive and ideal for a sunset pick-me-up before dinner al fresco. A larger affair than Pedregal, the hotel can make you feel anonymous, so those who like waiters to greet them by name and a cheery smile will be glad of their intimate pied à terre at Pedregal. Nonetheless, the Cape's infamous Manta restaurant is what you came for and, helmed by New York chef Enrique Olvera, the food is excellent and served alongside beautiful overhead views of the beach and the crashing surf. The hotel's position between El Arco and the Bahia Cabo San Lucas has also made it the best sunset spot on the coast – a fact rival hotels will happily admit.



Manta (a nod to the seafood-leaning menu) offers a mishmash of global cuisines, from Japan to Mexico via Peru. A watermelon cooler cocktail is offered on the house, as well as puffed crisps layered with avocado purée. The chef then recommends a roster of sharing options, including thin slices of cold scallop with a yoghurt dip, succulent squares of fried chicken with a cheesy yoghurt sauce and, the highlight: fatty wagyu kebabs for you to cook *à table* over a sizzling stone. The octopus with chorizo sauce also hits the spot and you realise why the word Manta – Spanish for “comfort blanket” – makes total sense. For dessert, small pieces of fried banana ringed by a wall of cream and caramel sauce provide dainty closure and *GQ* recommends you finish the night up

on the rooftop bar, where live guitar music provides the perfect harmony to your nightcap.

From £456 a night. [thompsonhotels.com](https://www.thompsonhotels.com)



Las Venetas Al Paraiso, a Rosewood Resort

Romance at the Rosewood begins the moment a trio of musicians serenade your entrance at the hotel as the host hands you a frozen Margarita. This beautiful and blissfully private hotel, with its network of underground tunnels allowing staff to be discreet, is a favourite of honeymooning couples and celebrities, who know they can go about their business undisturbed. Indeed, the hotel is so sprawling, with its villas and suites spread out on the beachfront, that at times the hotel can feel strangely empty. But head to an authentic Mexican breakfast at El Restaurante or the main pool's swim-up bar and you'll find the mood is lively. On the beach, sheltered king beds on stilts, plumped with pillows and cushions, allow for the serene sight of horses trotting along the sand and feature a buzzer for table service and drinks.



Come dusk, head to the beach fire pit with a sunken bar built into the sand for a cosy Champagne [cocktail](#) with brilliant views of the pink setting sun, before enjoying dinner at

Arbol, one of the most beautiful and newest restaurants in Los Cabos, offering Asian-influenced fine dining from Mumbai-born chef Anand Singh. Trees strung with pink fairy lights pepper both the inside and out and, for the luckiest couples, a table so private its only accessible via a wooden footbridge that crosses a stream, metres away from any other diner.



Start with a fresh and pulpy Passionfruit Martini (or, for the adventurous, a smoked avocado cocktail with tequila and mescal), while enjoying tandoori ceviche starters. GQ then recommends the deliciously tender and peppery stir-fried wagyu beef, followed by the creamy tapioca crème brûlée. If you're celebrating a special occasion, a quick word to the staff might just result in a magically run hot bath sprinkled with rose petals and a playlist of smooth love songs playing right on cue as you enter your room. The next morning, book yourself a 20-finger massage from the Four Elements menu, inspired by the ancient healers of Baja, with two masseuses working firmly across your body simultaneously in the resort's jungle-like outdoor spa full of giant foliage and pots of burning incense. An exciting opening for 2019 is the property's underground, pharmacy-themed speakeasy bar for those who don't like to call it a night too soon...

From £817 a night. [rosewoodhotels.com](https://www.rosewoodhotels.com)



Montage Los Cabos

It's a welcome treat, if such a word can do justice to the context of endless luxury, that at brand new five-star hotel Montage the sea is calm and safe to swim in. On this small sliver of public beach at the foot of Montage's restaurant, guests can borrow snorkelling equipment and try their luck scouting for the long snout of a trumpet fish by the rocks. The water, always beautifully warm and mouthwash blue, is perfectly still and totally clear. Compared to the strong currents and thunderous waves surrounding neighbouring resorts, Santa Maria bay is the hotel's greatest selling point.



Other attributes come up close behind. For a start, the Montage Suites, such as the two-storey Ocean Townhouse, are giant, each with its own generous square of garden with views to the beach, a separate sitting area and two bedrooms. A nice touch in the bathroom is the outdoor shower and the patio is as big as the room, with a six-person dining table, sun loungers and a sofa. Then there are the top-notch facilities, such as tennis and volley ball courts, a brilliant gym with free morning [yoga](#) classes, fresh fruit and ice tea and, next door, the rather palatial spa, with its own private pool and two-person sun beds to rival the bedroom's. A deep tissue massage is in order, followed by time in the jacuzzi and ice bath, sauna and steam rooms. By the sinks, you'll find enough complimentary face and eye creams to offer yourself a mini facial.



After the spa, most guests spend time drinking excellent Piña Colodas (with coconut cream not water) in the poolside private Cabanas, which can be rented by the day, and

include private sheltered beds and sofas, as well as a private pool and dedicated butler service. For lunch, the fresh sea bass with herbs and butter at Marea restaurant is simply but beautifully done and at dinner, Marea excels, with a different menu full of quality cuts of wagyu as well as delicately cooked lobster.



Elsewhere in the resort sits Mescal, the hotel's signature authentically wacky Mexican restaurant serving everything from catch-of-the-day tacos to crispy pork belly with peanut and chipotle sauce or suckling pig with recado negro. It's also worth booking the restaurant's five-mescal tasting experience at the bar with Carlos, where you'll learn enough about the homegrown spirit to pick your own bottle in the airport on your flight home. Each bottle is so ornate you'll want to keep it as a doorstopper.

From £970 a night. montagehotels.com