

Mexico's New LGBTQ+ Hot Spots

10
Places to Visit
Before It's
Too Late

OUT TRAVELER

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THE MOVIE LOVER'S
GUIDE TO L.A.

+

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WITH
SHARKS

GROWN-ISH
STAR WARREN
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FRANKLIN
HYPES
CLEVELAND

SAVORING
ATLANTA'S
SPICY SIDE

PROVINCETOWN'S
NEW GAY B&BS



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HAS NO RESERVATIONS ABOUT HER
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GUADALAJARA AND PUERTO VALLARTA

Mexico Musts

12 things that are most definitely on the itinerary for my vacation in Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta

By Chaya Milchtein

When my wife and I visited Mexico for the first time, we were unprepared for the overwhelming sense of joy we felt walking through the streets of Mexico City. Although my wife had initially made it clear she was apprehensive about holding my hand in public, it wasn't long before we saw many, many other queer couples expressing affection publicly.

While Mexico as a country is still largely conservative, many of its larger cities boast an impressive LGBTQ+ presence and don't have the same level of homophobia present in some other parts of the country.

When we first arrived in Mexico City, it was late at night and we were starving. We went out to find food and accidentally strolled into the city's Zona Rosa, or Pink Zone, which is a historic gay neighborhood. In that moment, we found our people (and food!) and it really put us at ease.

The neighborhood is packed with a thriving drag scene and late-night clubs and bars. If you're just looking for something to do — as opposed to something queer — consider a gourmet coffee tasting at **Borola Café**. I'll never look at black coffee the same way again, thanks to its multilayered approach to teaching the art of coffee to a Starbucks-loving public.

Consider booking a photo shoot with a pro like **Carlos Ratti**, a Venezuelan photographer living in Mexico City. We always reach out to local photographers to capture some of the magic of our vacation on film (selfies can only do so much). When I informed him that we were queer — just in case — he was ecstatic to bring our love story to life, as we were celebrating our en-GAY-gement.

While Mexico City is in the center of the country, our next trip will be to the state of Jalisco, which is on the west coast. Jalisco is home of both Puerto Vallarta and Guadalajara, and is one of the most LGBTQ+-friendly destinations in Mexico. The state appointed Andrés Treviño as Mexico's first sexual

diversity director in 2020. Guadalajara's Pride parade is one of the largest in Latin America, while Los Muertos Beach is well-known as a "gay beach" and loved by locals and tourists alike.

While 12 percent of visitors to the state of Jalisco are LGBT — which is a lot in itself — Puerto Vallarta boasts a 20 percent LGBTQ+ tourist base. Each June the state hosts the **Festival Androgina**, which features local and national queer artists, while Guadalajara is home to Premio Magüey, a queer cinema festival that is part of the city's International Film Festival. This year, Guadalajara will also be the home of the InterPride World Conference.

The two cities are 205 miles apart, about a five-hour drive or a 1 hour flight. We can't wait to go back and experience all Jalisco has to offer. Here's some of what is on our itinerary:

Places to Stay

With a massive pool and an impressive spa, **The Westin Resort and Spa Puerto Vallarta** is the perfect base for exploring the city and a place to rejuvenate. Westin's "Just for Two" package is the ultimate romantic experience, offering 50-minute couples' massages on the beach, sparkling wine, and chocolate-covered strawberries. (westin.marriott.com)

▲ The view from Los Muertos Beach in Puerto Vallarta



▲ **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** Shopping at the Mercado; Westin Puerto Vallarta; crispy fried birria tacos; The Marriott Puerto Vallarta Resort & Spa

The Marriott Puerto Vallarta Resort & Spa boasts a balcony or terrace in every room so you can enjoy the ocean breeze no matter where you are. The hotel is close to a local mall, and there's an ice cream shop on the premises for late-night cravings. (marriott.com)

The Westin Guadalajara is located near the World Trade Center, where its architecture and huge glass façade make it stand out for business travelers. If you're looking to spend the majority of your time out of your room, it's a great option. (westin.marriott.com)

For a grand experience, **Casa Habita Guadalajara** houses 37 magnificently designed suites crafted by Mexican architects Estudio5. A portion of amenities are located in the contemporary high-rise next door, which connects to the hotel and offers a spa and rooftop pool deck with a bar and poolside massages. (casahabita.com)

Where to Eat

I'm a sucker for street tacos, and the taqueria **Santo Goyote** in Guadalajara promises to expand my range, with beef head tacos.

Located on the beach in Puerto Vallarta, **Restaurante el Dorado** features a variety of fresh local seafood and extensive wine and cocktail lists. It opens early and stays open late. (eldoradopvr.com)

I always wanted to try the beef stew called *birria* but had to wait until I went to Mexico for the real deal. And **Birria de Res El Amigazo**, in Guadalajara, is the real deal! That's fitting, given the dish originates in the Mexican state of Jalisco.

One glance at **Tikuun Comedor Local's** Facebook page will leave you salivating. Duck quesadillas, shrimp aguachile, golden gutter, cured nopal, and tuna tartare with fried onions are just a few of their dishes. Reservations recommended for this Guadalajara restaurant.

For a taste of international cuisine in Mexico, try **Barcelona Tapas Restaurant's** homemade, shareable dishes. Ample outdoor seating overlooks the city and the ocean, offering stunning views. (barcelonatapas.net)

What to Do

Vallarta Food Tours offers a Puerto Vallarta road tour that blends a traditional bus tour and a food tour, allowing you to cover greater distance and experience more dishes — all protected from the sun. (vallartafoodtours.com)

The **Private ATV Adventure Tour with Tasting** takes visitors through the mountains and jungles surrounding Puerto Vallarta, with stops in nearby villages to explore and taste local tequila. An ATV without a weight limit means I can actually take the tour! (getyourguide.com)

Indoor market **Mercado San Juan de Dios** is the largest in Mexico. The 40,000-square-foot space is divided into three floors. The first floor is home to traditional Mexican groceries, crafts, and sweets. The second has prepared foods like pozole and tacos. The top floor has a wide variety of vendors selling everything from electronics to clothing. Bonus: It is open 365 days a year.

