

TRAVEL WEEKLY

THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY'S TRUSTED VOICE

[News & Featured Destinations](#) [Our Voices](#) [Resources](#) [Hotel & Cruise](#)

INSIGHT ■ *MEXICO INSIGHT*

Social distancing outside of the resort

By [Meagan Drilling](#) | Oct 21, 2020



A surfer rides a wave in Sayulita on Riviera Nayarit.



Meagan Drilling

While hotels and resorts across **Mexico** are touting heightened safety measures and cleaning protocols, travelers don't necessarily have to be sequestered away in a bubble in order to safely enjoy a trip south of the border. With 5,800 miles of

coastline, more than 60 national parks, and hundreds of archaeological sites, there are plenty of ways to stay socially distanced outside the walls of a resort.

Surf spots

Everyone's favorite Mexico pastime is to hit the beach, and that's easily achieved at its hundreds of oceanfront resorts. But surfers, from beginners to the pros, can discover the wilder side of Mexico's shoreline and really sink their teeth into the adventure that comes with it.

Riviera Nayarit, just north of Puerto Vallarta, has begun welcoming travelers back to its slice of Pacific coastline, particularly adventure travelers who can take advantage of the surf breaks all along the shore.

As we head into winter, Punta Mita is one of the top places in Riviera Nayarit for surfing, particularly for experienced surfers chasing strong waves.

Professionals will appreciate the Cove, while novice surfers will appreciate El Anclote, or Los Veneros and La Lancha.

Not far from Punta Mita is Sayulita, everyone's favorite boho chic beach paradise. While the cobblestone streets are flanked with art galleries, cafes and shops, the beach is known for its surf, especially since it has a sandbar that is ideal for beginners.

For something a little more private, Lo de Marcos is known for its secluded surf experience, with large breakers that crash quickly. The busiest day at Lo de Marcos will see fewer than 20 people, but keep in mind these are surfers that know their stuff. Novices should probably stay on land at this particular under-the-radar surf spot.

National parks

Mexico has approximately 67 national parks across the country, from Cabo Pulmo in Baja California Sur to Canon del Sumidero National Park in Chiapas, and dozens more in between.

If they are staying in Cancun, recommend that your clients visit Isla Contoy National Park. Isla Contoy is a tiny island at the confluence of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. The uninhabited island is an important nesting place for seabirds. Because the number of daily visits is limited, guests can experience a pristine island escape unlike any other in Mexico. Picture secluded, white sand beaches, thick fields of palm trees and more than 150 migratory and resident bird species.

Related report: Grupo Xcaret fires up ecotours

Down in Oaxaca, visitors can discover Lagunas de Chacahua National Park. Comprising five, mango-shrouded lagoons packed with wildlife, this jewel of Oaxaca is one of the most magical spots on Mexico's Pacific Coast. The lagoons eventually spill out to the Pacific, where a sandy point offers a picture-perfect getaway for laid-back surfers, peppered with surf bungalows, one or two restaurants and an endless view out to sea.

Up in the highlands of Chiapas, travelers can discover Lagunas de Montebello National Park. This collection of nearly 60 multicolored lakes lay surrounded by thick pine forest near the border with Guatemala. The park is two hours from the popular tourist town of San Cristobal de las Casas. Visitors are mesmerized by the jewel tones of the various lakes, which range from deep emerald to opal and even reddish black. The park also has two Mayan ruins, which include several pyramids and several other structures.

Archaeological sites

Speaking of archaeological sites, the state of **Yucatan has officially reopened Chichen Itza** as of the end of September. The park is now welcoming visitors at limited capacity. Yucatan's other archaeological sites, like Uxmal, Xcambo, Mayapan, Izamal and Ek Balam, have been reopened, as well.

But there are many other archaeological sites off of the tourist trail that are also great for socially distanced travel. Palenque is a Mayan city surrounded by thick, steamy jungle in the lowlands of Chiapas. The Unesco World Heritage

site has temples and buildings spread across a sprawling compound, much of which still remains covered by jungle. Southeast of Palenque are two other pre-Hispanic cities, Bonampak and Yaxchilan.

In the state of Jalisco, travelers staying in Guadalajara can make their way to Guachimontones, a former Olmec site. Guachimontones is one of the only pyramid structures in Mexico with circular pyramids.

In the state of Campeche, travelers can discover the site of Calakmul. About 15% of Campeche is still covered in jungle, and within this foliage are some of the most beautiful Mayan ruins. Calakmul was discovered in the 1930s and was once the main rival to Tikal in Guatemala. Today, visitors can explore burial crypts, pyramids and temples. There have been more than 6,000 buildings located, but only a few have been explored.