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# CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

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## THE FUTURE OF MEETINGS

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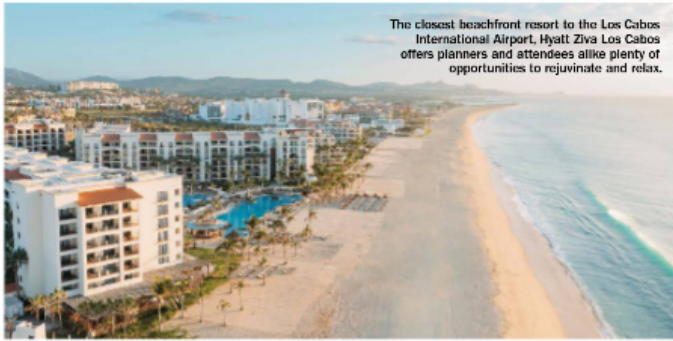
From pioneering green initiatives to (truly) cutting-edge technology, San Jose redefines what it means to be a leader in meetings and conventions.

VISIT  
**SAN JOSE**  
CALIFORNIA

# Mexico

## North America's Southern Neighbor Wows Planners with its Rich Culture

BY DAVID SWANSON



The closest beachfront resort to the Los Cabos International Airport, Hyatt Ziva Los Cabos offers planners and attendees alike plenty of opportunities to rejuvenate and relax.

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Mexico is an ideal destination for meeting planners and attendees alike," says Stacy Roberts, senior vice president of operations, for Global DMC Partners. "Thanks to a national culture that is deeply rooted in warm, authentic hospitality, the travel industry naturally excels with groups from a service perspective, whether budget or luxury."

Roberts is not alone in her praise of the excellent value, diverse offerings and air accessibility Mexico offers, and a growing number of meeting planners are discovering America's southern neighbor as a smart alternative to domestic destinations.

"Mexico is an easy sell with lots of flight options to the major tourist destinations and reasonable airfares," suggests Melissa DeLeon, president and owner of MTL Events. "The large number of all-inclusive resorts keeps the competition strong — not only for pricing but also for the quality of the food, rooms, service and the amenities offered."

Denise Frost, corporate travel advisor/groups & incentive travel for Central Travel, calls Mexico, "An

The Mayan ruins in Tulum — giant monuments of stone, in the form of temples, pyramids and palaces — are quite a draw for attendees curious about this architectural wonder.

affordable destination that offers great golf and excellent food," adding, "They're the top two important items for our trip on behalf of Spartan Chemical Company."

### Los Cabos

Frost handles the arrangements for the company's Spartan Top Ten gathering, which rewards top performers as well as brings in home office sales management for a meeting and awards event. In February, Spartan Chemical used Los Cabos for its 64-attendee meeting, a destination that is on a three-year rotation for the annual event. She notes the company's owners are very familiar with Hacienda Del Mar Los Cabos, Autograph Collection from personal visits, as regular guests of the property's restaurants, and from being members of the nearby golf course.

"Los Cabos offers direct flights from at least half of our attendees' home airports," says Frost. "Cabo continues to remain in the rotation due to the reliable weather, challenging golf, great food, unique sightseeing and nice resorts like the Hacienda del Mar with its affordable rates. The resort also allows for spectacular whale watching during the winter months — right from the beach, the restaurants and hotel room balconies."

The 270-room Hacienda del Mar is reminiscent of a seaside village, sprawling across 11 acres overlooking the Sea of Cortez, and designed with a combination of traditional Mexican Colonial elements and Mediterranean touches. The property features about 17,300 sq ft of meeting and event space. Six restaurants, five bars, five swimming pools, a spa and a fitness center round out facilities.

Spartan likes to gather as large a group as possible for dining. Frost says the resort's two restaurants seated 30-plus guests each, and used family-style menus, with limited selections. "But they were delicious, and right off their normal menus," Frost adds. The week-long visit is always kicked off on Super Bowl Sunday with a barbecue-style dinner, using an outdoor space equipped with large screen TVs and speakers provided by the AV department.

"Hacienda del Mar has limited outdoor venues, so they set up around one side of the Delfines Pool, which provided a gorgeous view to kick off the week."



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Frost notes that the resort's concierge desk provided excellent support during their stay, as well as prior to arrival, with spa and dinner reservations, both onsite and off.

"The area offers great deep-sea fishing — for marlin, as well as light tackle fishing closer to the shore for mahi mahi. As a group, we do not book anything off-site other than golf, however most of the attendees go into Cabo San Lucas for tours of shopping and dining on our free night. No one had any issues and enjoyed everything they did off-site."

With 45 different meeting hotels and more than 11,000 rooms, the tip of Baja California is known for having some of the best meeting space in Mexico, and additions come online regularly. Los Cabos has a dryer climate than the country's other coastal resort destinations, and it is home to some of Mexico's top-rated resorts.

For DeLeon, Los Cabos worked well as an incentive destination for American Tire Distributors (ATD), because the group is located in the U.S. West and Southwest, and flight schedules were ideal. They wanted an all-inclusive resort and looked to the Hyatt Ziva Los Cabos.

"This was their first year operating this incentive and we wanted a property that knew the U.S. market and operated well for large groups," explains DeLeon. "Hyatt Ziva Los Cabos is an excellent property that understands the American market, our timelines, dietary restrictions and can flex as the clients' needs change. I have used this property several times and the branding opportunities and function space for group events are fabulous. They have a lagoon area where you can brand the (floating golf) balls and project the client's logo on the buildings, so no matter what direction the attendees look they are surrounded by the client logo."

The 591-room Hyatt Ziva Los Cabos features 35,000