

# TEXAS



LIFESTYLE & TRAVEL MAGAZINE

*Everything that makes living great in the Lone Star State*

## Beyond the Beach: Discovering the Heartbeat of Puerto Vallarta's Magic

by Selena Swartzfager on January 11, 2024 in Travels.



Every moment in Puerto Vallarta resonates with a rich and immersive sensory experience that lingers long after the journey ends.

With few exceptions, it is uncommon to find majestic mountains and sandy beaches in the same destination. The beach town of Puerto Vallarta, found on the west coast in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, is one of these exceptions. Surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Sierra Madres it was once a hideaway for movie stars such as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. The locals will proudly tell you that the Academy Award winning film, "The Night of the Iguana" was filmed there. A quick flight from Texas will deliver you to this Mexican city where there is no change in time zone and there is something for everyone: relaxation, delicious food, snorkeling, shopping, art, hiking, and nature.

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### All-inclusive resorts are the way to go



*Enjoy relaxation time with a beautiful view on your personal balcony at Velas Vallarta. Photo courtesy PTG Consulting.*

A stay at **Velas Vallarta**, an all-inclusive family friendly resort, will give you everything you need without leaving the property (Starting Rate: \$180 USD per person per night). While you will likely want to leave to explore the colorful town of Puerto Vallarta, there is something extra relaxing about knowing you won't have to. The biggest decision to be made is if you will spend the day at the beach, the pool, or both. For families with children under 13, a great perk is The Kids' Club with supervised activities, giving adults time to reconnect.



*Originally designed as condominiums, each room at Velas Vallarta is super spacious with a full kitchen and sitting area. Photo courtesy PTG Consulting.*

On site you will find several restaurants managed by Executive Chef Roberto Vazquez. The beachfront **La Ribera Restaurant** is open for all meals with a set menu and views of the mountains. The menu at **Andrea Restaurant** rotates nightly, making this a different experience for each visit (reservations are required for dinner). You will give your room number upon entering both restaurants, but at the end of the meal there is no bill as it is part of the all-inclusive stay so order what you like! Every Sunday evening there is a Mexican fiesta on the grounds for guests to enjoy.

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*Enjoy the sound of the waves crashing with a view of the mountains at La Ribera. Courtesy photo.*

Be sure to schedule a spa treatment in one of the three beachfront Spa cabanas or indoors for more privacy (charges apply as this is not included in the all-inclusive rate). If you are lucky, you will be at the resort for karaoke night. Sing along from the safety of your chair or pick a song from the list and entertain the crowd. Many activities take place daily and a schedule of events is available upon arrival.

Just a note, if you have not stayed at an all-inclusive resort before you may have questions about tipping. If you want to tip during your stay, you can either do so in cash or by asking at the front desk if you can charge tips to your room. While this is certainly not required, resort employees will appreciate your generosity when excellent service is given.

Stay tuned for an upcoming article with more details on [Casa Velas](#), a boutique adult only hotel.

#### **Pristine Waters for Phenomenal Snorkeling**



*Visitors can embark on guided snorkeling tours that provide the chance to encounter the majestic sea creatures inhabiting the bay and for access to beaches reached only by boat. Photo courtesy PTG*

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Snorkeling in Puerto Vallarta offers an exhilarating exploration of the region's stunning underwater world. The clear waters of Banderas Bay beckon snorkelers to discover a vibrant marine ecosystem teeming with colorful coral reefs and a diverse array of marine life. The warm Pacific currents and the rich biodiversity make snorkeling in Puerto Vallarta an unforgettable year-round experience. Contact [Mexico Real Tours by Tatiana](#) for the best guided snorkeling tour in town. You will be treated to delicious snacks on the boat and willing participants will say "¡Arriba, abajo, al centro y pa' dentro!" and then sip on tequila after the snorkeling is done.

### Vallarta's Verdant Botanical Beauty



*Nestled on the slopes of the Sierra Madre Mountains, the Vallarta Botanical Gardens showcase an impressive collection of plants, including native orchids, palms, and exotic tropical flora. Photo courtesy PTG Consulting.*

The [Vallarta Botanical Gardens](#) offer a captivating haven for nature enthusiasts and those seeking tranquility amidst lush greenery. Book the Deluxe Garden Tour that includes transportation, admission, a guided tour and an authentic Mexican meal at [Hacienda de Ora](#). If you are lucky, resident pup Ping Pong will accompany you on your tour. The restaurant uses vanilla locally sourced from the pods of the tropical orchid grown on property. Pro tip: wear comfortable walking shoes for taking the short hike down to the crystal-clear river and don't miss the vanilla bean mojito with your meal.

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## Culinary delights in Zona Centro and Zona Romantica



*All choices on the menu at Tintoque will be created to be both delicious and beautiful. Courtesy photo.*

For an unforgettable experience, consider venturing to Zonas Centro and Romantica for delicious dining. The tasting menu at [Tintoque](#) is creative and adventurous and wine pairing is an option that takes this meal up a notch. Choose a table on the outdoor terrace of this upscale restaurant. At [Makal](#), Chef Diego Guerrero offers wonderful artistic culinary creations. This restaurant also offers a tasting menu and delicious cocktails. [The Street Taco Tour](#) will have you tasting tacos like you have never had before. This tour is a great way to experience many different restaurants at a time. Don't hesitate to ask for another cerveza as the night progresses. The only challenge here is having enough room for all the tacos. At the end of the tour have fun talking with friends about which taco was your favorite. It is not all about the tacos as one stop will include the best churro in Vallarta.

¡Salutita!

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