

OREGON COAST JOURNEY · FREE GUIDE

The Mexican Riviera Cruise Guide

Sun, beaches & tacos — the easy escape, planned the smart way.

When to sail, the ports worth your day, how to spend on beaches and excursions instead of your cabin, and what to pack — from an advisor who plans these every week.

YOURS FREE

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START HERE

The warm-weather escape that's easy on everyone

The Mexican Riviera is the perfect antidote to a grey Pacific Northwest winter: warm water, golden beaches, great food, and easygoing ports — usually round-trip from a West Coast city, so no long flights. It's a wonderful first cruise, a great family trip, and a reliable sunshine fix from October through April.

This guide gets your decisions right so the trip is all upside. And remember: planning it with me is **free** — I'm paid by the cruise line, never by you, and your fare is the same as booking direct (often better, with perks).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Skim the contents, land on what matters, and keep it handy while you plan. When you're ready, the button on the last page opens live Mexican Riviera fares — or just reply to any of my emails and I'll do the work for you.

What's inside

- 01 **When to go** — the season & the value windows
- 02 **Which cruise & cabin** — where to save, where to splurge
- 03 **The ports** — Cabo, Mazatlán & Puerto Vallarta
- 04 **Beaches, food & excursions** — how to spend the day
- 05 **What to pack** for sun & sea
- 06 **Smart & safe** — simple tips for a smooth trip
- 07 **Ready to sail** — book direct & get in touch

SECTION 01

When to go

The Mexican Riviera season runs roughly October through April — escaping both summer heat and hurricane season.

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER

Warm & good value

Still-warm water, thinner crowds, and lower fares as the season opens. A sweet spot for price and weather.

DECEMBER – JANUARY

Peak & festive

Prime winter-escape weather and holiday sailings. Most popular and priciest — book early for the best cabins.

FEBRUARY – MARCH

Whale season

Gray and humpback whales migrate along the coast — great from Cabo. Warm, dry, and lively (spring-break energy in March).

APRIL

Value & calm

Season winds down: warm weather, fewer crowds, softening fares. A relaxed, well-priced window.

How the itinerary usually works

Most Mexican Riviera cruises are **round-trip from a West Coast port**, typically 7 nights, hitting some combination of **Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlán, and Puerto Vallarta**, with a couple of relaxing sea days. That means no one-way flights and easy planning — a big reason it's such a friendly first cruise.

SHOULDER-SEASON SECRET

October, November and April deliver warm sun at noticeably lower fares than the December–March peak. If your dates flex, tell me — I'll show you what moving them is worth.

SECTION 02

Which cruise & cabin

On a warm-weather, port-packed cruise, the smart money goes ashore.

Where to save: the cabin

Unlike Alaska — where the view *is* the trip and a balcony earns its keep — the Mexican Riviera is warm, sunny, and spent mostly ashore or up on the pool deck. If you're the type who's off the ship in every port and only sleeps in the room, an **interior or oceanview cabin** can free up hundreds of dollars for excursions, beach days, and margaritas. Book the balcony if you value quiet outdoor space at sea — just know it's a lovely-to-have here, not a must.

Where to splurge: the experiences

Put the savings into the days: a great beach club, a whale-watch, a sunset sail, a food tour. That's where Mexican Riviera memories are made.

Match the ship to your trip

- **Big, playful ships** — water slides, kids' clubs, lively energy. Great for families and groups.
- **Classic & balanced** — a bit of everything; ideal for first-timers and multi-gen trips.
- **Premium & relaxed** — calmer, elevated dining, more grown-up evenings.

Tell me your travel party and vibe and I'll steer you to the two or three ships that actually fit — instead of guessing from marketing photos.

RULE OF THUMB

Warm-weather, always-out itinerary → interior or oceanview, and spend the savings ashore. Not sure? That's a two-minute question for me.

SECTION 03

The ports

What each stop is known for — so you spend your day on the right thing.

LAND'S END

Cabo San Lucas

The iconic Arch, El Arco, and Lover's Beach; whale-watching in winter, sport-fishing, and lively beach clubs. Usually a tender port — a short boat ride ashore.

OLD-WORLD CHARM

Mazatlán

A gorgeous historic Old Town, a long malecón boardwalk, golden beaches, and some of the best, most authentic food on the route.

BAY OF BANDERAS

Puerto Vallarta

Cobblestone streets, the seaside Malecón, jungle-and-beach excursions, and boat trips to hidden coves. Warm, welcoming, and walkable.

RELAX

Sea days

Two or more built-in sea days for the pool, spa, and slow mornings. Part of the appeal — this is a restful itinerary by design.

TENDER-PORT TIP

Cabo is often a tender port (the ship anchors offshore and small boats ferry you in). Ship-sponsored excursions get priority tenders — another quiet reason to have a plan and an advisor.

SECTION 04

Beaches, food & excursions

Three ways to spend a port day — mix them across your trip.

The excursions worth it

- **Whale watching (Cabo, winter)** — humpbacks and grays right offshore Dec–March.
- **Beach club day** — a lounge, the water, lunch and a drink; the easiest great day.
- **Sunset or snorkel sail** — catamaran cruises to coves and the Arch.
- **Food & Old Town tour (Mazatlán / PV)** — tacos, mole, local markets, history.
- **Zip-line & jungle adventures (Puerto Vallarta)** — canopy tours and river fun.

My go-to for booking tours

Independent operators are frequently the same tours for less than the cruise line charges. I curate trusted, well-reviewed Mexico excursions so you're not gambling on a random listing:

[Browse Recommended Mexico Tours »](#)

Powered by Viator, a Tripadvisor company. Free cancellation on most tours up to 24 hours before.

Eat well, easily

The food is a highlight — fresh seafood, street tacos, ceviche. Stick to busy, popular spots, drink bottled or sealed beverages, and don't be shy about asking me or the locals for the good places.

SECTION 05

What to pack for sun & sea

Light, sun-smart, and beach-ready — a few right items make all the difference.

You don't need much — you need the right few things. (The links below are things I recommend; as an Amazon Associate I may earn a small commission at no cost to you.)

Sun & sea essentials

- [Reef-safe sunscreen](#) — kinder to the ocean and increasingly required; the sun is strong here.
- [Water shoes](#) — for rocky beaches, tenders, and snorkeling.
- [A waterproof phone pouch](#) — for the beach, the boat, and the pool.
- [A packable sun hat](#) and good sunglasses — shade you'll be glad you brought.
- [A quick-dry travel towel](#) — light, packs small, dries fast for beach days.
- [A refillable water bottle](#) — fill it before every port day; staying hydrated matters in the heat.
- [Motion-sickness relief](#) — smart insurance for tenders and boat tours.

TWO QUICK RULES

Pack a **day bag** for port (sunscreen, water, cash, phone) and one nicer outfit for dinners. Bring a light layer — evenings at sea and the ship's A/C can be cool.

SECTION 06

Smart & safe

A few simple habits keep a Mexican Riviera cruise smooth and worry-free.

- **Know your all-aboard time** — the ship won't wait. On independent tours, leave a generous buffer and pick earlier departures.
- **Carry small cash (pesos or USD)** — handy for taxis, tips, and market stalls; many places take cards, but not all.
- **Stick to busy, popular areas** — the tourist zones and recommended operators are well-trodden for good reason.
- **Use official or ship-recommended taxis** — agree the fare before you get in, or book a tour that includes transport.
- **Drink sealed or bottled beverages** — and enjoy the food; just favor busy, reputable spots.
- **Get travel insurance** — inexpensive peace of mind for any cruise. I can point you in the right direction.

THE EASY BUTTON

Booking excursions through me or the ship means vetted operators, guaranteed timing, and transport handled — so you relax instead of worrying about logistics.

SECTION 07

Ready to sail to Mexico?

Two easy ways to take the next step — both free, both no-pressure.

You've got the playbook. Here's how to turn it into a trip:

OPTION 1 · SEE LIVE MEXICAN RIVIERA FARES

Book Direct & Browse Mexico Cruises

Search real, current sailings and prices for the Mexican Riviera — the same booking engine I use, with my advisor support behind every booking.

Browse & Book Your Mexico Cruise »

Option 2 · Let me do it for you

Tell me your rough dates, who's coming, and your must-have ports — I'll find the best sailing at the best price, perks included, and hand you a simple plan. No fee, no obligation.

Get Your Free Mexico Plan »

Or reply to any email from me — I read every one myself.

Refer a friend — you both win. Know someone dreaming of a warm escape? When they book a cruise through me, **you both** get a thank-you. Just have them mention your name.

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