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HOTSPOT: MEXICO

By Martine Bury

Spanning more than 760,000 square miles that stretch between the United States, Central America, Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea—you can never know all of Mexico. Yet getting to know its vast, varied terrain and diverse culture is one of travel's most rewarding pursuits. Over 61 hotel projects kicked off in 2017. We're not alone when we say we're obsessed.

NOW & NEXT

In Los Cabos, a series of new lodgings including a Montage and Ritz Carlton Reserve on the horizon are staking their grounds in this haven where desert meets ocean. With a private Yacht Cove and 145 rooms looking out onto the Sea of Cortés, **Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas** presents minimalist luxe in the remote East Cape. In the charming town of San José del Cabo on Baja's outer edge, **Hotel Mar Adentro**, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, is Miguel Angel Aragonés' architectural masterpiece, inspired by the Pacific Ocean so the element of water takes center stage. Although suites, rooms and villas have been open to guests since late 2016, the architects just completed the second of a three-phase building plan.

Dripping in Spanish-colonial charm, UNESCO World Heritage Site **San Miguel De Allende's** 5-star boutique hotels and flawlessly preserved central plaza, El Jardín, give way to its bohemian past as a beatnik haven in the 1940s via thriving arts and crafts scenes. Designated the Top City of 2017 by *Travel & Leisure*, the former silver mining colony is still full of polish

Photos courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas | Chablé Resort & Spa | Small Luxury Hotels of the World



Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas beach-front cabana

as the hub of new annual festivals, celebrating the nation's creative output in filmmaking, visual art, haute cuisine, music and fashion design.

The lure of Mayan ruins and beautiful beaches made the Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen and Tulum must-visits of the last five years—but there's a new Yucatan setting the scene for cultural immersion, wellness travel, nature exploration and hyper-luxury. North of the Peninsula, sleepy **Holbox Island** is quickly evolving into the place to unplug, with the bonus of exquisite wildlife viewing—think exotic birds, flocks of wild flamingos, whales and sea turtles. A bit of unexpected delight lies around every corner in tiny **Izamal**, the Yellow City, distinguished as an important site of Pre-Colombian Maya archeological treasures, temple pyramids and colonial architecture—and the mecca for mezcal. For the ultimate reboot on the grounds of a 19th century hacienda considered to be this year's best designed property, **Chablé Resort & Spa** interweaves traditional Mayan gardens, a cellar featuring the world's largest private tequila collection and 40 stand-alone pool villas amongst the lush foliage of the Mayan forest and the ancient temples of Chocholá. Nestled up to a revered, sacred cenote (cave pool), the spa features state-of-the-art and indigenous treatments, a yoga/meditation room and an adjacent kitchen garden where guests can prepare their own aromatherapy blends or gather ingredients for a cooking class.

At the midpoint between Playa del Carmen and Tulum, **Hotel Esencia** is a stylish escape on the Yucatan's finest beach, Xpu-Ha. The property will soon unveil 11 new luxury suites decked in custom Mexican textiles and art, including five Jungle Suites and six Beach Suites only steps from the water. A new onsite destination restaurant helmed by Chef Dimitris Katrivesis of Spain's Michelin-starred El Bulli will cap off the grand reveal.

Ultra-private opulence gets an infamous twist at **Casa Malca**, an exclusive 42-room resort that was once the mansion of Pablo Escobar. Tucked deep in Tulum's peaceful southern end, the property owned by art world mogul Lio Malca boasts a blue-chip art collection, long white sand beaches and a rooftop bar that offers 360-degree Caribbean and jungle views.



Photos: Top: Hotel Mar Adentro's Pacific views; Bottom: Casa Rosa at Chablé Resort & Spa

REGION ON THE RISE

The new center of Mexico's culinary culture is Puebla, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Learn about influential indigenous groups via lively local festivals or delight your taste buds with the perfect mole poblano dish, a sip of pulque or a tasting at a local tequila distillery. Summer ushered in the opening of 78-room **Rosewood Puebla** a stone's throw from the Zócalo de Puebla, the main public square containing the city's most iconic sites. The hotel encompasses a group of exquisitely restored historic buildings; the design incorporates time-honored traditional crafts like Talavera Pottery, and the rooftop infinity pool delivers stunning views of downtown Puebla and volcanoes dotting the valley. Two colonial mansions and a sleek, 40-room building make up **Hotel Cartesiano**, which will open on the Boulevard of Heroes this fall. Flanked by historic viceregal houses, it's a swank home base for exploration near must-see sights such as Puebla Cathedral, the Amparo Museum and Callejón de los Sapos antiques market.

Want más Mexico? Visit kerdowney.com for new itineraries featuring Mexican cuisine and culture.