

## **PUNTA DE MITA TRAVEL GUIDE**

### **Pros**

- Beautiful peninsula full of natural beauty and sweeping ocean views
- Large stretches of gorgeous, unspoiled beaches
- Secluded, upscale areas with high-end resorts, including some of the most posh properties in the area
- Small, charming surf towns full of oceanfront eateries and local character
- Delicious seafood restaurants and charming boutique shops
- Less touristy than the city center
- Several roadside stands selling locally grown fruits and homemade sweets
- Great waters for surfing, fishing, and boating, plus plenty of outdoor activities offered
- Fewer vendors on the beaches than guests will find in Puerto Vallarta
- Marieta Islands UNESCO World Heritage Site features a wonderful animal sanctuary
- World-class golf courses designed by Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman
- Great for whale watching during the migration season of December to April

### **Cons**

- Far from the main sights of Puerto Vallarta
- Long drive from the airport
- Not a lot of restaurants or bars outside of the resorts
- No major cities, only tiny towns (a pro for some)
- Local charm is largely limited to the small towns

### **What It's Like**

Set northwest of Puerto Vallarta in the Mexican state of Nayarit is a lush green peninsula with windswept beaches and quaint surfing towns. Commonly called the Riviera Nayarit, the area is known equally for its posh properties and superior surfing (regarded by many as the best in the region). Tucked at the far northwestern corner are Punta de Mita and Punta Mita, two similarly named areas with very different personalities.

Punta de Mita is a quiet surf town, full of small, locally owned shops and quaint restaurants serving fresh seafood overlooking the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean. Much more subdued than other popular surf towns in the area like Sayulita, Punta de Mita is less of a destination in itself than it is a quick stop for residents and visitors of the upscale resorts in the adjacent Punta Mita.

Secluded behind gates with guards who control who comes and goes, the ritzy, gated community of Punta Mita is as posh as they come in the Riviera Nayarit. Home

to high-end private residences and exclusive, world-class golf courses designed by the likes of Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman, Punta Mita is also the sight of some of the most upscale resorts in the region, set on manicured grounds along perfectly paved roads. For guests who truly want to be pampered, the chic enclave of Punta Mita is the place to go. The gorgeous stretches of beach that line the ocean offer stunning views of the sunset and the seasonally migrating whales, as well as some of the region's best surfing waves. They also have the benefit of being much quieter and less frequented by vendors than their counterparts in bustling Puerto Vallarta.

The Riviera Nayarit is also a hot spot for water sports enthusiasts and nature lovers. In addition to the highly rated surfing, many visitors come for the sailing, kayaking, fishing, and other ocean-based activities that are offered nearly everywhere along the coast. Just offshore are the Marieta Islands, one of the area's most popular attractions and a UNESCO World Heritage Site that features a wonderful animal sanctuary. Whale watching excursions are popular during the migration months of December to April. For those who want more of an adrenaline fix, outdoor activities like canopy tours are offered by local outfitters.

The area around Punta de Mita is decidedly less touristy than Puerto Vallarta, the region's much more popular vacation destination. That doesn't mean it lacks local charm, though -- visitors just need to look in the right places. The roads between Sayulita and Puerto Vallarta are lined with colorful stalls selling fruits and locally made sweets. It's impossible to miss the vibrant signs lining the winding, tree-covered roads, pointing drivers to the next roadside stand. Sayulita itself is one of the peninsula's most popular destinations. An adorable, bohemian Mexican surf town, Sayulita is full of winding cobblestone streets that lead away from the beach. Quirky shops, eateries, and bars sit on narrow passages strung with colorful paper flags. The laid-back vibe and oh-so-Instagrammable street scenes are as big of a draw as the town's top-notch surfing.

While some visitors will welcome the relative isolation and the less touristy vibe, one of the biggest drawbacks of Punta de Mita for many is its distance from Puerto Vallarta. Those who are hoping to take in the town's top sights and enjoy the bustling dining and nightlife should know that Punta de Mita is about an hour's drive from the city center. The airport is about a 45-minute drive away. Outside of the resorts, there's not a lot in the way of nightlife without making the trek to Sayulita, so Punta de Mita tends to be more ideal for visitors seeking quiet relaxation and beautiful scenery.

### **Where to Stay**

Punta de Mita lacks the wide range of lodging options that visitors will find in more popular Puerto Vallarta. The two most prominent hotels in the area are a pair of upscale resorts that sit inside the gated enclave of posh Punta Mita -- The St. Regis Punta Mita Resort and Four Seasons Punta Mita. These ritzy properties offer the kind of perks that visitors might expect from some of the world's top resort names,

including high-end dining options, multiple pools, beautiful beaches, luxe, full-service spas, and access to Jack Nicklaus-designed golf courses. Punta Mita is synonymous with luxury lodging.

For those who prefer the all-inclusive, upscale mega-resort experience, Iberostar Playa Mita is located on a nice stretch of beach on the north side of the peninsula, about a 10-minute drive from Punta de Mita. The town of Punta de Mita itself offers primarily small budget properties, which may appeal to guests who are looking for a more affordable option. The exception is the beautiful Condominios M Punta de Mita, a high-end boutique hotel offering a handful of high-end condos and fine dining right on the beach.