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cplbasilisk

Best Date Restaurants/Los Cabos

Cabo San Lucas, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Semi-formal dress is recommended for Arrecifes, an elegant beachfront restaurant located at the Westin. The paella, like the beach view, is unrivaled, and the attentive waitstaff are well-versed in the perfect drinks to accompany each entrée. Executive Chef Mirko Cappas specializes in seafood; the Red Snapper Filet is the best in Baja. The serene setting has been the setting for many a marriage proposal.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Cabo San Lucas

Arrecifes
Classically styled location

Margaritavilla
Healthy mex sports bar

Shrimp Factory (The)
Everything shrimp

Edith's
Outdoor mesquite grill

Pancho's Restaurant & Tequila Bar
Cabo's Largest Tequila Selection

Ristorante Italiano Galion
Pizzas from wood-fired ovens

Cilantro's Bar & Grill
Paradise Beach

Nick-San
Sushi bar and teriyaki

Seafood Mama's
Outstanding view

Rissalena
Private champagne breakfast cruises

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Day 1 - Cabo San Lucas

QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: 52 624 142 9000 (9317)
http://www.westinloscabos.com/arrecifes.php

location:
Highway 1 Km 22.5
Cabo San Lucas 23410

hours:
6p-11p W-M

1 Arrecifes

DESCRIPTION: Considered one of the best restaurants in Cabo, semi-formal dress is recommended for this beachfront restaurant. The seafood, especially the paella, is unrivaled, and the attentive waitstaff are well-versed in the perfect drinks to accompany each entrée. Executive Chef Mirko Cappas' Red Snapper Filet is the best in Baja. Located at the Westin, the beach views are dramatic but the restaurant itself is quietly elegant; many a marriage proposal has been uttered here. © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 0010
fax: 52 624 143 3630
http://www.margaritavillacabo.com/

location:
Boulevard Marina
Cabo San Lucas 23410

hours:
8a-11p

2 Margaritavilla

DESCRIPTION: Mexican cuisine is not typically known for being light on the hips, but this place has made an effort to reduce the calories and maximize the flavor. The menu consists of seafood platters, surf and turf, and some of the best Shrimp and Lobster Echiladas going. The decor is fun and tropical and the Margaritas have been described as some of the best in Baja. It shows all the major sporting events and has excellent views of the Main Street Marina. Here you can enjoy Belgian Waffles in the morning and the Mariachi bands in the evenings! © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 5066
http://www.loscabosguide.com/shrimpfactory/index.html

location:
Boulevard Marina y Guerrero
Cabo San Lucas BCS 23410

hours:
Noon-11p

3 Shrimp Factory (The)

DESCRIPTION: Located off Marina Boulevard, The Shrimp Factory is a branch of the wildly successful Maztlan shrimp bar. Offered by the kilo, guests feast on shrimp prepared a multitude of ways-- deviled, rachero, beer-battered, coconut-crusted. For those who don't like seafood, try the skirt steak or quesadilas. Call-in orders and large groups are welcome, and the restaurant is fully stocked. © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 0801
http://www.edithscabo.com/

location:
Camino a Playa El Medano s/n
Cabo San Lucas 23410

Edith's

DESCRIPTION: Located on Medano Beach, Edith's describes its menu as the offerings of the Baja Peninsula. Palapa roofs, Mexican lanterns, a fully-stocked bar and occasional live music add to the lively atmosphere. Try the signature dish: handmade tortillas with a choice of local seafood or steak. Side favorites include rosemary potatos. © wcities.com

wcities

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contact:
tel: +1 52 624 143 0973
fax: +1 52 624 143 5095
http://www.panchos.com/

location:
Hildago Street
Cabo San Lucas Baja
California Sur 23410

hours:
Open 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

4 Pancho's Restaurant & Tequila Bar

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Ask about their "curative" Mezcals.

DESCRIPTION:
One of the best Mexican restaurants in downtown San Lucas, Pancho's specializes in regional dishes, including Puebla-style chicken mole, Sonoran-style carne asada, and Oaxacan-style tamales wrapped in banana leaves. They also claim to have the largest tequila selection in the world, with over 500 separate producers represented. Whether this is the world's largest collection is debatable, but there is no question that the tequila and mezcal menus are enormous, with many labels you'll likely never see anywhere else. And it that weren't enough to pique your interest, the atmosphere is likewise exceptional, bright and airy, with traditional decor and accents. The mesquite grill is located in the center of the large dining room, so you can watch the chefs at work, and there is live music every night for dinner. © NileGuide

Photo courtesy of Pancho's.

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 0022

location:
Boulevard Marina
Cabo San Lucas BCS 23410

hours:
5p-11p

5 Ristorante Italiano Galion

DESCRIPTION: Here's an upscale place for fine Italian cuisine. Pizza just happens to be one of its specialties; it's baked in wood-fired ovens, in old country-style. The overall cuisine is best described as Neapolitan, and the decor is very elegant with brass fixtures and fine linens and silverware. All this, while enjoying the harbor views and live piano music! Located at the base of the hill that leads to Solmar Suites and Terra Sol Beach Resort, it is frequented predominantly by resort guests. © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 2900

location:
Medano Beach
Cabo San Lucas

hours:
11a-11p

6 Cilantro's Bar & Grill

DESCRIPTION: This bar and grill is an exceptional instance of exceptional hotel food. The menu keeps to what the cooks know best - Mesquite-Grilled Seafood. As an added treat, all meats are served with warm, fresh house-made Tortillas. The decor is fancy owing to the posh location at the Pueblo Bonito Resort. The clientele suits the atmosphere, as well. The restaurant generally draws a large afternoon crowd, people who stop in for a nibble and a break from the beach. Prices are moderate to expensive. © wcities.com

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contact:
tel: 52 624 143 2491
http://www.nicksan.com/

location:
Boulevard Marina lote 10
Cabo San Lucas BCS 23410

hours:
11:30a-10:30p Tu-Su

7 Nick-San

DESCRIPTION: If you are a fan of Japanese barbecue and Sushi, then consider this place. It is a fairly new establishment here and it has already become a favorite. The restaurant has an indoor and outdoor seating area plus a separate bar area for those interested in getting silly on Saki. The prices are moderate to expensive. The crowd is upscale and the meals are timed, so plan on enjoying the view and drinks before eating. © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 1220

location:
Boulevard Marina
Cabo San Lucas BCS 23410

hours:
7a-10p daily

8 Seafood Mama's

DESCRIPTION: How many chances do you have to eat in a lighthouse? Be sure to make your reservation early enough so that you can watch the sun drop into the sea. Try the chipotle Chile Shrimp Medallions Wrapped in Bacon, or garlic butter squid. For the hearty eater, you can choose a lobster and rib-eye combo or the Seafood Symphony with lobster, shrimp, oyster, fish and scallops (market price). This is part of the Plaza Las Glorias complex. © wcities.com

wcities

contact:
tel: 52 624 143 3048
http://www.allaboutcabo.com/rissalena.htm

location:
Boulevard Marina
Cabo San Lucas BCS 23410

hours:
Call for details

9 Rissalena

DESCRIPTION: If you have a budget that allows for a little indulgence, then you might consider chartering one of these cruises. There is an early morning breakfast cruise that departs at dawn and is absolutely stunning! You sail aboard a 42-foot catamaran with fine china place settings, and a brilliant array of fruits, sweet breads, juices and coffee. You can also reserve a custom cruise for up to 20 people. The restaurant is open daily; don't forget to make reservations. © wcities.com

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Cabo San Lucas Snapshot

Local Info

Forty years ago, Cabo San Lucas was a small fishing village. Since that time there has been increasing development to capitalize on the tremendous natural advantages enjoyed by the area, which include spectacular big-game fishing, superb diving, beautiful beaches, great sailing winds just outside the protected bay, and the unique rock formations at Land's End, the most famous of which is El Arco. Burgeoning ecotourism has also made this a prime destination for whale watching, and for exploration of the Sierra de la Laguna mountain range that forms the spine of Baja California Sur. These natural advantages have made Los Cabos the number one tourist destination in Mexico, and a favorite for destination weddings and renewal of vow ceremonies.

The resorts of Los Cabos are equal to any in the world in terms of extravagance, amenities, and the sheer magnificence of the surroundings. Infinity pools and world-class spa treatments are the norm at most of the resorts, the majority of which offer suites, villas, time shares, and ownership opportunities. Be advised that time shares are big business in Cabo San Lucas, and be prepared to deal with approaches from the time you land at the airport. Luckily, the sales people will take no for an answer, although those wishing to defray the cost of their vacation can recoup hundreds of dollars and get discounted dinners by attending a time share presentation or two. Hotel service is very good here, and concierge services are glad to help you arrange your itinerary. The value oriented traveler can find good accommodations for under 100 USD, and there are small, downtown hotels where you stay for around 50 USD per night.

Most of the action in Cabo San Lucas revolves around Medano Beach and the Malecon(marina boardwalk). Medano is the most popular beach in Los Cabos, and becomes particularly crazy during the Spring Break months. You can rent pangas(water taxis), kayaks, wave runners, and parasailing tours right off the beach. Lover's Beach near Land's End can only be reached by panga, kayak, or wave runner, so this is a prime departure point. The marina area is the center of the fishing, sailing, and diving charter businesses, and is fringed by a number of bars, restaurants, and shops. This is also a good walk for boat lovers, as the marina is home to some of the most luxurious yachts this side of the French Riviera.

Cabo San Lucas has also become a very desirable golfing destination. There are many championship caliber courses in the area, from the Davis Love III designed Diamante along the Pacific coast north of the city, to the Pete Dye designed Cabo San Lucas Country Club, to several great Jack Nicklaus designs like Cabo del Sol, Palmilla, Quivira, and Club Campestre. Golfing here can be expensive, but the ocean and desert views that characterize these courses are memorable, to say the least. Expect lots of uneven stances, elevation changes, and attentive beverage service.

Restaurants here range from fruit and taco stands to fine-dining, with great food at every price point. Most resorts will have several on-site restaurants, and many offer all-inclusive plans that cover your food and drink. This is a fishing destination, so the local seafood is varied and delicious. If you have never enjoyed smoked marlin, be prepared for a treat. Traditional Mexican food is very popular, of course, and so is, somewhat inexplicably, Italian food. There are a wealth of great Italian restaurants here, and, because so many talented chefs have gravitated to Los Cabos, you will also find very good French and Mediterranean cuisine.

One of the things Cabo San Lucas is most famous for is its unabashedly roisterous nightlife. Old-school party bars like El Squid Roe and Cabo Wabo have been challenged by a new breed of VIP discoteques catering to the high-end haut monde, and locals style bars offering ridiculously cheap prices. You can get two beers and two tequilas for five dollars, or spend 10,000 dollars for a three liter bottle of Cristal Champagne. Whatever strikes your fancy, there are a slew of options here, several to the block in fact. Dancing and drinking start at dawn, and often end at dawn. Don't be alarmed when you're being offered margaritas before breakfast. They may think you haven't been to sleep yet.

There is a wealth of good shopping here, from the high-end extravagance of Luxury Avenue to local handicrafts such as clothing, jewelry, blankets, hammocks, paintings, sculptures, and the like. Mexican silver is a specialty of many shops, and there are numerous small flea markets, as well as the ubiquitous t-shirt shops you will find in any resort area. Afficionados of Mexican art should be sure to visit Todos Santos and San Jose del Cabo, both of which have flourishing art districts. If you are from the US, and wish to take advantage of the availability of Cuban cigars, be warned that there are many vendors and stores offering Dominican imitations.

Most everyone you meet at the resorts or around the marina and downtown areas will speak passable to very good English. As you move away from the tourist areas, however, you will find fewer and fewer people who know English. So if you are an intrepid traveler who enjoys getting off the beaten track, it is advisable to come armed with a least a smattering of Spanish, enough to order a meal, or ask for directions. Of course, no one here knows the street names when they give you directions. They will point you in the right direction and tell you what your destination is next to, so it is a good idea to pick up a local street map. All the big resorts give them away as a complimentary amenity.

The marina and downtown areas are compact and easy to walk, but taxis are necessary from time to time. You will have no trouble finding them, as there are drivers everywhere. The taxi union is one of the strongest in the country, which helps to explain their proliferation as well as the high prices they charge. A taxi from the airport to Cabo San Lucas can easily run 80 to 90 USD. Negotiating with the taxi drivers can be challenging, and has become something of a sport with the ex-pat community. Walking is preferable, and offers a better opportunity to interact with the locals, the majority of whom are very friendly. Visiting San Jose del Cabo, Todos Santos, Cerritos, and other communities in Baja California Sur will require a rental car or signing up for a guided tour.

Despite the growing reports of violence in Mexico, Cabo San Lucas and in fact all of Baja California Sur are very safe places to visit, and the local and federal authorities are committed to keeping it that way. The primary safety concern of visitors should be

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the beaches, since lifeguards are virtually nonexistent. Swimming in Bahia San Lucas, at Medano or Lover's Beach, is generally quite safe. Avoid swimming at any of the beaches on the Pacific Ocean side. The rip currents are very strong, and rogue waves, while not exactly common, are not unheard of either. Sidewalks can be uneven here, and change elevation frequently as you move away from the marina district, so watch your step. Water is purified at the resorts, but the safest bet is bottled water when you are out and about. Otherwise, there are few dangers here outside of tequila overindulgence, a local malady that seems to afflict most visitors at one time or another.

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History

Before Cabo San Lucas was known as the tourist town it is today, the beaches were inhabited by a nomadic Guaycura Amerindian group calledPericu. The Pericú were hunters and gatherers; the shores around Cabo made it easy to live off of shellfish, small game and wild plants. There is also evidence that they were skilled weavers and potters as well.

The Cabo coastline remained untouched by European explorers until 1542, when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Spaniard, made the first contact with the Pericu people while exploring the waters of the Pacific for the Spanish monarchy. The Spanish forces remained because of the threat of English pirates in the area. The harbor at Cabo San Lucas continued to be used by pirates until the mid-18th Century as a hiding place after attacks on Manila Galleons(you can see a ship similar to these in the harbor). The pirates also enjoyed the many coves and inlets, perfect places for stashing loot. After pirating became a thing of the past, the port was mostly ignored because of the lack of fresh water available there.

More activity came to the harbor at the end of the 19th Century.Baja-californianos began exporting bark from the localpalo blanco tree, to be processed and used in leather tanning. This made Cabo San Lucas a main shipping port. With the increase of nautical traffic, the Faro Viejo lighthouse was built in 1890 by port authorities at the nearby Cabo Falso.

The abundance of tuna in Cabo was discovered in the early 20th Century, and in 1917 an American tuna cannery was moved from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas to take advantage of this new resource. This brought a new population that continued to grow even as the native population dwindled. By the 1930s, a small fishing village had developed to supply the cannery. The harbor was then occupied by about 400 people, all of whom were involved in the canning industry. This remained the driving force of the local economy until 1941, when a hurricane destroyed a large part of the factory. The damage was devastating and Cabo San Lucas was all but abandoned during World War II, when Japanese submarines patrolled the coast.

After the war, leisure travel became a popular activity and Cabo was rediscovered as a game-fish paradise. Word of mouth brought a sport-fishing craze to the cape in the 1950s and 1960s and Cabo became a hot spot for catching prize-winning marlin and other swordfish. During this time, the small village grew in size to about 1500 residents(not including the many seasonal fishermen that were brought in by plane or boat to fish the cape). The slow but steady pace of growth changed in 1973 when the Transpeninsular Highway was completed. This new link by land between the United States and Cabo San Lucas brought even more traffic to the area. The city soon became a popular destination for people traveling by car and recreational vehicle, in addition to those who already came by boat or plane.

Nowadays, the small fishing village has become a bustling tourist attraction. Cabo San Lucas has increased its numbers and now boasts a population of almost 25,000. The majority of people who call this place home make their living from the tourist industry and most of them are recent arrivals seeking work. Many small shops and boutiques line the streets with souvenirs and handcrafted Cabo clothing. Tour guides are ready to show off the spectacular coastline(and the sights under the water too). Affordable boating adventures and tours await those ready to take to the waves and are a sign that Cabo is no longer an exclusive yacht club just for the upper class sports fishermen.

Great fishing is not the only activity that brings people to the southernmost tip of the Baja peninsula. First class golfing attracts sportsmen of a different kind, while the beaches bring legions of sunbathers each year. Scuba diving is also a popular draw for visitors; the beautiful waters are great for watching exotic, colorful marine life.

Despite deep roots in the past, so richly displayed at the Museo de las Californias, Cabo San Lucas has a distinctly modern feel. It is far enough away from home to be a great getaway, without feeling too foreign. American dollars(and other foreign currency) are widely accepted here, as are most major credit cards.
©

Hotel Insights

Up until 300 hundred years ago, pirates from around the world chose this area for their anchorage. Today the pirates are gone, and it is a more benign traveler who seeks repose in this sheltered port town. Considered one of the best vacation destinations in the world, Cabo offers a small-town feel with all of the activities, accommodations, beautiful weather and beaches that any tourist expects. Your selection of where to stay is quite varied; part of your selection process, however, should be based on what you plan to do while here. While choosing to stay in one area over another does not limit your options, it is possible to narrow down the choices based on the atmosphere and nearby attractions.

The most important thing to do is to first decide what area of Cabo San Lucas you want to stay in depending on your interests and lifestyle. Almost every price range and level of accommodation is located in each area and the hotels listed represent only a sampling of the available choices.

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Pacific Ocean/Pedregal Hills

Starting north of town, in the Pacific Ocean/ Pedregal Hills area, you can choose between three hotels: the Solmar Suites, Hotel Finisterra and the Terra Sol Beach Resort. These exclusive resorts share the Solmar Beach. This beach is dangerous because of undertows, but delightfully peaceful for sunning and relaxation. Minutes from downtown, these spots offer a break from the busy streets, but are still close to nightlife and other activities. The Finisterra offers views of both the bay and the Pacific Ocean, as it spans the top of the Pedregal Hills. The cliff-side rooms offer direct views of the ocean and the authentic decor is tastefully displayed. In contrast, the Solmar Suites focuses on creating a more romantic ambiance. All suites are oceanfront and there is a lovely Italian restaurant called Romeo& Julieta. Staying at the Terra Sol Beach Resort will introduce you to unparalleled privacy and tranquility. Nearest of the three to the water's edge, and the most deluxe, the hotel attracts a particularly sophisticated crowd seeking peace and sun on their vacation.

Downtown

The hotels in the downtown area tend to be a little less expensive than some in the other areas. These hotels don't have adjacent swimming beaches, although the Chile Pepper Inn, with its lovely garden courtyard, and the romantic Los Milagros both have pools. The first of these, and the less expensive, is stylishly decorated with chili pepper motifs. The second offers larger rooms and gardens so lovely that many people choose to be married here. Another option in the area, the Best Western Hotel Cabo Las Flores, provides a pool, restaurant and quality accommodations.

Marinas de Baja

Adjacent to downtown and near the Marinas de Baja are several beautiful hotels, such as the Marina Fiesta. While its views are largely of the marina and there is no swimming beach, the massive swimming pool with gorgeous patio more than compensates. Nearby, the Marina Cabo Plaza and the Plaza Las Glorias Hotel are all within two blocks of downtown and just steps away from the Medano Beach.

Medano Beach

Following the bay to the east brings you to Medano Beach. Nearest downtown and right on the beach, the well-established Melia San Lucas offers luxurious accommodations and an enduring reputation for quality service. Take advantage of its delightful activity and rental area. The Melia offers all sorts of water sports and the staff will assist you in planning and making reservations for your offsite activities. Some of the higher class offerings on this beach are the Pueblo Bonito Rose Resort, the Hacienda Beach Resort and the Villa Del Palmar. Each of these has massive spas and offers all manner of pampering, and excellent restaurants.

San José

Continuing east for the next several miles towards San José, there is a selection of more secluded hotels with plenty of dining options, activities in-house and facilities, including car and equipment rentals. The lovely Hotel Twin Dolphin is nine miles from downtown and sits high upon a bluff overlooking the ocean. It has an easy footpath down to the popular and safe Santa Maria snorkeling beach. One of the earliest hotels to be built in this area, it provides its own fleet of sport-fishing boats for guest use. In an eco-friendly gesture of melding with its natural surroundings, this hotel offers raked sand, flowering desert bushes and stone step paths rather than the typical manicured lawns. Beyond the Twin Dolphin you will find the Sheraton's Cabo Del Sol/Hacienda Del Mar, the Melia Los Cabos Beach and Golf Resort and other hotels of equal grandeur.

Outside San José

Hotels continue to dot the edge of the bay all the way to San José. Golfing has grown tremendously here in the last ten years and many of the resorts that continue east along this stretch to San José have golf courses attached or nearby. If your focus will be golfing rather than downtown nightlife, it would be wisest for you to choose this area. Each hotel offers markets and restaurants, so there is no need for you to go into town at all if you choose not to. Of the many hotels in this area, the Westin Regina Resort is perhaps the best known. Its man-made beach compensates for the undertow of the ocean in this area and offers safe swimming for its guests. Its spectacular architectural structure looks like two towers joined by a several-storied bridge. Just another mile along the beach is Las Ventanas al Paraiso. Built in 1997, it is the epitome of contemporary design. Its spacious rooms are each more than 1000 square feet(93 square meters) and suites offer telescopes for viewing whales and ships, whirlpool tubs and fireplaces for a cool evening.
©

Restaurants Insights

Long a home to sunshine fun, Cabo is gaining respect for a sophisticated new dining scene that has exploded in the area. The Mexican government opened the area to development in 1990, bringing some exceptional restaurants along with the new resorts. Increasing tourism has also led to the opening of many new restaurants downtown, and a greater variety in the Cabo dining experience.

Whatever your dining decisions, the restaurant experience in Cabo promises to be memorable and offers plenty of variation. The combination of flourishing seafood markets, vacation wonderland environment, activities that will leave you famished and an ambiance that is both romantic and stimulating guarantees that you will enjoy Cabo's gastronomical delights.

Downtown

Nearly every place in town offers fresh seafood, purchased from the fish market each day, and fresh in Cabo means it was still swimming that morning! One popular seafood location in the downtown area is Mariscos Mocambo. Housed in a largepalapa, dining is available either

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indoors or outside. Much loved by those who like seafood but not its typically high price, most meals cost less than MXN85.

It is not surprising that the most successful of older eateries are good, down-home Mexican restaurants. In the downtown area and across from the town square is Mi Casa Restaurant& Cantina, which is a favorite with locals and tourists alike. Originally a church, this is a colorful location with brightly painted walls and a courtyard dining area. Recognized for its traditional dishes, the quality and quantity of its portions are superb. As you wait for your entree, nibble on a poblano pepper filled with seafood or try some tiny tamales. Watch as the house tortillas are pressed and cooked in the courtyard. Candles are lit at each table as daylight wanes. Relax and listen to the four-person mariachi band(Friday to Sunday during the winter season).

Marina

Marina-side, Seafood Mama's is a romantic choice for seafood lovers, and offers a delightful view of the Sea of Cortez. Brasil Steakhouse, a newcomer to the dining scene, yet a welcoming and festive downtown location that offers an all-you-can-eat, sit-down dinner. It begins with appetizers of hot chicken wings, soup of the day, three types of salads and other treats. Then, waiters bring grilled meats such as New York steak, BBQ ribs, chicken, fillet mignon and eight other meat choices. The traditional Brazilian drink Caipirinha, is recommended; this is the only spot in Cabo you will find it. The garden-like dining room is decorated with plants and fountains.

Medano

Another seafood location downtown is Peacock's Bar and Restaurant. Since 1989 this back patio dining room has been head-and-shoulders above many of its competitors. Part of its success is due to more than 30 varieties of appetizers. Try the seafood stuffed eggplant(MXN50) or Mexican-style escargots(MXN75). Keep your appetite in check though, because the seared yellow fin tuna(MXN140) or Blackened Cabrilla(MXN150) is on its way. Peacock's also offers duck, leg of lamb, New York steaks and much more.

Savor the salt air along with your margarita at one of the many beachside restaurants such as The Office. Whether the sun is coming up or going down, you can almost always find a bite to eat here. While the food is good, the location right on Medano Beach is outstanding. If you are looking for something more up-market, go to Edith's, just a half-block away. This lovely outdoor patio restaurant has linen-draped tables, a fine wine selection and a view of Land's End. Fresh salsas and tortillas complement the many seafood specials and grilled entrees. While you dine, a live jazz band plays softly in the background. If you are tired of seafood, try the steak seared at the outside mesquite grill(MXN275), or a chicken or pasta entree. If you aren't,(and why should you be?), there are excellent lobster, shrimp and fish dishes also.

Just several blocks away from the beach is a romantic dining experience. Casa Rafael's offers three dining rooms to choose from for your dinner party: the Ocean Room with tropical fish in a huge aquarium; the Garden Room set in a lush jungle-like garden; and a poolside dining area around an open-air pool deck. One of Cabo's widest selections in wine and fine liquors is available here; you are sure to find the proper accompaniment for your meal. Each selection from its menu is made-to-order, so substitutions and special requests are welcomed. After dinner, head to the Piano Bar or Cigar Room for a drink. Reservations are a must and the sooner made, the better.

El Corredor

Heading out of the city and down the Cabo Corridor toward San Jose gives you the option of some of the more recent additions to the restaurant scene. The only businesses along this route are the hotels and their respective restaurants. At the Villa Del Palmar, just outside Cabo, the Bella California provides an unforgettable romantic dining experience. Be sure to make reservations early and ask for a beachside table. It offers impeccable service and a clever combination of flavors from its eclectic menu; many fresh seafood entrees are available. Down the Corridor about six miles(ten kilometers) farther is a well-known favorite, Pitahayas, part of the Hacienda Del Mar hotel that also offers beachside dining. It boasts an underground wine cellar and a mix of native spices used in its Pacific Rim-style cuisine. Reservations and formal dress are strongly encouraged at this fine dining venue. A less formal experience with an equally impressive view can be had at the cliff-top Villa Serena.
©

Nightlife Insights

If you poll ten people in downtown Cabo after 8pm and ask why they chose Cabo as a destination, chances are that they will say"to party." Downtown Cabo is certainly the place to be for that; in fact, some might say it is incomparable. The combination of sand, sea and surf seems to make people a little loco, and in this town, drinks flow freely at any hour. The many people who aren't downtown at night though, are vacationing here for other reasons: to relax, golf, fish, sunbathe, dive or snorkel. The mixture of visitors traveling to Los Cabos is changing. It is not just about the nightlife scene anymore.

Nightclubs& Nightlife

If you have arrived for the partying scene, you won't be disappointed. From live rock bands at Cabo Wabo Cantina to crazy beach volleyball games at Sunrise Charlie's to the one-of-a-kind Giggling Marlin, or the “three for the price of one” margarita-zone, known as Rio Grill, you could bar-hop all night long without having to leave the downtown/marina area. There is fun to be had around every corner and even on Medano Beach. This section of swimming beach touts The Office, Mango Deck and the Crazy Lobster as some of its hot spots. And this is just a small sample of what this town has to offer the party animal.

Historical Sights

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Most travelers are also interested in exploring some culture when they travel to another country. Cabo, since it is such a young town, has only two historical buildings. The oldest of buildings is the Iglesia de San Lucas, a church from 1730. Interestingly, the church founder, a Spanish missionary, was killed in a disagreement with the locals over their practice of polygamy. The other historical attraction is the lighthouse, El Faro De Cabo Falso, that dates back to 1890. These recent constructions, of course, reflect only the dominant culture of the Spanish. For a nice depiction of native cultures from this area, check out the painted murals in the church turned restaurant, Mi Casa Restaurant& Cantina.

Arts& Culture

If you are interested in demonstrations that will provide some insight into this region and its peoples, tour Cuca's blanket factory and see how blankets have been loomed for centuries here. These gifted artisans are capable of taking your custom design and creating a blanket for you within 24 hours. Or head to the Glass Blowing Factory and be amazed by the skills of the craftsmen as they spin and shape glass into beautiful pieces of art. The Artisan's Market and Handicrafts Market are other great places to see the culture and artisans of this area. Using family designs passed down from one generation to the next, sandals are cut and shaped, dresses are embroidered in age-old designs, beads are turned into jewelry and cotton becomesserape dresses. These shops are great options if you want the opportunity to get to know the people, see their craft traditions first hand, and then take a piece of Cabo artistry back home with you.

Festivals& Celebrations

Mexicans have long been recognized for their colorful festivals and Cabo's citizens are fond of celebrating. If you happen to be in Cabo during a celebration, you really should attend. It will give you an opportunity to understand Los Cabos and its heritage in a unique way. Some of the most important celebrations are: the Virgin of Guadalupe Celebration on December 12, and the Cabo San Lucas Festival(Festival of the Patron Saint) on October 18. Each of Mexico's cities has patron saints that guide and protect the people of the city. One of the most important saints in Cabo is San Luis, because he protects the fishermen at sea, and the celebration in his name includes much feasting, dancing, parades, local musicians playing in the streets and, of course, drinking. The Virgin of Guadalupe celebration honors the patron saint of Mexico. During these festival days, many of the resorts have begun offering specific cultural nights.

Also, many of the big resorts put on a dinner show or hold a Mexican fiesta night once a week just for vacationers to enjoy. Some of those locations include the Hacienda Beach Resort, the Melia San Lucas and Solmar Suites(all of these on Saturday nights). The fiestas are mini-parties and typically include traditional songs and dances presented in authentic costume and a dinner of traditional dishes. Make sure to ask the chefs or wait staff to identify the dishes you are not familiar with. These fiestas, while not entirely authentic, are a terrific way to experience something of traditional Mexican culture, not to mention food. Meals are enormous, with plenty of choice to justify the steep prices, and a very festive atmosphere. Note that it may be wise to go easy with the free tequila shots that are traditionally offered at these occasions.

Shopping

Shopping is another fun way to spend your day and there are lots of shops to choose from. If you are looking for souvenirs, you can find those everywhere. Whether you buy from a beachside salesman or in a brightly lit shop, there are T-shirts, jewelry, pottery and many other souvenirs of every size and color. Especially worthy of note is thetalavera, pottery from Puebla, Mexico of a very high quality, with prices to match and a tradition that dates back centuries. You can find this at the Necri store and several others in Cabo. Necri also carries pewter from Mexico City.

A terrific store for women's clothing is Magic of the Moon. It is filled with hand-sewn clothing made in Cabo and specializes in Cha-Cha-Cha blouses, skirts and bustiers. For fine jewelry go several doors down to Taxco Silver. Carrying a wide selection of high quality silver, they offer many choices including fashionable chokers and bracelets. There are many more to choose from including the Dos Lunas Boutique, El Callejon and El Perico, each carrying fine quality items for a perfect treat for yourself or someone else.

Sports& Activities

If you are interested in outdoor entertainment, look to the sea. Choose from water sports like jet-skiing, water skiing, snorkeling, scuba diving, swimming and surfing. The 80F/27C ocean temperatures are inviting to all who love water. If you want to be on the water, but not in it, try parasailing, fishing, whale watching, party cruises, dinner cruises and more. Back on dry land, meanwhile, the innumerable golf courses in Cabo are giving the Sea of Cortez a run for its money when it comes to entertainment.

Whatever your reason for choosing Cabo as your destination, the soul of Cabo and the beauty of the area will win you over. This lively city will provide you with unforgettable memories of your days in the sun.
©

Things to Do Insights

Since World War II, when pilots spotted huge fish from their planes off Baja's southern tip, Cabo has been a fishing hotspot of steadily growing importance. Fishing is now one of the largest revenue generators for the city, thanks in part to great fishing grounds and to major tournaments like the Bisbee's Black& Blue Marlin Jackpot Tournament, with prizes of more than USD 2 million.

Fishing

If you have come for the fishing, you will have many options to choose from. One

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of the most recommended operators is the Pisces 20 sport fishing company; its boat took first prize in 1996 and 1997 at the Cabo San Lucas Gold Cup Fishing Tournament. Since the early 1980s it has offered guide and boat services to avid fishermen and women around the world. You may opt for a 28-foot or a 31-foot boat and then choose between all-inclusive trips or semi-inclusive trips. Another local tour company, the Solmar Fleet, offers a wide variety of boats, long and short range trips and other options available. Trip prices start at MXN2750 for up to three people, or MXN7100 for up to eight people. Be sure to ask for your hotel desk for recommended guides and boats.

A completely different style of fishing involves no planning and little cost. Head to the marina district or the Medano Beach and signal one of the locals orpangaros sitting by a boat filled with fishing gear. While the biggest marlin and tuna are at fishing grounds 10 miles further south than these small boats will go, the guides will take you to out into the bay with its abundant grouper, yellowtail, snapper and other fish. If you have your own gear, or can rent some, so much the better, as these small operations don't always have the best equipment. Or, do as the locals do and just fish from the beaches or the Cannery piers for free. Amazing catches can be pulled from these shallow waters.

Water Adventures& Activities

Although some Cabo veterans might disagree, there is more to life than fishing. Fortunately, there are plenty of other tours and activities available for the active, semi-active or inactive person. If you are a water person, consider the snorkel or scuba tours offered by Sun Rider, Tio Sports, or Baja Sports. Each company takes guests to the Santa Maria Beach for clear water and fish viewing off the reef there. Some snorkel trips and scuba diving trips go to Lover's Beach where there are many hot spots. Scuba is also very popular at the Cabo Pulmo Beach at 22 miles(36 kilometers) east of Cabo. Most of the operators can offer classes that will certify you in scuba within several days.

Cruises provide a relaxing view of the bay and of the city from a different angle. From a fully-restored 19th-century Pirate Ship to glass-bottomed boats to catamarans, each offers something unique. A 45-minute ride in a glass-bottomed boat(MXN75) is one of the best values. Seas permitting, it will take you out to Lover's Beach, around the corner from Land's End, and offers an interesting view of what lies beneath the surface while you travel. The Pez Gato catamaran offers a sunset cruise that includes all you can drink in the price. For two hours you get unlimited margaritas and a lovely view of the city and bay at sunset(MXN330). The Pez Gato also offers a"romantic-style" cruise available with less partying but more class. If you are in Cabo between January and March, be sure to look out for migrating whales. Many cruise tour companies offer whale-watching excursions. With binoculars, you may also be able to see the whales from shore.

If you seek a more adrenaline-filled day, try a jet ski rental or some water skiing from either Juancho's or Tio Sports. Also for the adventurer(but possibly the couch potato, too), the parasailing offered is a beautiful way to see the expanded Cabo horizon from high above the water. You don't even have to get wet. Typical charges are MXN330 to 440 for an eight to ten minute ride. Juancho's and Baja Sports both offer reasonable pricing and services from Medano Beach.

Walking tour

If you are not a water person, you may want to take a walking tour of town. Park at the marina(it provides a large parking lot for visitors at no charge) then walk two blocks north to the town square on Avenue Cabo San Lucas, to begin your tour. This area is filled with park benches and shade trees around a flat stone patio. You could stop here for a quick picnic before you start out. Take some time to look around; the plaza is bordered by the new Museo de las Californias, colorful Mexican store fronts, restaurants such as Mi Casa and Pancho's Restaurant. Here you will find the closest thing to a traditional Mexican atmosphere in this resort town.

As you return to the marina, keep your eyes open for the historic Iglesia de San Lucas, which was built in the 1740s. This mission church is between Calle Madero and Zapata streets, on Avenida Cabo San Lucas and is the oldest building in the city. Walking back to the marina, you can see the Cannery piers off to your right, which are the only still functioning remains from the tuna fishing era of the 1930s. Go straight ahead with the marina on your right and the shops and restaurants to your left. There is a lovely boardwalk that passes by the Handicrafts Market(open daily) then circles the downtown district from the waterside. You will be amazed at how many countries are represented in the harbor below you(the home ports are listed below the ship's names).

From there, you can choose to do a wide, complete circle and explore the downtown, winding back to the marina and your car, or you may continue on to the Medano Beach, which is also called"hotel row" due to its abundance of hotel and resorts lined next to each other. One experience that you should not miss is a few moments at the umbrella-covered, patio-style tables on Medano Beach. Waiters from The Office restaurant will bring you whatever you would like to drink or eat, while you sit back and soak up the view of this beautiful bay and the arches at Land's End.

Horseback& ATV rides

Looking for something with a faster pace? Check out the horseback riding on the beach or the many tours offered throughout the area, such as the Red Rose Riding Stables. Or try an All-Terrain Vehicle(ATV) tour. This typically costs around MXN500 for one person or MXN715 for two people per machine. Sergio's Rentals has one of the best safety records in this higher risk activity. For safety purposes, they take only small groups on tours when navigating downtown traffic. One of the most interesting horse and ATV tours(and the longest) will take you to the old town of La Candelaria, a shipwreck site and the

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ruins of El Faro de Cabo Falso, an 1890 lighthouse.

Nearly all of the active sports will include waivers of responsibility. While the typical tour operator will have your safety as their top priority, it never hurts to ask for references from people within your hotel. This is a fun-loving town with lots to do. There will be no shortage of tours presented to you that you will enjoy thoroughly, no matter how crazy, or cautious, you are.
©

Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

The Los Cabos International Airport averages over 200 flights a week. Renovations to its main terminal and the opening of a second terminal lend it a look and feel of the fastest growing vacation area in Mexico. The airport's lone hitch is its 29 mile(47 kilometer) gap with Cabo San Lucas to the south.

Los Cabos International Airport(SJD)+52 624 146 5111http://aeropuertosgap.com.mx/aeropuertos/loscabos

Its two terminals service the following major airlines:

Aeromexico(+52 624 146 5097/ http://www.aeromexico.com) Alaskan Airlines(+52 624 142 3324/ http://www.alaskaair.com) American Airlines(+52 624 146 5302/ http://www.aa.com) Continental(+52 624 146 5040/ http://www.continental.com) Delta Airlines(+52 624 146 5005/http://www.delta.com) Frontier Airlines(+1 800 432 1359/ http://www.frontierairlines.com) Mexicana(+52 624 43 5353/ http://www.mexicana.com) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/ http://www.usairways.com)

All ground transportation can be found just outside the doors from the baggage claim areas. Aeroterrestre Taxis, bright yellow government operated mini-vans, are a good option. They are reliable and charge a controlled rate of MXN200 sparing travelers the annoyance of having to haggle. Regular taxis approximately cost MXN715. Hidalgo y L. Cardenas(+52 624 143 0090), L. Cardenas y Zaragoza(+52 624 143 0104) and Camino al Cerro y Boulevard Marina(+52 624 143 0105) are the area's most prominent taxi companies.

Astur Baja Services(+1 800 352 4990) provides passengers the option of a private vehicle(MXN1300 round trip) or a shared van(MXN200). The hitch is that advanced reservations are mandatory.

Bus service is a cheap alternative(MXN15), but woefully inconvenient. Passengers need to take a 10-minute taxi ride from the airport to San Jose del Cabo(usually costs about MXN55) and then from there grab a bus into Cabo San Lucas. But even then the bus deposits passengers about a mile outside of town, at the junction of Mexico 19 and the Cabo Bypass, necessitating a 20-minute walk, or another cab ride.

Rental car agencies include:

Advantage(+52 624 143 0909/ http://www.arac.com) Avis(+52 624 143 4607/ http://www.avis.com) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/ http://www.budget.com) National(+52 624 143 1414/ http://www.nationalcar.com) Payless(+1 800 729 5377/ http://www.paylesscarrental.com) Thrifty(+52 624 143 1666/ http://www.thrifty.com)

By Bus

Buses starting in Tijauna, about 1000 miles(1605 kilometers) to the north, can take 22-30 hours to chug into Cabo San Lucas. Autotransportes de Baja California(ABC)(+52 664 683 5681) and Tres Estrellas de Oro(+52 5549 8520) both service Baja's southern tip.

By Car

The Transpeninsular Highway, or better known as Highway 1, is the only thoroughfare leading into Cabo. It's huge on scenery, but limited on roadside services. Potholes, wandering cattle, and locals who find turning on their car lights to be too much of an inconvenience make driving at night a dangerous gamble. If possible only drive during the day and try to keep your gas tank as close to full at all times.

Getting Around Town

Walking is the fastest and most efficient way to negotiate Cabo's streets. The center of town is small and compact.

Driving in Cabo can be a challenge depending on the time of year. The streets, especially during the college spring break months of March and April or Easter, are clogged with vehicles all in search of parking. Free public parking can be found at the south end of Blvd Marina, but it generally fills quickly. Adding to the driving mayhem is that there are no street numbers, causing first time visitors to crawl along in their cars squinting out their windows for addresses that cannot be found.

Taxis are numerous and can be found at most hotels. Marina in Front of Plaza Las Glorias(+52 624 143 3290) and Cardenas y Zaragoza(+52 624 143 0104) Sitio Nuevo Atardecer and Transcabo are the more prominent companies in town. Rides around town cost MXN33-MXN55, while journeys north into the Corridor area average MXN220.

Buses service all of Cabo and the surrounding area. Most bus drivers when asked will stop at specific beaches and hotels.
©

Fun Facts

Cabo San Lucas State: Baja California Sur **Country**: Mexico

Cabo San Lucas by the Numbers

Population: 56,811(2005 Census) Average January Temperature: 20°C/ 68°F Average July Temperature: 32°C/ 90°F Average Annual Rainfall: 17.78 cm/ 7 in. Average Days of Sun: 350 Major language: Spanish. Nearly extinct languages: Aguasteco and Kiliwa

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: Tourism Electricity: 110-120 volts AC Time Zone:

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Cabo San Lucas Snapshot continued

GMT-7(GMT-6 daylight saving time/ Mountain Time(MST) Country Dialing Code: +52 Area Code: 624

Did You Know?

Cabo San Lucas was the main staging area for pirates during the late 1500s who feasted on Spanish galleons heavy with gold. It is also believed that Cabo San Lucas has been inhabited by humans for approximately 14,000 years.

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