

How do we love Mexico? Let us count the ways: zesty tequila, lively mariachis, diverse landscapes from desert to rainforest to beach ... Whether you want a ritzy rendezvous or a barefoot bash, Mexico can accommodate. Its range of resorts satisfies every budget; fun group outings run from whale-watching to cave snorkeling; and local touches (churros, anyone?) elevate weddings from good to *grandísimo*.

BEST FOR CULTURE

RIVIERA NAYARIT

Tradition and sophistication merge at this Pacific Coast haven just north of busy Puerto Vallarta. From the sleepy fishing village of Sayulita to the swanky resorts of Punta Mita, Riviera Nayarit is a top pick for couples looking to marry the beauty of Mexico's beaches with authentic culture.

FULL-SERVICE RESORT Nestled on Banderas Bay's powder-white sands, the 173-room Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita hosts some of the area's most stunning weddings, thanks to accomplished onsite wedding coordinators, scenic event spaces from beaches to the Tamai Garden, and a diverse range of activities, including a Jack Nicklaus golf course and a luxe Apuane spa. *Rooms from \$485.*

BOULIQUE RESORT Set along a steep cliff overlooking Sayulita Bay, the 42 one- to three-bedroom villas at Hotel Villa Amor feel like private Mexican mansions, highlighted by mosaic tiles, colonial-style iron doors and verandas with brilliant ocean views. Weddings can take place on the beach, in a historic courtyard surrounded by *palapas*, or in the "kissing garden" (great lawn). *Villas from \$115.*

INDIE VENUE With three sparkling pools, a palm-lined beach, and expansive ocean and mountain views, Martoca Beach Garden in Bucerías, along Banderas Bay, is the perfect spot for nature-loving couples. Follow a beach ceremony with a poolside cocktail hour and sunset reception for 15 to 300 guests. *Rental fee from \$1,500.*

PHOTO OP For a romantic photo shoot with a touch of mystery, Mexico photographer Jillian Mitchell's favorite spot is the historic Lo de Marcos cemetery, filled with massive stone archways and beautiful ruins 20 miles north of Punta Mita.

LOCAL TOUCH Keep your reception dancing fueled with Mexico's sweetest treat, the churro. Local wedding planner Kristee Smith recommends bringing in a festive cart that serves the deep-fried cinnamon-and-sugar dessert with ice cream and gooey toppings such as caramel and chocolate sauce.

GROUP ACTIVITY Gather your clan for a prewedding horseback ride through the jungle, coastal area and Sierra Madre Mountains with My Vallarta Experience tours. After fording rivers and following streams, take an afternoon swim under a waterfall.

BEST FOR GLAMOUR

LOS CABOS

Equal parts glamorous getaway and laid-back retreat, this Baja Peninsula paradise, located where the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez meet, lures regular visitors like Jennifer Aniston and Jessica Alba. Arid weather, super-fresh seafood and ritzy resorts will please your guests, and you'll love the wide variety of wedding sites, from hotel terraces and tropical gardens to jaw-dropping cliffs and miles of unspoiled sand.

FULL-SERVICE RESORT Colorful artwork, hacienda-style architecture and palm-studded courtyards make the 375-room Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort in Cabo San Lucas a great choice for couples who want to infuse local flavor into every aspect of their big event. Your day can be intimate or lavish (10 to 800 guests) with options such as two grand ballrooms and several lawn and beach sites overlooking the Sea of Cortez. *Rooms from \$165.*

BOULIQUE RESORT Saying I do at gorgeous Capella Pedregal affords you exclusive surroundings: The only road access to the resort is via a secret tunnel carved through a mountain. A mere 66 rooms — each with its own private plunge pool — are nestled within the 24 mountainside and oceanfront acres. Exchange

Traditions
for Two

INFUSE EVEN MORE CULTURE INTO YOUR FIESTA WITH THESE MEXICAN WEDDING CUSTOMS.

IN THE LOOP Incorporate a traditional Mexican wedding lasso into your ceremony. Typically made of white ribbon or decorative beads, the loop is placed around the couple's necks in a figure-eight and represents the everlasting bond of love.

GOLDEN HOUR In the traditional golden-coin ceremony, the groom presents his bride with 13 gold coins that have been blessed by a priest. The exchange symbolizes the couple's mutual trust and devotion.

ANCIENT PRACTICE Opt for a Maya ceremony, a shaman-led ritual that channels the universe's four elements: earth, fire, water and air.

HORSEPLAY Historically, a groom arrived at the ceremony on horseback, and at the end of the evening, he led his new bride home in a horse cart. For a more luxurious take, use a horse-drawn carriage instead.

FLOWER POWER In the bridal bouquet, include Mexico's national flower: the indigenous pink dahlia pinnata, a relative of the daisy that resembles a bright pinwheel.



Warm weather, fresh seafood and ritzy resorts will entice your guests, while you'll find a

vows on a cliff overlooking the Pacific; then hold your reception at the Beach Club or on El Farallon hillside terrace. **Rooms from \$650.**

INDIE VENUE Set along a secluded stretch of El Medáneo Beach overlooking the Land's End rock formation, Hacienda Cocina & Cantina offers 10 different event spaces (seating 35 to 300), all with atmospheric colonial decor such as hand-painted vaulted ceilings and wrought-iron chandeliers. *Weddings custom.*

PHOTO OP Downtown San Jose's historic buildings and colorful walls make the perfect backdrop for a vibrant portrait session. Jerome Dieu of Ana and Jerome Photography especially loves the arts district for its funky galleries and cafes.

LOCAL TOUCH Nothing screams "Mexican wedding" more than a mariachi band. *DWH* A-List Planner Sarai Flores of Signature Mexico wedding designers swears by Mariachi Mi Tierra, a 10-man ensemble that dons the traditional silver-adorned pants, fluffy bow ties and matching sombreros. Have the band strike up during the recessional and continue playing throughout cocktail hour.

GROUP ACTIVITY Shake off prewedding jitters with a yacht party. Set sail on one of Pisces Yachts' glass-bottom boats to Los Cabos'

iconic Arcos rock formation and Lover's Beach for snorkeling, whale-watching and sunbathing.

BEST FOR ADVENTURE

PUERTO VALLARTA

One of Mexico's most popular destination-wedding locales, this Pacific Coast retreat first established itself as the ultimate beach getaway in the 1960s, thanks to an appearance by Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton — and the tailing paparazzi. Today, the region might not be quite so undiscovered, but its appeal persists with luxurious hotels, a serious foodie scene and excursions galore.

FULL-SERVICE RESORT Tucked away on Banderas Bay, the 337-room Dreams Puerto Vallarta is close enough to the city to take advantage of its restaurants, night life and other attractions, yet far enough away to ensure plenty of peace and quiet. More than 20,000 square feet of event space includes several beach locations and an alfresco wedding gazebo. *Rooms from \$160 per person, all-inclusive.*