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Whale Watching at Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit

By Mark Rogers

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It's that time of year again, when travelers' thoughts turn to catching sight of migrating humpback whales. The Baja Peninsula and Los Cabos, in particular, have done a great job of promoting themselves as prime destinations for whale watching. However, a lesser known Mexico destination for whale watching — but one with just as many thrilling possibilities — is the Riviera Nayarit region on Mexico's Pacific coast.



The Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit features several infinity-edge pools and a la carte restaurants.

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Each year, Humpback whales migrate hundreds of miles south from the frigid north to mate or give birth in the warm and welcoming waters of Riviera Nayarit's Banderas Bay. Organized tours give visitors a chance to view these gentle giants up close.

The Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit in Nuevo Vallarta is making it easy for travelers to take advantage of the whale watching season. Its all-inclusive Whale Watching Package includes suite accommodations, taxes and gratuities, a la carte dining at a choice of restaurants, premium-brand beverages, 24-hour in-suite service, access to the fitness center and plenty of organized activities for adults and children alike.

Guests won't have to rough it at the Grand Velas, either. The resort has 267 one- and two-bedroom suites (two of which have handicapped facilities). Each suite is furnished in teak

woods imported from Bali and decorated in a contemporary style with light neutral tones and tropically influenced color accents. Guests can choose between Parlor Suites, Master Suites, Ambassador Suites, one- and two-bedroom Governor Suites, a three-bedroom Presidential Suite and the Imperial Spa Suite.

“One of Grand Velas’ greatest attributes is that all of the suites, no matter which category, have terraces with ocean views,” said Pilar Alvarado, Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit’s director of sales, tour and travel.

Amenities and features at the family-friendly resort include a 23,600-square-foot infinity pool, an infinity Jacuzzi, a children’s pool, a tennis court and its Kids Club. There are also excellent golfing, fishing, sailing and scuba-diving opportunities nearby.

Meetings attendees will find a fully equipped convention center with 25,321 total square feet of meeting space. The Grand Marissa Ballroom has a capacity for up to 700 people and can be subdivided into five different areas.

The resort’s 16,500-square-foot Grand Velas Spa is a member of Leading Spas of the World. Its signature treatment, the 50-minute Cora Massage, utilizes both indigenous oil and traditional Mexican healing techniques.

In addition to offering around-the-clock, in-suite dining, the resort also has four a la carte restaurants: Frida Fine Mexican Dining, with its delectable dish of annatto quail over mashed plantains; Lucca Mediterranean-Italian Cuisine; Piaf Traditional French Cuisine; and the Azul International Restaurant, which serves up Chinese, Japanese, Italian and Mexican dishes.

Last November, Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit debuted several new additions and features, including new Nespresso machines and 42-inch LCD televisions in all of the resort’s suites. The resort’s main pool now has a shakes and smoothie bar for kids, and all four of the resort’s fine-dining restaurants received new menus featuring a variety of traditional French, Italian and Mexican cuisines.

Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit overlooks Banderas Bay, which is also a 25-minute drive from downtown Puerto Vallarta. The 267 all-suite, all-inclusive resort is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World and a recipient of the AAA Five-Diamond Award.

The Details

Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit

www.grandvelas.com

Packages: The all-inclusive Whale Watching Package starts at \$352 per person, per night, based on double occupancy, and is available from Jan. 4 to March 31. Mention promotional code GVNYKWEWHALE.

Agent rates: Agents interested in experiencing the resort can contact sales@grandvelas.com to get the best available industry rate.