

# FOR THE BRIDE

SUMMER / FALL 2009

**NEW  
TWISTS**  
ON OLD TRADITIONS

**ELEGANT**  
GOWNS, BAGS,  
HEADPIECES  
AND JEWELRY

15  
WAYS TO  
TRIM &  
TONE

SEXY HONEYMOONS  
**ULTIMATE**  
GETAWAY  
RESORTS

BEAUTIFUL IN

*Blue*





Punta Mita

Vallarta Palace Spa

Four Seasons Punta Mita

Although it is Mexico's hottest resort region, Riviera Nayarit remains resolutely old school. While eager-to-please spots like Cancun and Los Cabos go all out to present Mexico as a non-stop fiesta, Riviera Nayarit plays it coy. Located just minutes from downtown Puerto Vallarta's bustling boardwalk and chock-a-block beachfront hotels and resorts, the towns of Riviera Nayarit maintain a laid-back vibe, punctuated with luxury resorts and golden sand beaches fringed with lush jungle. This west coast region is characterized for its many small fishing villages and farmers who travel to and from their fields on horseback along dusty streets. The contrast of new and old, make Riviera Nayarit the perfect place to get a flavor of Mexican life today—and how it was back then.

## NUEVO VALLARTA

This is the most developed—and most visited—town in the area, if you want to launch your exploration of the region from a luxurious home base, this is the place to start. And because all of the beachfront properties lie along a three-mile stretch of crescent-shaped Banderas Bay, you're all but guaranteed a front-row beach chair for viewing the spectacular Pacific Coast sunsets.

The luxe all-inclusive **Vallarta Palace** ([palaceresorts.com](http://palaceresorts.com)) resort offers some interesting touches. In addition to the complimentary mini-bar featuring top-shelf liquors, all rooms have a double Jacuzzi. Four restaurants offer a choice of Brazilian, Asian, Mexican or Italian cuisine, and you can catch a different show in the seaside amphitheater nearly every night. The clean, modern design of the **Grand Velas All Suites & Spa Resort** ([grandvelas.com](http://grandvelas.com)) sets it apart from the fiesta of colors found at many Mexican resorts.

Each of the property's 267 suites, which feature a private terrace overlooking the bay, is furnished with marble floors and teak furniture and decorated in earth tones. Some are also outfitted with Jacuzzis. The gorgeous spa offers the ultimate in one-on-one service from the moment you enter. Opt for the hydrotherapy treatment in the beautiful wet room,

which features a hot and cold plunge pool, waterfall and mini Jacuzzi designed just for legs and feet.

## SAYULITA

This sleepy town lies just 45 minutes up the coast from Nuevo Vallarta. Forty years ago, Sayulita was a collection of dusty streets roamed by skinny, seemingly ownerless neighborhood dogs and chickens. In those days, fishermen would go down to the bay early in the morning to cast their nets from their small, brightly colored boats. But in the late 1960s, North American surfers began flocking to the area, attracted by the warm waters and consistent waves year-round. However, their influence has had little impact on Sayulita—which is not to say you won't find yoga studios, reiki practitioners and boutiques selling everything from native folk art to pricey jewelry. The streets, which veer sharply up into the steep surrounding hills, are still cobblestone or dirt (in the June to October rainy season they may become a bit muddy). And the beaches are blessedly free of crowds. Amenities are plentiful but for the most part basic, and the food is simple but first rate. If you're a fan of seafood, particularly fish tacos, you've found heaven.

*Cocos Banana*, located in the main plaza, is loved by residents and visitors alike for its tasty breakfast (French toast, homemade muffins and amazing coffee) and the namesake dessert, a frozen banana dipped in chocolate and topped with coconut, granola and sprinkles.

If you tire of water-based thrills, head up to Rancho Mi Chaparrita ([michaparrita.com](http://michaparrita.com)) on the edge of town. There you can sign up for a horseback tour through the jungle or up to the peak of nearby Monkey Mountain. They also offer zip-line tours. The fantastic views will take your breath away.

## PUNTA MITA

While it's only eight miles from the rustic charms of Sayulita, the 1,500-acre gated community of Punta Mita feels a world away. If your idea of a

