

DESTINATION IS HIGH END & AFFORDABLE

Los Cabos is an A-list playground that's still growing in popularity

PAT LEE

We Are Flying. Well, not literally. It feels that way as a group of us pedal at top speed on mountain e-bikes on the beautiful coastline of the Mexican Baja Peninsula.

While we sprint along the Instagram-worthy white sand beach, we also keep our eyes peeled for whales.

It was the perfect finale to a cycling tour that meandered through the desert with stops along the way to learn about the various cacti and other natural points of interest found on the Tierra Sagrada ranch, an eco-preserve operated by Cabo Tours.

The outing also highlighted the region's unique ocean-mountain-desert environment, making it one of the more interesting ecosystems in the world.

So it's not surprising that Los Cabos has long been a playground of the rich and famous, and continues growing in popularity with a large jump in visitors in 2022.

After all, the glitterati aren't the only ones who enjoy year-round good weather, the aforementioned beautiful desert-meets-sea scenery, great restaurants, nightlife, and a lively arts and culture scene.

"Cabo is a high-end destination," says Maribel Aguirre, sales manager at the Hard Rock Hotel Los Cabos, one of the few all-inclusive properties in the region, which served as our host for our three-day stay.

"But it's affordable." Cabo, as it's commonly known, first gained its reputation as an exclusive destination for Hollywood stars and others who would fly in for sport fishing and enjoy the seclusion of the region.

That changed when the Golden Corridor Highway was built in the 1970s, connecting the towns of Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo, offering panoramic views of the Sea of Cortez on the Gulf of California and passing by hotels, villas and golf courses.

A side note: Ask how long it takes to get from A to B in Cabo and the answer is always "about an hour" given the limited access to and from the two populated areas.

If hiking isn't your thing, there are plenty of other activities to consider.

Sunset sailing and dinner aboard Animalon by the Sea: This three-hour sunset sail aboard the 49-foot Animalon by the Sea is the passion project of chef Javier Plascencia, who designed the boat that can accommodate up to 40 diners per outing.

The scenic and palate-pleasing outing includes a trip to the iconic rock formation The Arch off the southern tip of Cabo San Lucas, home of lolling and barking sea lions and dolphins.

While sailing past Lover's Beach and other landmarks, Plascencia's team will hand you a craft cocktail and serve up a mouth-watering five-course meal.

Flora Farms: For a unique desert experience, plan to spend a few hours at this amazing oasis just north of San José del Cabo. The 25-acre organic farm offers a transformative experience as soon as you enter the grounds to find a high-end boutique, farm-to-table eatery, spa and of course the lush, sprawling gardens that have been incredibly established in the desert.

Be sure to sign up for a farm tour, which can include a hands-on cooking class (be prepared to feel like your gym membership is a waste of money as you try your hand at milling masa to make tamales) that concludes with a delicious Mexican meal that you've helped prepare.

Art Walk in San José del Cabo: This charming historic town on the southern tip of the peninsula hosts a weekly Art Walk throughout its gallery district on Thursday evenings from 5 to 9 p.m., featuring pop-up vendor stalls in the town square. Drifting away from the square, you can pop in and out of small boutiques, gift stores and galleries, while perhaps grabbing a treat from one of the various cafés or food stalls along the way. Tourist or art aficionado, there's something for everyone at the weekly event.

Awaken Your Senses Dinner Experience: This seven-course dinner at the Hard Rock Hotel Los Cabos is a mind-blowing trip around the world as seen through amusingly presented and delicious tastes while paired with the music of different destinations — the U.K., the



The weekly Art Walk in historic San José del Cabo is a popular way to explore the town's gallery district. PAT LEE



Flora Farms, a 25-acre organic farm near San José del Cabo, offers farm tours and cooking lessons, and features a farm-to-table restaurant, spa and boutique. Visitors can try making tamales from scratch. PAT LEE

U.S., France among others — along with high-resolution video projection and an interactive touch table. The experience hits all the senses in the most fun way. It's only offered to guests of the resort for an add-on cost.

Cabo Adventures: You will see the

Cabo Adventures logo a lot while touring the region as they offer tours of all sorts on land and water. Along with the activities at their property at Tierra Sagrada ranch, including e-biking, ATV or camel rides and learning about their eco-projects, like turning camel dung into paper products and re-

cycling plastic, the company also does whale watching, diving and sailing excursions.

For more information check out these websites:

- # animalonbythesea.com
- # cabo-adventures.com
- # hardrockhotels.com/los-cabos
- # flora-farms.com



An e-bike excursion on a beach in Los Cabos offered by Cabo Adventures is the perfect way to experience the Baja Peninsula region of Mexico. CABO ADVENTURES



A sunset sail to the rock formation The Arch off the southern tip of Cabo San Lucas, home of lolling and barking sea lions and dolphins, is a must-do while visiting. PAT LEE