

# Relaxation Awaits In Puerto Vallarta



## THE DAILY TRAVELER

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I napped. I never nap. But off and on for a few hours a nap seemed like a perfectly reasonable activity as I laid in the shade of our poolside Bali bed cabana at Villa Premiere Boutique Hotel & Romantic Getaway in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

I'm not opposed to naps, but I feel there are better things to do with my time - especially when traveling. Blame it on the gentle swaying of this bed floating above the pool deck or the sound of the occasional break of the nearby Pacific Ocean.

Maybe I just felt more relaxed than usual when traveling. That was the point of this four-day visit to Puerto Vallarta back in August. We left our son at home and celebrated our 18th wedding anniversary at Villa Premiere, a small adults-only boutique resort just a

few blocks from all of the action of Puerto Vallarta's famed seaside El Malecon boardwalk, but far enough away to enjoy the peace and quiet of the water gently lapping against the shore.

It was nice to wade into the surf or relax in the warm waters of the infinity pool overlooking the beach with a drink in hand from the swim-up bar, not thinking about entertaining our over-active son.

We picked Puerto Vallarta generally and Villa Premiere specifically as a good place to have our first getaway as a couple without our son in a few years.

We spent three nights in mid-August, during the middle of the rainy season. That meant lower prices and no crowds, so we boarded our early morning flight with a connection through Houston and headed to Mexico. We

were on property by early afternoon following a short 10-minute cab ride from the airport.

Puerto Vallarta is a year-round destination, but summertime has fewer crowds as the temperatures rise and the chance for afternoon showers during rainy season increases. I actually assumed our afternoon pool time could get rained on - possibly even enough to send us inside. But other than a short spurt of sprinkles our first day and a short shower later on the second day, we had sunny skies and great beach weather our whole time in Puerto Vallarta.

I've been to Puerto Vallarta before; it was a June visit and we had evening rain a couple days of the trip, but never at a time to interfere with beach and pool time. In addition to warm weather, calm seas and a lively downtown, that earlier visit from a few years ago taught me Puerto Vallarta holds its own on the dining scene.

The city's street taco scene is unmatched. This most recent visit only confirmed Puerto Vallarta's reputation for exceptional dining, and we enjoyed several solid meals on property as well as in the city including our big anniversary meal at Café des Artistes, one of the city's top restaurants with a French twist.

Puerto Vallarta has solid options for adventure, whether it's riding ATVs, hiking or ziplining in the rainforest high above the city or snorkeling, sailing and other watersports in the Pacific. Our only adventure this visit was hitting the market and having a leisurely walk along the Malecon.

There are lots of nightlife, dining and shopping options along several city blocks centered on the Malecon overlooking Banderas Bay and the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The Puerto Vallarta area doesn't lack for lodging options, from family-friendly resorts with kids clubs to romantic villas on the hillsides overlooking the bay to various apartments and condos in the city and all-inclusive hideaways.

We stayed at Villa Premiere, an all-inclusive beachfront property with 80 rooms and suites. I love traveling with our son, but sometimes adult time is a must. Traveling with him means our lodging choices rarely center on relaxation or luxury.

The Villa Premiere Boutique Hotel & Romantic Getaway provided all of that with three restaurants, pool and lounge bars, butler service in our room, a spa and two pools. We didn't spend all of

our time on property, although it wouldn't have been the end of the world if we did.

But Puerto Vallarta is a great destination, and one that it's good to get away from the luxury of the resort here and there.

The hotel actually helped us make that happen. The concierge arranges tours, and we signed up for a private guide who drove us around all the highlights, including the market, Malecon and a shop to buy a few bottles of Mexican vanilla. Our guide also drove us into the hills above the city and several vantage points of Los Arcos National Marine Park.

We also had a private tequila tasting, and hiked to small waterfalls before returning to our hotel for a late lunch.

We don't always sign up for tours, but without a car it wouldn't have been possible to get out of the city and see the region.

Puerto Vallarta is the type of destination that has a little bit to satisfy most travelers: luxury, relaxation, beaches, outdoors, scores of spots to find great food and friendly people who make it all just a touch more enjoyable.

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