

## The Best of Los Cabos & Baja

**A**lthough many consider Baja Mexico as an extension of Southern California, it is actually a region rich with its own culture, history, and attractions. The area's tremendous variety attracts every kind of traveler with an unequalled mix of sophisticated resorts, rustic inns, exquisite beaches, desert landscapes, and exhilarating adventures. Following are my personal favorites—the best places to go, the best restaurants, the best hotels, and my picks for must-see, one-of-a-kind experiences.

### 1 The Most Unforgettable Travel Experiences

- **Harvest Festival in the Valle de Guadalupe:** Mexico's wine country comes alive in true fiesta style each year, late August to early September, during this annual wine festival. The celebrations combine wine tastings with parties, concerts, blessings of the grapes, and other events. See p. 147.
- **Exploring Baja's Missions:** From the late 17th through the 19th centuries, Jesuit, Franciscan, and Dominican friars founded a succession of missions in Baja California. The missions were part of the many institutions that the Spanish crown used to colonize the territories of "Nuevo España." Explore one or several along the "Camino Real Misionero." See p. 118.
- **Arts Festival in Todos Santos:** Although Todos Santos is filled with a creative, artistic ambience at any time, it reaches a peak each February during the annual Arts Festival. Held since the early 1990s, the festival continues to grow in popularity and content. See p. 87.
- **Centro Cultural Tijuana:** The ultramodern complex houses an impressive combination of cultural venues, including the Museo de las Identidades Mexicanas (Museum of Mexican Identities), gallery space for changing exhibitions, a concert hall, and an OMNIMAX theater, all showcasing the best of Mexico's culture and performing arts. See p. 146.
- **Foxploration!:** When the 1997 movie *Titanic* was filmed here, at a seaside sound stage created for the production of the movie, Hollywood turned its attention to Rosarito Beach for even more movie making. The original production facility has been turned into an interactive museum and entertainment center that brings into focus the art of moviemaking and special effects, especially those made along Baja's coastline. See p. 160.
- **Bullfights in Tijuana:** No matter what your opinion of bullfighting may be, the pastime is an undeniable part of the sporting culture of Mexico, drawing from its Spanish heritage. Considered among the best venues for watching this sport in North America, Tijuana's dual bullrings feature top matadors in their contest against bulls. The season runs from May to September. See p. 149.

- **Cave Paintings of Central Baja:** Primitive rock paintings on the walls of caves in central Baja are the only examples of this type of art on the North American continent. Their origin remains a mystery, and researchers say they could date back as far as 10,000 years, created during the Prehistoric Age. Regardless of who created them, or when they were created, the colorful, mystical murals are impressive. The journey to reach them

is also an adventure in itself. See “Baja’s Cave Paintings: An Exploration of the Mysterious” on p. 116.

- **Carnaval in La Paz:** The best Carnaval (or Mardi Gras) party in Baja takes place in La Paz, where round-the-clock revelries take place just prior to Lent. The oceanfront *malecón* is the site of most of the festivities as this generally tranquil town swings into party mode. See p. 94.

## 2 The Best Beach Vacations

- **Los Cabos Corridor:** Dramatic rock formations and crashing waves mix with wide stretches of soft sand and a rolling break here. This stretch of coast is also home to Baja’s most luxurious resorts, verdant golf greens, and even a specialty surf camp. Start at San José del Cabo and work your way down to the famed Playa de Amor at Land’s End in Cabo San Lucas. Some beaches here are more suitable for contemplation than for swimming, which isn’t all bad. See chapter 4.
- **Todos Santos:** Although the town of Todos Santos itself is just inland from the beach, it’s near enough to beautiful stretches of pristine beaches, where whales can easily be sighted offshore during the months of December through May. During summer months, these shores are home to nesting turtles. Year-round, an eco-surf camp specializes in teaching the art of surfing to women, though they usually have lessons for both sexes. The town itself is part artist outpost, part pure relaxation. See chapter 4.
- **La Paz:** If laid-back is what you’re after, this town—the official capital of Baja Sur—offers peaceful, small-town

beach life at its best. Most accommodations are smaller, inexpensive inns, with a few unique, more luxurious places tossed in. Explore a succession of rocky coves and sandy beaches, or focus your efforts on underwater vistas or the offshore islands, where you’ll encounter a wealth of marine life, as well as great diving and snorkeling. You can also visit nearby Isla Espíritu Santo, where you can mingle with the resident colony of sea lions. See chapter 5.

- **Loreto:** Once the center of the mission movement in Baja, Loreto is both a town of historical interest as well as a naturalists’ dream. Offshore islands provide abundant opportunities for kayaking, snorkeling, diving, and exploring, and the beaches to the south of town are downright dreamy. If you tire of the big blue, there are plenty of inland explorations nearby as well. See chapter 6.
- **Rosarito to Ensenada:** Northern Baja’s beach towns may be primarily known for attracting a rowdy party crowd on weekends, but whether or not you’re here for the revelry, you’ll also find this stretch of coast ideal for great surfing and dramatic diving. See chapter 7.

### 3 The Best Museums

- **Museo Histórico Comunitario:** It's a little-known fact that this region—now known as Mexico's wine country—was originally settled by Russian immigrants who were granted political asylum by Mexico in the early 1900s. A tribute to these pioneers of grape cultivation in the area, this small but intriguing museum tells the story of this curious time. An adjacent restaurant serves traditional Russian food. See p. 174.
- **Museo de las Misiones, Loreto:** The missionaries who came to Baja in the 17th through 19th centuries did more than work on converting the local populations to Christianity. This museum features a complete collection of historical and anthropological exhibits pertaining to the Baja peninsula, and includes the zoological studies and scientific writings of the friars. It also documents the contribution of these missions to the demise of indigenous cultures. See p. 118.
- **Museo de Antropología (Anthropology Museum), La Paz:** If you can't make it to see the actual cave paintings of central Baja, this museum has large, although faded, photographs of them along with a number of exhibits on various topics concerning the geology and history of Baja California. See p. 101.
- **Serpentarium, La Paz:** Reptiles are the star of this mostly open-air natural museum that offers plenty of opportunities to get up close and personal with the snakes, iguanas, lizards, crocodiles, and other reptilians of Baja. Children seem especially happy to explore here. See p. 102.
- **Museo Regional de Historia, Mulegé:** It's not so much this museum that fascinates me; it's more about the fact that it was once a state penitentiary that allowed its inmates to leave during the day—on the condition they return at dusk! For some reason, escape attempts were rare in this honor-system prison. The museum details the operation of this unique entity and the town of Mulegé. See p. 130.
- **Museo de Cera, Tijuana:** Many of the figures in this wax museum are creepy, but it's hard not to be fascinated by the eclectic mix of personalities memorialized in wax that range from Aztec warriors and Dominican friars to Bill Clinton and Whoopi Goldberg. Don't miss the Chamber of Horrors. See p. 145.
- **Museo de las Identidades Mexicanas (Museum of Mexican Identities), Tijuana:** Located inside the Centro Cultural Tijuana, this permanent collection of artifacts from pre-Hispanic through modern times displays the gamut of Mexican historical and cultural influences, leaving visitors with a better understanding of this complex society. See p. 146.

### 4 The Best Outdoor Adventures/Active Vacations

- **Whale-Watching in Magdalena Bay:** Few sights are as awe-inspiring as watching whales in their natural habitat, and few places in the world can offer as complete an experience as Mexico's Baja peninsula, especially in Magdalena Bay. It's part of the El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve, where a large number of whales can be seen easily. The various protected bays and lagoons in this area on the Pacific coast are the preferred winter waters for migrating gray whales as they

journey south to mate and give birth to their calves. See chapter 6.

- **Scuba Diving off Los Cabos:** Great dive sites are very accessible from Los Cabos, with the favorites being Gordo Banks and Cabo Pulmo. Most impressive, however, are the “sand-falls” (similar to a waterfall, but instead of water flowing over a ledge, sand flows in an underwater current) that even Jacques Cousteau couldn’t figure out. See chapter 4.
  - **Surfing the Northern Baja Coast:** Northern Baja has the perfect combination of perpetual right-breaking waves, cheap places to stay, and a community of fellow surfers. It’s also home to Killers at Todos Santos Island, a legendary wave that takes a boat ride to reach, as well as many other great breaks. See chapter 7.
  - **Kayaking the Islands off Loreto:** The offshore islands and inlets surrounding Loreto are a kayaker’s paradise, and numerous outfitters are equipped to take you on day trips or overnight kayak excursions. Especially popular is exploring Isla del Carmen, a mostly inaccessible and private island just offshore. See chapter 6.
  - **Snorkeling with Sea Lions at Los Islotes:** A playful, curious colony of more than 250 California brown sea lions resides on Los Islotes, a cluster of red-rock islands offshore from La Paz. Numerous tour operators can take you there, a 2½-hour trip by boat, after which you can snorkel or dive while watching the underwater antics of these sea mammals. See chapter 5.
  - **Golf in Los Cabos:** Los Cabos has evolved as one of the world’s top golf destinations. It currently has seven courses open to challenge golfers and several more under construction. The master plan calls for a total of 207
- holes of play. In addition to the championship design, quality, and exquisite desert-and-sea scenery of these courses, Cabo offers very reliable weather. The ample and intriguing variety of courses challenges golfers of all levels. See chapter 4.
- **Exploring the Caves in Central Baja:** The goal of a trip to these caves is to see the mysterious cave paintings that potentially date back to the Pre-historic Age, but the journey itself to the caves in Central Baja is a fascinating adventure. Depending upon your destination, treks can be mildly challenging to difficult. These treks will take you through the canyons, crossing streams, and up challenging climbs. In many protected areas, access is allowed only with an authorized guide. The caves are in the San Francisco de la Sierra and Santa Martha mountains in Central Baja. See chapter 6.
  - **Sportfishing in the Sea of Cortez:** You’re as likely to reel in the big one here as anywhere in the world, where bringing in a 45-kilogram (100-lb.) marlin is considered routine. The Sea of Cortez has abundant sport fishing—which was the original lure to adventure travelers years before easier access brought more traditional tourism. Among your likely catches are sailfish, wahoo, tuna, and the famed marlin, in black, blue, and striped varieties. See chapter 4.
  - **Hiking the National Parks of Northern Baja:** In northern Baja, several national parks provide ample opportunities for hiking, camping, climbing, and other explorations. Among the most notable is the **Parque Nacional Constitución de 1857**, a 5,000-hectare (12,350-acre) preserve at an altitude that averages 1,200m (3,936 ft.), and, contrary to what you may expect in Mexico, has

a large lake in an alpine setting. In the **Parque Nacional Sierra San Pedro Mártir**, you'll find the Picacho del Diablo (Devil's Peak), a mountain

with a summit at 3,095m (10,152 ft.) from which you can see both oceans and an immense stretch of land. See chapter 7.

## 5 The Best Places to Get Away from It All

- **Rancho La Puerta:** In 1940, well before resort spas were the rage—or even an acceptable form of vacationing—Rancho La Puerta opened its doors. It was called a “health camp” then, and today it is considered a pioneer of the modern spa and fitness movement. In the more than 50 years it's been in operation it has consistently been at the cutting edge of promoting health and wellness. It emphasizes a mind/body/spirit philosophy in one of the most relaxing and pristine settings you can imagine. For those looking to get away from it all in search of your best self, this is the place. See p. 155.
- **Mulegé:** Literally an oasis in the desert, Mulegé attracts those looking for a small, funky, and lovely town where one can slow down the pace of life to a crawl. You'll find an assortment of accommodations here, plus nearby places to park an RV or pitch a tent, with opportunities nearby for nature explorations. And if you feel the need to connect with others, there's the ubiquitous Mulegé pig roast, which is more than a meal here—it's a tradition. See chapter 6.
- **Camping near Loreto:** The beautiful succession of tranquil coves and beaches bordering Loreto makes for great places to set up camp. Once settled you can kayak the coast or indulge in other opportunities to explore this magnificent landscape. See chapter 6.
- **La Playita:** Although it's close to the easy air access and diversions of Los Cabos, La Playita is a quiet beach to use as a starting point for fishing expeditions. Located just to the north of the town of San José del Cabo, it's a great spot to get away—yet still be near to dining, golf, and other activities, should you feel so inclined. See chapter 4.
- **Valle de Guadalupe:** Mexico's wine country bears little resemblance to the tourism-oriented wineries of Northern California. Here you'll find plenty of peace and quiet in the midst of acres of vineyards. A couple of small inns welcome visitors who want to stop and smell the grapes—or vintages produced here. And, its eclectic history makes exploring the area a treat. See chapter 7.
- **Danzante Adventure Resort:** This resort's location, 40km (25 miles) north of Loreto on pristine Ensenada Blanca Bay makes it far away from most everything, but you won't miss a thing. Lovely suites filled with hand-made furnishings are perched on a hill facing the sea, while ocean breezes gently rock the hammocks found on every palm-thatched terrace. All meals and a host of activities are included in the rate. Getting to know the engaging and adventurous couple that owns Danzante is one of the main reasons to book a stay here. See p. 120.
- **Todos Santos:** This artists' outpost is becoming increasingly popular for those looking for the climate and beaches of southern Baja without the crowds of Los Cabos. It's both a cultural oasis as well as an oasis in the true sense of the word: In this desert landscape, Todos Santos enjoys an almost continuous water supply that

supports verdant groves of palms, mangos, avocados, and papayas. The quaint inns, creative cuisine, and

lovely colonial-style architecture prevalent in the town cultivate an ambience of the artistic. See chapter 4.

## 6 The Best Shopping

**Some tips on bargaining:** Although haggling over prices in markets is expected and part of the fun, don't try to browbeat the vendor or bad-mouth the goods. Vendors won't bargain with people they consider disrespectful unless they are desperate to make a sale. For best results be insistent but friendly.

- **Carved Furniture in Rosarito:** Rosarito Beach's Bulevar Benito Juarez has become known for its selection of shops featuring ornately carved wooden furniture. Comparing the offerings has become easy, with so many options in one central location. See p. 158.
- **Art in Todos Santos:** Whether it's oil on canvas, pottery, or weavings, you'll find very high quality original works of art in this town that is building a reputation as a truly cultural community. The annual Arts Festival, held every February, brings an even greater selection of works to choose from. See p. 87.
- **Chinatown in La Paz:** Although small in size, La Paz's Chinatown is authentic, drawing from the days when Chinese immigrants were brought to Baja to work the mines here. From dim sum to shops selling Chinese herbs and medicines, you'll feel transported to another culture in this unique Mexican shopping experience. See p. 103.
- **Ibarra's Pottery, La Paz:** Not only can you shop for hand-painted tiles,

tableware, and decorative pottery here, but you can also watch it being made. Each piece offered for sale in this popular shop is individually made. See p. 103.

- **San José's boutiques:** As San José del Cabo becomes increasingly gentrified, so does its shopping experience. In southern Baja, the best boutiques and shops offering clothing, jewelry, and decorative items for the home are found within the lovely colonial buildings in this tree-lined town. See p. 56.
- **Avenida Revolución in Tijuana:** This rowdy drive is shopping central for the entire Baja peninsula. The most popular items offered here are electronics, traditional Mexican souvenirs, T-shirts, and prescription medicines—sans prescription. See p. 146.
- **Mercado de Artesanías, Tijuana:** For a more authentic and spirited marketplace atmosphere to pick up your colorful sombrero or serape, head to this collection of over 200 stalls in Tijuana, where bargaining is both accepted and expected. You'll also find pottery, clothing, and crafts from throughout Mexico. See p. 151.
- **Duty-Free in Cabo San Lucas:** Fine jewelry, watches, perfumes, and cosmetics are offered at duty-free prices in Cabo's UltraFemme store, the largest duty-free shop in Mexico. See p. 79.

## 7 The Hottest Nightlife

Although, as expected, Cabo San Lucas is home to much of Baja's nightlife, that resort city isn't the only place to have a

good time after dark. Along the northern Pacific coast, beachside dance floors with live bands and extended happy hours in

seaside bars dominate the nightlife. Here are some of my favorite hot spots:

- **Nikki Beach, Los Cabos:** The global haven of the hip has recently arrived in Cabo San Lucas, on the beachfront of the Meliá San Lucas hotel on Medano Beach. Lounge on oversize beds draped in white, day or night, while sipping colorful cocktails and watching the beautiful people groove to music spun by the worlds' hottest DJs. See p. 84.
- **Cabos's Cantinas:** The nightlife scene in Los Cabos originated in a collection of rowdy beach bars, which still hold their appeal to this day, regularly packing in the crowds until the first fishing boats head out to sea. The Giggling Marlin and El Squid Roe still rank as the top spots for revelers looking for the laid-back but riotous good time that seems only to happen here. See chapter 4.
- **Tijuana's Avenida Revolución:** This street ranks among the world's most famous—or infamous—for nighttime carousing. "La Revo," as it's commonly known, is probably the single most common introduction

tourists have to Mexico, though it offers only a glimmer of the country's wealth of attractions. No matter the night, you're likely to find a party atmosphere here on par with the best of a Mardi Gras celebration in full swing. Bring plenty of aspirin for the next morning—as overindulgence is the norm. See chapter 7.

- **The Tijuana Club Scene:** Tijuana's nightlife is not limited to Avenida Revolución: Increasingly, the city is hosting a sophisticated club scene that welcomes internationally renowned DJs and the requisite selection of martinis. Most of these clubs are concentrated in the Zona Río. See chapter 7.
- **Beach Bars of Rosarito and Ensenada:** It doesn't have to be spring break in Rosarito or Ensenada to find a similar let-loose party atmosphere here. The favored spot is Papas & Beer, which has a location in both of these beach towns. And both regularly draw a young and spirited crowd for endless-summer style fun. See chapter 7.

## 8 The Most Luxurious Hotels

- **Las Ventanas al Paraíso** (Los Cabos Corridor; ☎ 888/525-0483 in the U.S., or 624/144-0300; www.lasventanas.com): Understated luxury by the sea, Las Ventanas perfectly melds desert landscapes and sophisticated pampering in this elegant yet intimate resort. Special extras like telescopes and fireplaces to private pools and rooftop terraces make each suite a slice of heaven. Their seaside infinity pool is one of my favorite places in the world, helped, in no small part, by the exceptional service offered by the resort's pool butlers. See p. 62.
- **Esperanza** (Los Cabos Corridor; ☎ 866/331-2226 in the U.S., or 624/145-6400; www.esperanzaresort.com): A creation of the famed Auberge Resorts group, this dramatically designed resort, set on a bluff overlooking two small coves, feels more like a collection of villas than a hotel. Hallmarks are its exceptional spa, award-winning restaurant, and impeccable service. See p. 62.
- **One&Only Palmilla** (Los Cabos Corridor; ☎ 800/637-2226 in the U.S., or 624/146-7000; www.oneandonlypalmilla.com): Currently the most popular Mexican resort with the Hollywood crowd, the completely renovated Palmilla has regained its spot as the most deluxe hotel in this

seaside playground known for sumptuous accommodations and great golf. The new, exceptional spa, fitness center, and yoga garden, as well as a restaurant by renowned chef Charlie Trotter, are added bonuses. See p. 63.

- **Camino Real Loreto Baja Beach & Golf Resort** (Loreto; ☎ 800/873-7484 in the U.S., or 613/133-0010; www.caminoreal.com): Set on its own private cove just south of the historic town of Loreto, this is central Baja's most luxurious place to stay. An adjacent golf course and a calm beach

for swimming add to its appeal. See p. 119.

- **Camino Real Tijuana** (Tijuana; ☎ 877/215-3051 in the U.S., or 664/633-4000; www.caminoreal.com/tijuana): Bold architecture in vibrant colors are signature Camino Real, as is the collection of fine Mexican art that graces the lobby here. This city hotel is considered Tijuana's most popular, with spacious, work-friendly rooms and a selection of services that cater to taking care of business. See p. 152.

## 9 The Best Budget Inns

- **Cabo Inn** (Cabo San Lucas; ☎ 624/143-3348; www.caboinnhotel.com): This former bordello is the best budget inn in the area. Rooms are small but extra clean and invitingly decorated, amenities are generous, and the owner-managers are friendly and helpful. Ideally located, close to town and near the marina, the inn caters to sportfishers. See p. 80.
- **Posada Señor La Mañana** (San José del Cabo; ☎ 624/142-1372; www.srmanana.com): Set in a grove of tropical trees, this simple and simply inviting inn offers guests an abundance of hammocks strewn about the property as well as the use of a community kitchen, which encourages impromptu get-togethers. See p. 58.
- **Hotel Mediterraneo** (La Paz; ☎ 612/125-1195; www.hotelmed.com): Mixing Mexican with Mediterranean decor details, the result here is a stylish, economical inn. The location near the *malecón* means you're close to everything. The on-site Trattoria

La Pazta restaurant is a favorite of mine in La Paz. See p. 105.

- **Hotel Las Trojes** (Loreto; ☎ 613/135-0277; www.loreto.com/costa2.htm): This unusual bed-and-breakfast is built from authentic wooden granaries (*trojes*) from the Tarascan Indians, brought over from the state of Michoacán. A beach bar and the friendly service are additional reasons to stay. See p. 121.
- **Hotel Hacienda Mulegé** (Mulegé; ☎ 615/153-0021): Right in the heart of Mulegé, this former 18th-century hacienda is a comfortable and value-priced place to stay, complete with a small shaded pool, restaurant, and popular bar. See p. 132.
- **La Fonda** (South of Rosarito Beach; no phone): Since the 1950s, La Fonda has welcomed repeat guests drawn to its dramatic setting perched on a cliff above breaking surf and the quiet of a place with no phones. The best rooms have fireplaces, which are a welcome addition during winter months. See p. 162.

## 10 The Best Unique Inns

- **Casa Natalia** (San José del Cabo; ☎ 888/277-3814 in the U.S. or 624/142-5100; www.casanatalia.com):

This renovated historic home, now a charming inn, is an oasis of palms, waterfalls, and flowers against the



desert landscape. Each room and suite is an artful combination of modern architecture and traditional Mexican touches. The restaurant is the hottest in town. See p. 57.

- **Hotel California** (Todos Santos; ☎ 612/145-0525 or -0522): After undergoing a complete renovation in 2003, the Hotel California has now emerged as the hippest place to stay in the area. Jewel-tone rooms and a profusion of candles and eclectic accents make this a study in creative style. Although you can check out any time you please, chances are you won't want to after being lured in by the inviting pool area and the popular La Coronela Restaurant and Bar. See p. 88.
- **Adobe Guadalupe** (Valle de Guadalupe; ☎ 649/631-3098; www.adobe.guadalupe.com): The six rooms of this inn are among the only places to stay in Mexico's wine country, and are inviting in their own right. It's also a boutique winery, offering its vintages

with the four-course dinners served each evening (for an extra charge, though breakfasts are included). See p. 175.

- **Posada de las Flores** (Loreto; ☎ 877/245-2860 or 613/135-1162; www.posadadelasflores.com): Adjacent to the main plaza in this town steeped in history, this inn is the perfect setting from which to explore—rooms are individually decorated in fine Mexican antiques and arts and crafts. It also boasts a rooftop glass-bottomed swimming pool. See p. 120.
- **Punta Chivato** (north of Mulegé at Punta Chivato; ☎ 615/153-0188; www.posadadelasflores.com): Enjoy the 3 hectares (7½ acres) of desert landscape and tranquil, private beach that come with a stay in the large and beautifully decorated suites and guest rooms here. Meals are included, as are a host of light activities. There's even a private airstrip to make it more accessible. See p. 130.

## 11 The Best Dining Experiences

In this section, best doesn't necessarily mean most luxurious. Although some of the restaurants listed here are fancy affairs, others are simple places to get fine, authentic Mexican cuisine.

- **“C,” at the One&Only Palmilla** (Los Cabos Corridor; ☎ 624/146-7000): Under the direction of celebrated chef Charlie Trotter, a meal at “C” is a fusion of exquisite flavors, perfectly melding Mexican and Continental cuisine. See p. 63.
- **Laja** (Valle de Guadalupe; ☎ 646/155-2556): This lovely adobe-and-stone gourmet restaurant has become a reason in and of itself to visit Mexico's wine country. A daily fixed menu of four to eight courses is prepared, which regularly draws a crowd and wins mounting accolades. See p. 176.

- **Café Santa Fe** (Todos Santos; ☎ 612/145-0300): Excellent northern Italian cuisine prepared in the exhibition kitchen of this gracious cafe has been a driving factor in drawing people to Todos Santos over the past decade. Enjoying lunch here in the flower-filled courtyard is a particularly wonderful way to pass an afternoon. See p. 90.
- **Mi Cocina** (San José del Cabo; ☎ 624/142-5100; www.casanatalia.com/dining.cfm): It could be the creative menu, the captivating garden setting, the hibiscus-infused martinis, or it could be the gracious hospitality of owners Nathalie and Loic. Whatever the reason, Mi Cocina at Casa Natalia gets my vote for the single best dining experience in Los Cabos.

There may possibly be better restaurants in the area, but for me, the combination of winning elements can't be topped. See p. 60.

- **The Mulegé Pig Roast** (Mulegé): It doesn't matter where you stay in Mulegé, you'll invariably be confronted with the possibility of a pig roast. As they say here, it's more than a pig, it's a party; and it's the must-do tourist activity in town, one in which the pig is roasted Polynesian-style in a palm-lined open pit for hours while guests enjoy libations. See p. 132.
  - **El Boleo** (Santa Rosalía; ☎ 615/152-0310): Throughout Mexico, bakeries offer a small version of the French baguette known as *boleos*, and I've concluded that they've been named after this bakery, in Santa Rosalía. This bakery has been operating since the late 1800s when the French Compañía de Boleo (part of the Rothschild family holdings) obtained a 99-year lease from the Mexican government to operate the area's copper mines in exchange for creating employment opportunities. Of course, the French executives
- running the operation needed their bread, which continues to be addictive to this day. See p. 135.
  - **Cien Años** (Tijuana; ☎ 664/633-3900): One of the finest gourmet Mexican restaurants in Baja, Cien Años will intrigue even the most adventurous of diners with regional specialties that may include garlicky ant eggs or buttery *guisanos* (cactus worms). See p. 15.
  - **La Embotelladora Vieja** (Ensenada; ☎ 646/174-0807): In the Bodegas de Santo Tomás winery, this stylish restaurant features a Baja-French menu carefully crafted to complement wine. See p. 171.
  - **Lobster in Puerto Nuevo** (Puerto Nuevo): It seems almost every restaurant or simple shack serving food in this tiny seaside town has locally caught lobster on the menu—and there's good reason why. It's fresh, and it's delicious. The Puerto Nuevo way of serving it is grilled and accompanied with fresh tortillas, salsa, limes, beans and rice, and the price is just over \$10, making it well worth a stop in this town. See p. 164.