

MAZATLAN IS FOR TOURISTS TOO!

As far as calling Mazatlan a major tourist destination, well, luckily for the natives, (maybe a little unluckily for the expats), Mazatlan can now lay claim to that title.

But, unlike Puerto Vallarta, Cancun, and Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan is a true living city first and foremost, with fishing and agriculture playing an important part in the economics.

You can select from more than 90 hotels and condominium properties. And, not surprising to me, 50 are four and five star resorts. Mazatlan, as I've said in my books, *Retire In Luxury* and *Money Saving Mexico*, is a real Mexican town, with the added bonus of being a great tourist destination.

Many resorts offer golf, and sometimes they are in partnership with other resorts, so you can enjoy different beautiful courses. If the "greens" aren't the way to your heart, take advantage of the beautiful weather and beaches and just relax. Perhaps you want to do some deep sea fishing and pull your own "big one" out of the ocean and even have it cooked for you. Or, lay back and indulge yourself at some of the local restaurants specializing in their wonderful fresh seafood. Music and festivities are just waiting for you, almost every night, around the beautiful green "square" in the middle of the historic district of Mazatlan, as well as at most of the resorts in the Mazatlan area. My favorite is a stroll on the Malecon - where it's family oriented.

Some of the newer resorts such as Pueblo Bonito Emerald Bay are worth going to visit, to enjoy the ambiance and beauty. And to tour around Mazatlan, you can not beat the fun of riding in a polmonia – sort of a super golf cart. They are available almost anyplace – and yes, you can ask for a better price.

You'll find everything from quiet beaches, to interesting shops, exciting touristy fun, such as a canopy adventure – where, on raised platforms, you'll take a nature walk – up-high! You can take a harbor cruise, take a tour on a mountain bike, snorkel, kayak, ride horses, visit and walk the beaches of Stone Island, take a tequila tour, ride a catamaran, surf at the Olas Altas beach, visit the aquarium, take a jungle tour. Then, be adventurous - see and experience the real Mexico by visiting the Pino Suarez Mercado, tour the historic district with the Angela Peralta Theater, and relax under the canopy of trees at Plazuela Machado, travel the malecon – sort of an updated boardwalk along the coast that connects the old city to the new and enjoy all the statues dedicated to everything from the polmonias to their favorite beer. See the world's second-tallest lighthouse, find the scoop about just why Ice box Hill is so called, visit the beautiful historic cathedral, take a side trip to the little communities of Rosario, Copala, Chametla, El Huajote. Travel to the foothills of the impressive Sierra Madre Mountains. And after a busy day of all this, go back to your beautiful resort, relax and enjoy a deliciously cold margarita, and see if you are fortunate enough to catch the "green blip" the instant the sun disappears into the ocean. Yes, Mazatlan is a great place to call home, but it's for tourists too!

A RECENT EMAIL EXCHANGE:

nickidee wrote:

Hi Barbie,

I love getting your emails even though I don't have the kind of money it would take to live in some of the more popular places, like Mazatlan or Guatalajara. But I do think I can make a go of it in Guanajuato city, where I made a few wonderful friends, both native and ex-pats. I'm going there in July to visit my friends and see what prices are like for renting as well as buying.

I pass your newsletters on to friends of mine who think I'm crazy for wanting to move to another country. And they are ALWAYS saying how dangerous Mexico is! Mind you, these people have never been to Mexico, but they all have a million reasons why I shouldn't. I guarantee you, THEY will be the ones coming to stay at my place for free!!!!

A good friend of mine just returned from a week in Guatalajara and fell in love with it. She now says she wants to move there and I do believe she's serious. By the way, she's NOT one of the folks who ever thought I was crazy for wanting this change in my life. I'm thrilled that she really wants to research the possibilities.

I'm forwarding this newsletter to her, as she is starting a research folder on Mexico. I may be there before her, but it's wonderful to know that sooner or later, one of my good amigas will be joining me, and all the other happy ex-pats in beautiful Mexico.

Thanks for all the valuable and fun information. Keep the good word coming!!

*Adios, por ahora,
Diane*

Dear Diane, Thanks so much for your great email :) I think I will put it in my blog - people will love reading it. And, yep, bet you'll need a little spare room - or a futon! Best to you, Barbie

One more time, then I'll put it to rest

everyday, Dick and I both get "junk" mail that is labeled to look as though it comes from retireinluxury...it doesn't. It's just a phenomenon that is a reality - anyone can set up an email system that puts false "from" information. We all know that Bank of America and other legitimate entities really don't put out all that junk email to people - well, neither do I. There is no way to stop it - but, I will continue to try to properly identify any email that is sent out from here, so you know it's information you actually want. Barbie

Want to share with you all, this lovely email I received from a gal whom I sent to Sylwia and Kris Desoto of InvestMazatlan Realtors:

April 10, 2009

Barbie & Dick:

Just a quick thank you for the referral to Sylwia who is an outstanding realtor and such a nice person. My trip to Mazatlan was productive and reaffirmed my hunch that it is a place to seriously consider for retirement. BTW, I was safe and never once felt any fear of an American lady traveling alone.

Cheryl Weaver

AND...

AMPI SELECTS FIRST WOMAN

The founder of InvestMazatlan, Sylwia DeSoto, elected to be the first woman & the first foreigner member of the Board of Directors of the Mazatlan section of the Mexican Association of Real Estate Agents.

CONGRATULATIONS SYLWIA !!

COMMUNICATIONS IN MEXICO

Well...I did it again – wrote what I thought was a pretty good bit of information and promptly accidentally deleted it. As long as I have worked on computers, you'd think I'd not be doing such stuff, but – well, it does happen. I get going and then I think of something else, and finally I have about six documents open and maybe three different programs and then – boom – I close the wrong thing – don't save it and it goes off into the never-neverland of computer-dom... So, here I go again...

Finally, now in Mexico, Satellite TV service is available and delivered by a high-power direct-broadcast satellite, allowing service to customers across the entire country. You'll need the little satellite dish antenna (an ear) and of course, that ugly little black box that sits on top of your televisions, but, now, the signal, being satellite, can reach past mountains and other such obstacles, to give good TV service in Mexico.

Due to a joint venture between MVS Communications and EchoStar Corporation, producing an entity called Dish Mexico, affordable satellite TV service has finally arrived. It used to be that many people, when moving to Mexico, would buy their service in the States, as I explained in my book, *Retire In Luxury*, keep a billing address in the States, and then take the little box and antenna, surreptitiously, to Mexico – a practice highly frowned upon, but then – what'cha gonna do?

Now, expats wanting English speaking satellite tv, can choose from StarChoice, DishNet, DirecTV, and offering programs broadcast in both English and Spanish, SkyTV. CableVision offers many different services including phone, internet and cable and is the biggest service in Mexico.

Packages available for tv include children's programming such as Disney and Discovery Kids, Nick, and even Cartoon Network (fabulous for the Grands who come visiting), Entertainment Television, The SciFi channel, Universal Channel, educational channels such as Discovery and Animal Planet and The History Channel. Sport fiends will be relieved to know they haven't been overlooked, with ESPN, EXPN2 and Fox Sports being included. TNT will give you movies and there will be music channels – much like in the States. You can always choose packages that cost more, if you're a real TV watcher. There's always a drawback – guess that's probably the time you may have to wait to receive the installation of whatever package you choose – of course - it's Mexico.

Cable TV is competitive in Mexico, with about 160 different Mexican cable companies vying for your business. MegaCable and CableVision both have good reputations and even include "bundled" services that include cable, internet and phone, same as in the States.

Since I brought it up, yes, internet service is available in many places – including high speed DSL.

PRICES IN ALGODONES, MEXICO, 2009

100mg Atenolol -100 tabs – \$6.35

50 mg Atenolol – 100 tabs - \$3.92

500 mg Ampicillin (for everything – amoxicillin is more specific) – 100 tabs – \$5.83

Bexident – after oral surgery or dentistry mouth rinse – 250ml – about \$9.

Retin-A – 40% .5 – one tube, \$1.47 – so I got 6.

Glasses – single vision including exam, includes the poof in your eye, glaucoma test – for me – \$70. I could have spent from \$50 to \$150 – but choose the frames that gave me the whole deal for \$70.

Glasses – for Steve – bifocal – no line - his totaled \$70 – including exam. Transition - changes darkness in the sun - \$40 more - which Steve did not opt for, since he wanted them mainly for reading and studying.

Again, we stopped in a couple of places, asking prices, and choose the least expensive offering – Very happy.

Dental – Dick: 12 fillings (9 redo's (taking out the old silver and replacing it with white – looks just like a tooth – can't even see the fillings now) plus 3 very small cavities that we thought the dentist should just go ahead and do, as long as we were there) for Dick @ \$40 per tooth. (They threw in a free cleaning for Dick).

Steve: Had 9 fillings replaced, same as Dick, plus a front tooth had chipped off and they 'bonded' that (added material that looks just like the tooth itself and it matches the other front tooth now) – just beautiful. All for \$40 per tooth. Steve passed on the cleaning – guess he had set in the dentist chair long enough.

During this stay – Monday and Tuesday, June 22 and 23, 2009, we stayed at the Days Inn I wrote about earlier – it was now \$64 for 2 queen beds, \$58 for Steve's single room.

My Trip to the Mexican Dentist

by Steve Parks

(Middle Son)

Summary: I saved over 80% by getting expert dental work done in Algodones, Mexico. The work was performed quickly, completely and professionally by members of the Gator Dental Group headed by Dr. Miguel Fuentes (928) 377-4562 (US). I also saved more than half on a pair of eyeglasses at Algodones Optical.

I recently decided to change careers so, now that I am a full time student, I look for ways of saving money where ever possible. After hearing of my mom and dad's good experiences and savings at the dentist office in Algodones, Mexico I was ready to give them a try. (Algodones translates to "cotton" in Spanish.)

Before going to Mexico, I went to see a dentist in my home town of West Hollywood, CA just to see if I actually needed some work done – I'd had no mouth pain but was overdue for a checkup. In the past, while I was working, I normally saw a dentist every six months but I hadn't seen one in about two years prior to making that appointment.

The dentist near my home gave me a check up with full X-rays for an introductory price of \$65. At the time I thought that was a reasonable price. He diagnosed that I had ten teeth that needed attention, all of them old fillings that needed to be replaced. The X-rays showed that I had no problems underneath my existing crowns and fillings. The dentist prioritized the planned work into three categories from urgent to not so urgent. The single first tooth to be refilled would cost \$225. So, armed with that information, I asked my mom to make an appointment for me the next time she and my dad went to go to see Dr. Fuentes at Gator Dental Group in Algodones. We arranged for the three of us to drive to Mexico during my summer break from school.

The trip was easy. From Phoenix, we took I-10 West to 85 South. Near Gila Bend we took I-8 West to Yuma. The trip from Phoenix to Yuma takes about 3 ½ hours. Just past Yuma we traveled over the Colorado River into California then took the Algodones St. exit (Rt. 186 South). After exiting and driving about a mile, past a couple of RV parks, we saw the large secure parking lot run by the local Quechan Indian Nation on our right and parked there on the US side of the border. (Parking fee \$5.) In sight was the Algodones town water tower, surrounded by the small town just over the boarder (about 50 yards, maybe less).

Walking across the border without waiting, Gator Dental was easy to find – just a ten minute walk from the car past the calls of the pharmacy hawkers and T-shirt and wallet sellers. The office was clean and since my parents were previous patients, we were greeted like old friends. Dr. Fuentes gave me an exam and came to the same conclusion as my US dentist. Ten fillings needed to be redone. I was happily surprised that he could fix them all immediately for \$40 per tooth with the work guaranteed.

Comparing his price to my US dentist price of \$225 per tooth, I would be saving 82%. Incredible. Plus the work would not be dragged out over months and could be completed that day. (For your reference, they perform quick teeth whitening for \$200 and crowns made for about \$150.)

There are dental and optical labs within the town, where out of office work is performed, so we saw many scrub-clad workers making rounds between the offices to the labs.

So, Dr. Fuentes put me at ease by saying not to be nervous and to let him know immediately if I felt any pain. He completed all of my work in a couple of hours. In my opinion, he is an expert and a very talented dentist. He was able to bond a chip in one of my front teeth so now, all of my teeth are not only healthy but my smile looks great! And I saved a lot of money. My work at Gator Dental cost \$400 where at home I would have had to spend \$2250!

Algodones is a great place to save on several other medical related necessities including prescription medications and eyeglasses. Also there are almost as many discount liquor stores as pharmacies along the way to the dentist and optician's offices. While my dad's teeth were being worked on, Mom and I found and purchased a pair of lineless bifocal glasses that I am very happy with for the bargain price of \$70 at Algodones Optical. They had many lens and frame styles to choose from at great prices. I had my eyeglass prescription with me but most offices will test your eyes for free. Most eyeglass offices can have your glasses made for you in an hour or two.

Coming back into the US through customs was fast and easy with a passport. Remember that you must have your passport and US citizens are allowed to return with 1 liter of distilled spirits per 30 days.

Getting near Yuma's Mexico Border



Added by Barbie: I also got a pair of glasses on this trip. Exam, and out the door for \$70.

I could have gotten a pair for \$50 - total, if I had chosen a different frame. Most of my glasses are from the Dollar Store, so I decided to splurge - this time.



The Gator Dental office we go to is in the Callejon Alamo (Alamo Alley), on the west side. (They have two offices in Algodones.) Open: 8:00am - 4:00pm, Monday - Saturday. Sunday by appointment See my blog at www.retireinluxury.com for video of Gator Dental.

**My books are full of important information
you'll be very glad you have
to help you make some of the most important decisions
of your life!**



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Enjoy! Wishing the best of the good life to you and yours!

Barbie and Dick

