

A person with short brown hair and glasses is shown in profile, holding two tropical drinks. The drink on the left is in a short, wide glass with ice and a lemon wedge. The drink on the right is in a tall, narrow glass with ice, a lemon wedge, and a small umbrella. They are standing by a swimming pool with a blue fence and palm trees in the background.

LA IGUANA'S FAVORITES

**Our little guide to eating,
drinking, dancing & enjoying
Puerto Vallarta**

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several wavy, overlapping lines in the colors of a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

WELCOME TO LA IGUANA!

One of the best things about staying at La Iguana is that you're already right in the middle of the action. The Romantic Zone is colorful, walkable, welcoming and home to an incredible mix of restaurants, taco stands, cafés, shops, beach clubs, cocktail bars, cabaret, drag shows and some of Puerto Vallarta's best-known LGBTQ+ nightlife.

This isn't meant to be a directory of everything Vallarta has to offer. These are simply places we think are worth knowing about — some distinctly gay, some wonderfully local, and some simply really good.

Most importantly, don't feel like you need to follow a plan. Wander around, try somewhere that catches your eye, change bars halfway through the night, eat tacos at midnight and leave a little room for the unexpected. Go out and enjoy Vallarta. Come back to La Iguana to rest.

EAT

Puerto Vallarta has an extraordinary food scene, and staying in the Romantic Zone puts many great places within an easy walk.

Our advice? Mix it up. Have a beautiful dinner one night, eat tacos on the street the next, and don't be afraid to venture beyond the obvious tourist spots.



BREAKFAST & BRUNCH

Coco's Kitchen: A longtime Vallarta favorite with a charming tropical courtyard. Great for a slower breakfast or brunch.

La Palapa: Start the day right on Los Muertos Beach. A Puerto Vallarta classic where breakfast comes with ocean views, your feet almost in the sand, and one of the city's most iconic beachfront settings.

El Dorado: Right next door to La Palapa and another wonderful beachfront option for a leisurely breakfast or brunch. Great food, ocean views and an easygoing atmosphere make it an especially nice way to start a vacation day.

A Page in the Sun: Part café, part bookstore and very much a neighborhood institution. A relaxed place for coffee and a casual breakfast while watching the Romantic Zone wake up.

Casa Nicole: A more polished breakfast option in the Romantic Zone. A great choice when you're in the mood for a slightly more refined and leisurely breakfast.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a stack of pancakes. The pancakes are golden-brown and topped with a dusting of white powdered sugar. A thick, amber-colored syrup is drizzled over the stack, pooling on the plate below. Several fresh fruit slices, including a banana and strawberries, are scattered around the pancakes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

The Pancake House: A casual neighborhood favorite for a classic breakfast. As the name suggests, pancakes are a big part of the appeal, along with plenty of familiar breakfast favorites. Easy, relaxed and perfect when you're craving a traditional morning meal.

El Campanario: This one is farther from La Iguana, in Downtown Vallarta right in front of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe — but we think it's absolutely worth the trip. A beloved local favorite for authentic Mexican breakfasts, freshly handmade tortillas and a wonderfully unpretentious atmosphere. If you want a more traditional, local breakfast experience, this is one we'd happily send you a little farther for.

CASUAL LUNCH & DINNER

Pancho's Takos: Just steps from La Iguana, Pancho's Takos is a Vallarta favorite famous for its tacos al pastor, sliced straight from the trompo. Recently selected by the MICHELIN Guide Mexico 2026, it's casual, authentic and almost always busy. Expect a line, especially at night.

Marisma: Fish and shrimp tacos done the Vallarta way. Nothing fancy — just really good seafood.

Joe Jack's Fish Shack: A neighborhood favorite for fish tacos, fish & chips, seafood and cocktails. Casual, fun and consistently popular.

El Barracuda: Right across from La Iguana, this new Zona Romántica location brings one of Vallarta's longtime seafood favorites right to the neighborhood. Known for fresh seafood, ceviches and tacos, it's an easy choice for a casual lunch or dinner just steps from the hotel.

DINNER WORTH DRESSING UP FOR

Yeo Zona Romántica: Just around the corner from La Iguana, Yeo offers contemporary Japanese cuisine in a stylish, modern setting. Known for excellent sushi, fresh sashimi and robatayaki, it's a great choice when you're craving something different from Mexican food.

La Palapa: One of Puerto Vallarta's classics. Dinner directly on Los Muertos Beach, with your feet almost in the sand. Especially beautiful around sunset.

ICÚ: An intimate, contemporary Mexican restaurant in the Romantic Zone, known for creative seasonal cooking and local ingredients. Awarded a MICHELIN Bib Gourmand in 2026, it's a great choice for a special dinner without the formality—or price tag—of traditional fine dining.

Tre Piatti: A charming Italian restaurant in the Romantic Zone, known for its house-made pasta, creative regional Italian cuisine and frequently changing menu. Intimate and welcoming, it's a great choice for a relaxed but special dinner.



Tintoque: For guests who really enjoy food. Contemporary Mexican cooking with local ingredients and a more chef-driven experience.

Café des Artistes: A Vallarta institution for a special evening. Elegant food, beautiful tropical garden and a romantic atmosphere.

Barcelona Tapas: Go for tapas, cocktails and the panoramic view over the bay. Sunset is particularly beautiful, and it's worth checking whether there's flamenco or live music that evening.

Kaiser Maximilian: A longtime Romantic Zone favorite known for its Austrian and European-inspired cuisine, warm service and loyal following. The setting is understated and traditional, but the food is the reason people return year after year.

Café de Olla: A Puerto Vallarta classic with traditional Mexican food, generous portions and plenty of local character. Casual rather than fancy, but absolutely worth including for dinner when you're craving an authentic, lively Mexican meal.

EAT LIKE A LOCAL

Some of Vallarta's best food doesn't require a reservation — or even a dining room.

Follow the crowd. Try a taco stand. Order something you've never heard of. Have a late-night taco after the clubs.

If a tiny place is packed with locals, that's usually a very good sign.



GAY BEACH & DAYTIME



A gay vacation in Vallarta doesn't only start after dark. Los Muertos Beach has long been at the center of the city's LGBTQ+ scene, and you'll find everything from a simple chair in the sand to full-service beach clubs and pool parties.

Mantamar Beach Club: For the full Vallarta gay beach-club experience: pool, beach, music, drinks, DJs and a social crowd. Some days are relatively relaxed; special events and weekends can be a completely different story. Check the current schedule.

Blue Chairs / Green Chairs: The old-school gay beach experience. These neighboring spots have long been part of Vallarta's LGBTQ+ beach scene. Less polished than the newer luxury beach clubs, they're great for people-watching, meeting people and spending an easy afternoon on Los Muertos Beach.

Sapphire Beach Club: A good alternative when you're looking for comfortable beach service and a somewhat more relaxed day by the ocean.

Cheeky Pool Club: A small, intimate gay pool club tucked away in the Romantic Zone. Clothing-optional, relaxed and social, with drinks, light bites and a lush private courtyard — a fun alternative when you want a pool day without the big beach-club scene.

START THE NIGHT

One of the best things about gay nightlife in the Romantic Zone is that you don't have to commit to one place. Start with a cocktail, walk a block, see somewhere that looks fun, go in — and repeat.

Cheeky Lounge: Practically across the street from La Iguana, Cheeky Lounge is a relaxed LGBTQ+ bar and an easy place to start the night. Friendly, casual and social, it's perfect for a first drink before heading deeper into the Romantic Zone nightlife.

Apaches: Small, friendly and social. A longtime LGBTQ+ neighborhood bar and an easy place to start the evening with a martini.

One Six One: A more polished cocktail option. Great when you want a proper drink and conversation before the night gets louder.



Blondies: Frozen cocktails, casual energy and a natural stop on the way back from the beach or before dinner.

The Corner Bar: Small, comfortable and social. A good choice if you're traveling alone or actually want to talk to people rather than shout over a dance floor.

Elixir Mixology Bar: A queer, women-owned cocktail bar that helps show just how diverse Vallarta's LGBTQ+ scene really is. Cocktails, DJs, music and a welcoming mixed crowd. It is currently closed for renovations but will reopen on October 30, 2026 — and we didn't want to leave it out!

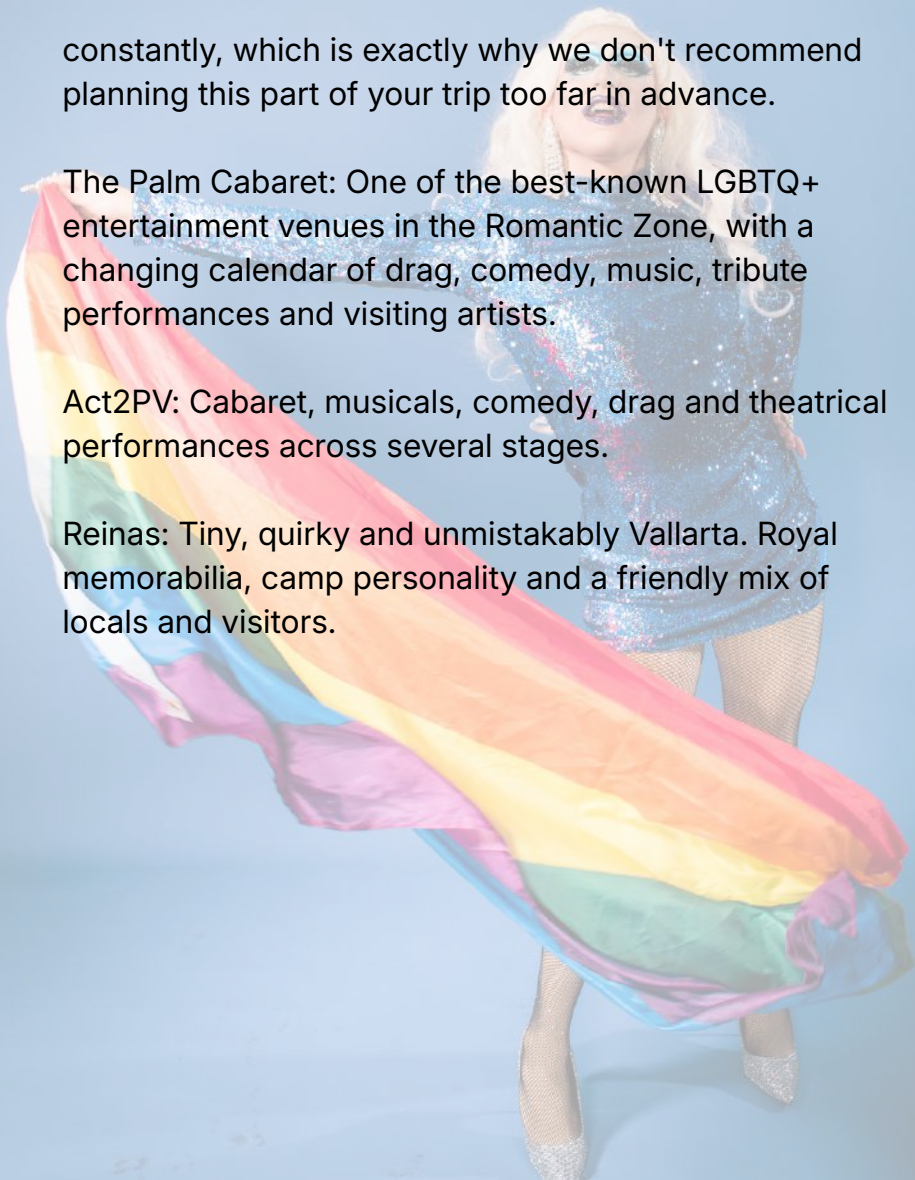
DRAG, CABARET & SHOWS

constantly, which is exactly why we don't recommend planning this part of your trip too far in advance.

The Palm Cabaret: One of the best-known LGBTQ+ entertainment venues in the Romantic Zone, with a changing calendar of drag, comedy, music, tribute performances and visiting artists.

Act2PV: Cabaret, musicals, comedy, drag and theatrical performances across several stages.

Reinas: Tiny, quirky and unmistakably Vallarta. Royal memorabilia, camp personality and a friendly mix of locals and visitors.



WHAT'S ON TONIGHT?

Vallarta's LGBTQ+ entertainment scene changes constantly, with guest performers, drag shows, DJs, theme nights, circuit parties and special events throughout the season.

For current listings, check:

Gay Guide Vallarta — nightlife and event listings around the LGBTQ+ scene.

Out & About PV — local LGBTQ+ news, nightlife and current event information.

The venue's own Instagram or website — especially for The Palm, Act2PV, Mantamar, Industry and STUDS.

READY TO PARTY?

Now we're getting serious! One of the best things about staying at La Iguana? Most of Vallarta's best-known gay clubs are right here on our own street.

Yes, really! So there's rarely a reason to choose only one — just step outside and start exploring.

Mr. Flamingo: Open-air, social, pop music and often overflowing onto the street. It's one of the easiest places to start dancing and one of the best places to watch the gay nightlife district come alive.

La Noche: A longtime gay Vallarta stop with dancing, drinks and a rooftop terrace.

Paco's Ranch: A Vallarta classic. Loud, unapologetically fun, Latin, dance-heavy and known for drag shows. One of those places you should probably experience at least once.

CC Slaughters: More dance club than neighborhood bar. High energy, late nights and a good option when you're ready to properly go out.

Industry: Big-room club atmosphere, DJs, dancing and — depending on the night — a more circuit-oriented crowd.

SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT

Gay Vallarta isn't one scene. That's part of what makes it fun.

Garbo: A quieter alternative to the big clubs, with a piano-bar and cabaret feel.

Kooky Karaoke: Because sometimes the correct decision after a few drinks is karaoke.

STUDS: For the bear/leather side of Vallarta's nightlife, with theme nights and a very different atmosphere from the big dance clubs.

Culture: Art, food, drinks and LGBTQ+ community come together in a more relaxed setting.

Anonimo: Smaller and more intimate than the big clubs. A social video-bar atmosphere that can be a good stop during a night of bar hopping.

ADULTS ONLY - FOR THE CURIOUS

Puerto Vallarta's gay scene also includes men-only venues, saunas, cruising spaces and adult entertainment. They aren't everyone's thing — and that's perfectly fine — but they're part of the nightlife here.

Wet Dreams: Right next door to La Iguana and definitely for adults only. This men-only gay strip club is best known for its dancers and signature shower shows. If you're curious about the more risqué side of Vallarta's gay nightlife, you won't have to go very far.

NOT EVERYTHING HAS TO BE GAY

We love being in the middle of Gay Vallarta. We also love Vallarta. A night outside the LGBTQ+ circuit can be just as much fun.

El Colibrí: Excellent cocktails in a beautiful courtyard, with DJs adding energy on selected nights.

Yambak: Craft beer, pizza, music and a younger, alternative crowd.

La Bodeguita del Medio: Mojitos, live Cuban music and dancing. If you're in the mood for salsa rather than pop and circuit music, this is your night.

Blind Tiger: Speakeasy-style cocktails and a more intimate atmosphere for nights when you want something polished rather than loud.

And sometimes the best option is simply walking the Malecón, stopping wherever the music sounds good and seeing where the evening takes you.

THE PERFECT GAY DAY IN VALLARTA

1.Late breakfast in the Romantic Zone. Sleep in! You're on vacation!

2.Los Muertos Beach. Grab a chair and some drinks or spend the afternoon at a beach club.

3.Back to La Iguana. Shower. Rooftop pool. Siesta. Reset.

4.Cocktails & Dinner

5.Drag or Cabaret

6.Mr. Flamingo / La Noche: Time to turn up the volume!

7.Paco's / CC Slaughters / Industry until LATE

8.Whenever you're done — La Iguana! Come home and sleep.

Tomorrow, you can do it all over again!!!

DISCOVER VALLARTA

As much as we love our neighborhood, don't spend your entire vacation within six blocks of La Iguana.

Walk the Malecón. Cross the bridges to Isla Cuale. Visit the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Wander uphill through the cobblestone streets. Watch the sunset. Eat street corn. Try raicilla, mezcal and tequila. Take a boat somewhere you can't reach by car.

If you have more time, spend a day discovering Yelapa, Las Ánimas, Quimixto, the Botanical Garden, San Sebastián del Oeste or one of the small communities around Banderas Bay.

Puerto Vallarta is one of those places that's often best enjoyed without a strict itinerary.

A FEW USEFUL THINGS

Groceries & Essentials:

You'll find OXXO and small convenience stores throughout the Romantic Zone for water, snacks, drinks and everyday essentials. For a larger grocery run, Ley and Soriana are two convenient full-size supermarket options, both a short taxi or Uber ride away.

For something much more local, Mercado Municipal Emiliano Zapata is just a few steps from your door. It's a traditional neighborhood market where you'll find fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, seafood, tortillas and other everyday groceries — a great place to shop like a local.

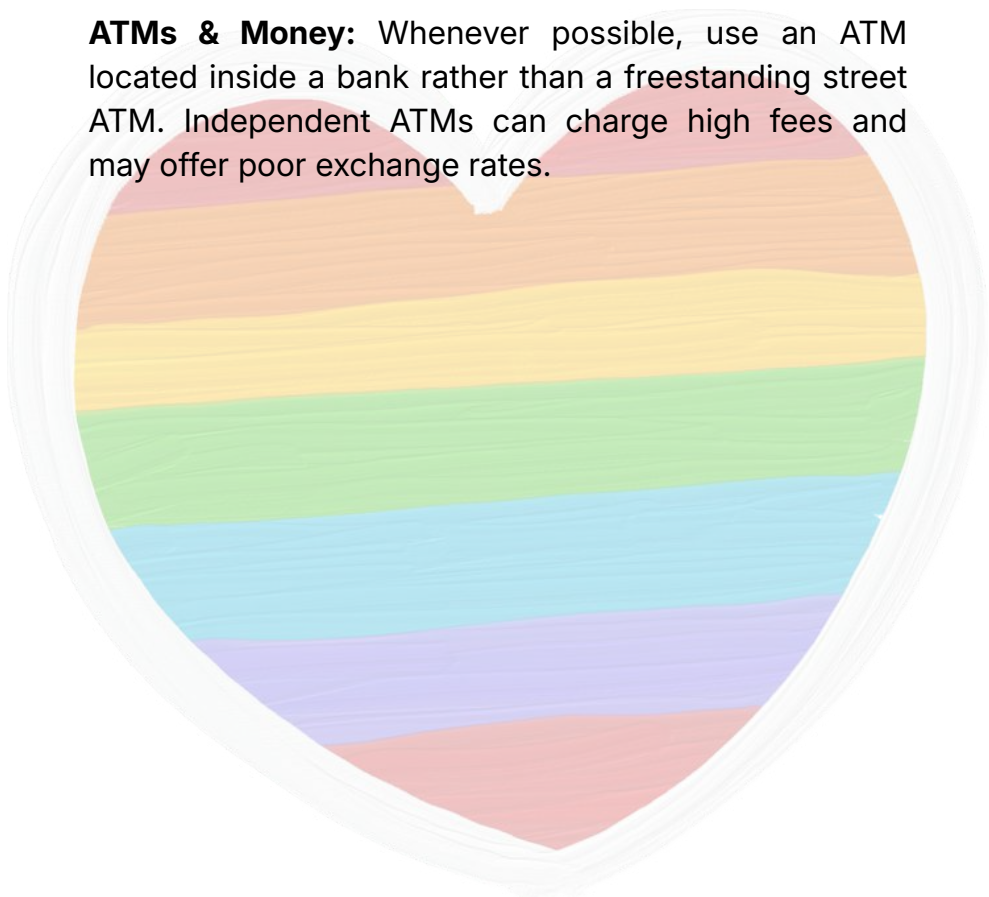
Pharmacies:

There are numerous pharmacies throughout the Romantic Zone, including several within walking distance. Many sell toiletries, sunscreen and basic medications in addition to prescriptions.

Medical Care: For anything more serious, Puerto Vallarta has private hospitals and urgent-care facilities, including CMQ Downtown on Basilio Badillo, conveniently located in the Romantic Zone.

Emergency: 911

ATMs & Money: Whenever possible, use an ATM located inside a bank rather than a freestanding street ATM. Independent ATMs can charge high fees and may offer poor exchange rates.



ONE LAST THING...

Don't try to experience Puerto Vallarta from a checklist. Some of the best nights here start with "let's just have one drink" and end somewhere you hadn't planned to go. Talk to people. Walk around. Try something new. Be respectful. Be yourself! Go out and enjoy the nightlife. Come back to La Iguana to rest!

Thank you for staying with us.

We hope you fall a in love with Puerto Vallarta as much as we are — and that we'll see you back at La Iguana soon!