



Bahía de Banderas Travel Checklist

A printable pre-trip checklist for first-time visitors to Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit, Mexico

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How to use it: print it, save it to your phone, or use it as your pre-trip planning sheet. This checklist covers Nuevo Nayarit, Bucerías, La Cruz, Punta de Mita, Sayulita, San Pancho and nearby beach towns. Entry rules can change, so always verify official immigration sources before you go.

Quick essentials

- ☐ Your passport is valid for the whole trip, and you checked whether your nationality requires a Mexican visa.
- ☐ Your Mexico visitor status is understood: FMM/FMMd for foreign visitors, with the allowed stay set by Mexican immigration.
- ☐ Your flights, hotel address, activity bookings and return/onward ticket are saved offline.
- ☐ Your arrival plan is ready: Puerto Vallarta airport transfer, authorized taxi, rental car or ride-share/taxi plan.
- ☐ Your destination area is clear: Nuevo Nayarit, Bucerías, La Cruz, Punta de Mita, Sayulita, San Pancho or another town.
- ☐ Your money plan is ready: pesos, backup card, bank ATM strategy and small bills for tips/taxis.
- ☐ Your beach kit is packed: reef-safe sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, swimsuit, sandals and dry bag.
- ☐ You saved emergency numbers, insurance details and your country's consulate information.

6-8 weeks before you go

- ☐ Check whether your nationality needs a Mexican visa. Do not assume rules are the same for every passport.
- ☐ Confirm your passport is valid for the whole trip; check your airline's validity rules before booking.
- ☐ Understand the FMM/FMMd visitor record. Air entries are often handled digitally by immigration; land entries use the official INM FMM process and must be validated at the border.
- ☐ Choose your base carefully: Nuevo Nayarit for resorts, Bucerías for a relaxed town feel, La Cruz for marina/food, Punta de Mita for luxury, Sayulita for surf/nightlife, San Pancho for a calmer beach vibe.
- ☐ Compare flights into Puerto Vallarta International Airport. Most visitors to Bahía de Banderas still arrive through PVR, even when staying in Nayarit.
- ☐ Book travel insurance that covers medical care, delays, cancellations and beach/adventure activities.
- ☐ Check seasonality: dry season is best for beach days; summer/rainy season is greener, warmer and more humid.
- ☐ Reserve popular activities early: Marietas Islands, boat tours, surf lessons, whale watching in season, food tours and private transfers.

Foreign visitor note: An FMM is not a visa. It is the record that confirms your visitor status in Mexico. The exact process depends on whether you enter by air, land or sea. Use official INM/SRE sources, not paid look-alike websites.

3-4 weeks before you go

- ☐ Save digital and printed copies of passport, visa if required, flight confirmation, hotel address and travel insurance.
- ☐ Confirm your hotel or rental check-in time and ask whether airport pickup is offered.
- ☐ Plan transportation from PVR: private transfer, authorized taxi, rental car or a clear pickup plan for taxis/ride-share options.
- ☐ Download offline maps for Nuevo Nayarit, Bucerías, La Cruz, Punta de Mita, Sayulita, San Pancho and Puerto Vallarta airport.
- ☐ Set up international roaming, eSIM or a local SIM plan before arrival.
- ☐ Notify your bank or make sure your card works internationally; bring at least one backup card.
- ☐ Create a flexible daily plan. Town-to-town distances can look short on a map but take longer with traffic or coastal roads.
- ☐ Check cancellation policies for hotels, tours, transportation and boat trips.

Area tip: Bahía de Banderas is spread out. Staying in Nuevo Nayarit feels very different from staying in Sayulita or Punta de Mita, so match the town to your trip style before booking.

1 week before you go

- ☐ Check weather, ocean conditions and whether rain may affect boat tours, surf lessons or outdoor plans.
- ☐ Confirm all bookings: hotel, flights, airport transfer, tours, restaurants and spa reservations.
- ☐ Save your hotel address in Spanish and the nearest landmark for taxi drivers.
- ☐ Prepare pesos for tips, taxis, beach vendors, small restaurants and local transportation.
- ☐ Pack medications in original packaging and keep prescriptions or doctor's notes for important medicines.
- ☐ Download Google Translate Spanish, offline maps, airline app, bank app and tour confirmation files.
- ☐ Share your itinerary with someone at home, including hotel/town name and flight details.
- ☐ Check baggage rules for sunscreen, liquids, beach gear and souvenirs.

Weather tip: Tropical rain often comes in bursts, especially in summer. A light rain layer and flexible afternoon/evening plans help a lot.

Packing checklist

- ☐ Passport, visa if required, FMM/FMMd proof or entry stamp information, flight details and hotel address.
- ☐ Swimsuits, breathable outfits, comfortable walking sandals, beach cover-up and one nicer outfit for dinner.
- ☐ Reef-safe sunscreen, after-sun lotion, sunglasses, hat and reusable water bottle.
- ☐ Waterproof phone pouch or dry bag for boat tours, beach days, surf lessons and sudden rain.
- ☐ Light rain jacket or compact umbrella if traveling during rainy season.
- ☐ Basic medicine kit: stomach medicine, pain reliever, motion sickness tablets, bandages and personal prescriptions.
- ☐ Chargers, power bank, eSIM/SIM tool, headphones and a small day bag.
- ☐ Copies of important documents stored offline and in cloud storage.

Beach tip: Bring less than you think to the sand. Leave passports, extra cards and valuables locked at your hotel when possible.

Arrival day in Bahía de Banderas

- ☐ At immigration, check the date or allowed stay written/stamped in your passport or digital entry record.
- ☐ Keep your passport and visitor record/entry stamp information safe for the entire trip.
- ☐ Use official airport transportation or your confirmed transfer; ignore aggressive sales pitches after baggage claim.
- ☐ Do not exchange all your cash at the airport unless necessary; bank ATMs usually offer better control and receipts.
- ☐ Message your hotel or host when you are on the way, especially if traveling to Sayulita, San Pancho or Punta de Mita.
- ☐ Buy water and basic snacks before settling in if you arrive late or if your rental is away from the main town center.
- ☐ Identify your nearest pharmacy, convenience store, beach access and taxi/transportation point.
- ☐ Take the first evening easy; save big tours or long day trips for the next day.

Airport tip: PVR airport is across the state line from Nayarit. Travel time can vary a lot depending on traffic and whether you are going to Nuevo Nayarit, Bucerías, Sayulita or Punta de Mita.

During your trip

- ☐ Use pesos for small purchases, tips, beach vendors and local transportation.
- ☐ Check ocean flags, surf conditions and lifeguard instructions before swimming.
- ☐ Stay hydrated; coastal Nayarit can feel much hotter because of humidity.
- ☐ Book boat, surf and adventure tours with reputable operators and confirm pickup location the night before.
- ☐ For day trips between Bucerías, La Cruz, Sayulita, San Pancho and Punta de Mita, leave early and confirm return options.
- ☐ Be careful with valuables on the beach; bring only what you need.
- ☐ Use licensed taxis, verified pickups or arranged transfers at night, especially between towns.
- ☐ Respect wildlife, protected áreas, local beach rules and nesting áreas when posted.

Money tip: Many places accept cards, but small businesses, taxis and beach vendors may prefer cash. Keep small bills separated from your main wallet.

Before you leave México

- ☐ Confirm flight time, terminal details and recommended airport arrival time.
- ☐ Check whether you need to show your entry stamp, FMM/FMMd record or other visitor proof at departure.
- ☐ Use remaining pesos for tips, airport snacks or transportation, but keep enough for last-minute costs.
- ☐ Pack liquids, tequila, sauces and souvenirs according to airline and customs rules.
- ☐ Save receipts for higher-value purchases in case customs asks about them.
- ☐ Check your hotel room safe, outlets, drawers and bathroom before checkout.
- ☐ Leave extra time for traffic if coming from Punta de Mita, Sayulita, San Pancho or another town north of Nuevo Nayarit.
- ☐ Keep your passport in your personal bag, not in checked luggage.

Emergency basics: In México, 911 is the emergency number. Also save your insurer and your nearest consulate/embassy contact before the trip.

Official sources to check: INM FMM/FMMd, SRE/Mexican consulate visa rules, your airline entry-document guidance, and your country's travel advisory.