

The Best of Huatulco (My Humble Opinion)

I have had the good fortune of traveling to Huatulco eight times and in fact I'm going there again at the end of September. Based on my experiences and preferences I have compiled my own "best of" list. For perspective I must say that my traveling style is neither Lonely Planet nor Life of the Rich and Famous. My preferences are probably closer to the Lonely Planet mode but above anything very Spartan. The following is just my humble opinion and far from complete.

1. The single best thing about Huatulco:

Without question it is the people. From the beach vendors to the gordita stand cook to the palapa restaurant waiter; all are warm and friendly and at the same time proud with a deep sense of devotion for this incredible area.



2. The next best thing about Huatulco:

The bays with stunning scenery and beautiful water.

3. The best beach:

Playa La Entrega is perfect with calm water, gorgeous coral reefs, and dazzling fish.

4. The best bay:

San Agustín is absolutely spectacular. Primitive and more remote but it is like snorkeling in a 1000 acre aquarium.



5. The best hotel:

Hotel Castillo in Santa Cruz is clean and simple, even plain but very convenient with a beach within easy walking distance, nearby shops and a taxi to La Crucecita is quick and only 20 pesos.

6. The best hotel room:

The Magnihotel (formerly the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza) rooms are beautiful. Two levels with the sleeping area above and a sitting and viewing area below. Lovely views but the location is inconvenient and the funicular is very slow. The hotel is located in the Tangolunda area where I do not like to stay because I feel like I'm in nothing but a tourist zone. No locals, few shops, no local flavor, only tourists.

7. The best hotel grounds:

Without question that would be the Zaashila with stunning, immaculately manicured landscaping and a gorgeous pool. The architecture is superb. When I stayed here I shot a whole roll of film of the grounds. Their beach is the best in the Tangolunda area and that is not saying a lot. The rooms are quite plain, even Spartan when compared to the rest of the property.

8. The hotel with the best views:

The Hotel Barcelo (formerly Sheraton) rooms on the upper floors have stunning panoramic views of the entire Tangolunda bay. A very nice and comfortable room and the maid would always leave a beautiful design of flower petals on the bed. I like the Sheraton but again I don't like the isolation of the Tangolunda zone.

9. The best palapa restaurant:

My all time favorite is the Langosta Gorda located at la Entrega. The proprietress is Senora Isabel Williams a wonderful elegant lady who was the staff English instructor at the Sheraton for a number of years. Senora Williams takes great pride in the incredible fish dishes she serves. The restaurant is immaculate and the staff is very well trained and personable. I love spending the afternoon at la Entrega sitting under a palapa at Langosta Gorda. Sipping a cold Bohemia after a snorkel and usually eating too much. I can't help myself, her food is so good it must be addictive.



10. The best restaurant not on the beach:

Of course it is the Sabor de Oaxaca. Absolutely stupendous Oaxacan cuisine with a mole negro to die for. Every dish I have had there was world class. Ask for Efrin, a great waiter and very helpful with menu suggestions. I have found a very close second, the Santa Clara restaurant. Again fantastic Oaxacan cuisine expertly prepared and incredibly delicious. Unfortunately the Santa Clara closes quite early in the evening so plan on having your almuerzo there.



11. The best restaurant for breakfast:

The Meson de las Flores just off the square in Santa Cruz is the place to go for breakfast. Sr. Roberto Robles A. has done an incredible job with the decor at his beautiful restaurant. The food is absolutely delicious. A great place to people watch and start the day.



12. The best taxi driver.

Carlos who usually chauffeurs Zaashila guests. I apologize for not remembering his last name. Carlos knows the area intimately and every ride has added value as he points out an interesting shop or a great restaurant that only the locals go to. His car is a gray newer model Ford (I believe) which is in excellent condition. Carlos drives in a very conservative manner unlike some of the drivers who must be fantasizing they are driving in the le Mans with every fare.

13. The best bell person / concierge.

The best person in this roll I have ever dealt with anyplace is Marcello at the Zaashila. Marcello is wonderful. He knows your name before you arrive. Whatever you want

Marcello will arrange, a scuba dive, a bay tour, a doctor, anything! Marcello gets my very highest recommendation.

14. The best lancha captain.

I must admit to personal bias on this choice because Evodio Altomarino has become a very good friend of mine over the years. I have booked a bay tour on Evodio's boat Rey David every time I have visited Huatulco. Fishing, snorkeling, spear fishing, and just cruising the bays has always been a great time. We've yet to have the fishing day that you never forget but we did have excellent spear fishing about four meters from where the surf crashes onto the rocks that I'll always remember. Evodio is completely honest, very seaworthy, and I look forward to seeing him at the end of the month.

Dan Merriman
tfl3672@blackfoot.net
September 2000