

PHOTO GALLERY



Travel to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

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Male bonding trips have a long and noble history, from Henry VIII's extended hunting-lodge getaways to Ernest Hemingway's week-long fishing trips with "the Mob."

Whether on spring break, a bachelor party or a business getaway, modern man trippers look for destinations packed with high-energy opportunities. At the tip of Mexico's Baja Peninsula is one of the world's best vacation locations for adventures with the boys: Cabo San Lucas.

The first step to successful man tripping is securing a base of operations. Cabo does not lack for premier accommodations. For example, Grand Solmar's Land's End Resort can house any size of wolf pack, with accommodations from the 737-square-foot grand studio to the 6,232-square-foot, four-bedroom penthouse suite. Rooms have luxury amenities and balconies with magnificent views of the Pacific Ocean. And the property has a variety of restaurants and bars, plus, a spa and a gym to enjoy. But the resort's real draw for man trippers is the myriad testosterone-boosting outings on land, sea and air, which can be booked through the hotel concierge.

Slop on the sunblock and slap on some shades for adventures at sea. Cabo San Lucas juts out between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez (also known as the Gulf of California). Jacques Cousteau famously called the Sea of Cortez "the aquarium of the world," as it is packed with aquatic life. Scuba diving and snorkeling trips can be booked to surrounding coral reefs or deep ocean, the perfect spots to swim with giants. The world's largest fish,

coral reefs or deep ocean, the perfect spots to swim with giants. The world's largest fish, the whale shark, comes to the waters from early winter to late spring to feed. Also plying the depths are the largest ray, the manta, which can reach wingspans of 18 feet, and the smaller but very dynamic mobula rays, which jump by the hundreds over six feet above the water. Other large animals to check off the dive list include sea lions, hammerhead sharks, sea turtles and dolphins plus a bounty of colorful fish. The peninsula also attracts a variety of whales including gray whales, humpback whales and the ultimate leviathan, the blue whale. Tour boats abound for whale watching trips, and kayaks make for sea-level sighting. However, in winter the gentle giants can often be seen breaching out of the water from the resort room balcony.

Deep-sea fishing tours rank high on "guy-tineraries," with the chance of bragging rights for landing a trophy. Cabo has been labeled the marlin capital of the world, with black, blue and striped marlin at the head of the school. The waters also attract other billed monsters such as swordfish and sailfish, considered the ocean's fastest fish with clocked speeds of nearly 70 mph. Other trophy fish include roosterfish, wahoo, yellowfin tuna and black skipjack tuna. Grand Solmar has its own fleet of fishing vessels and experienced crew to charter, and they've even hosted notable royal and sports fisherman King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and his entourage on an all-day fishing expedition. Successful anglers that opt for the resort's "Hook and Cook" program can have their catch cooked for dinner in their preferred recipe at one of the resort restaurants.

Land lubbers will love the stark surroundings of the Baja peninsula, with adventure opportunities in desert habitats, through mountainous terrain and along beautiful beaches. Speed demons can drive ATVs or Polaris off-roaders into the desert outback and weave through forests of giant cardón, the world's tallest cactus, which can grow more than 60 feet high and weigh up to 25 tons. For a more leisurely ride, horseback or camel safaris seek out isolated beaches bordered by towering cliffs. And for self-propelled pumping, there's plenty of mountain biking through rocky trails.

Man trippers can also get their share of big air on the Baja Peninsula. The latest thrill is flyboarding. Riders wear boots that force jets of water out at high pressures, allowing them to hover above the surface. Riders can then dive under water and burst straight up, shooting to almost 50 feet in the air. Mid-air flips, barrel rolls and huge arching dives would make any dolphin jealous. Another popular sky thrill is zip-lining over ecological sanctuaries. Cabo Adventure's zip line has numerous aerial obstacles including rappelling cliffs, swinging over canyons on a pendulum line, and a portion of zip line called "the Superman." At 4,000 feet it is the longest and fastest zip line in Mexico, reaching speeds of 60 mph. But the ultimate adrenaline punch has to be Wild Canyon Adventures' Bungee Bomber, an exhilarating 300-foot bungee jump from a dangling gondola into jagged canyons. Many of these activities can be bundled through the resort concierge to pack in more adventure in the day.

After these heart-pumping outings, the guys can swagger into the Land's End sports bar and brag about their spine-tingling experiences, while they take a mescal- and tequila-tasting class taught by master mixologists. It's important to soak in this Mexican culture, as agave-based beverages have roots long before the conquistadors arrived. But it's also important to learn the subtleties of the finer distilled "elixir of the gods" because no man worth his salt (and lime) should drink rot-gut tequila over a smooth, smoky añejo mescal.

Even thrill junkies can get overwhelmed by the overabundance of heart-pumping exploits. No worries. There are plenty of activities available for guys to bond and relax. Cabo San Lucas has numerous public golf courses and even more private courses that are available for resort guests. The latest addition is the Rancho San Lucas Golf Club, a Greg Norman designed ocean-side course that incorporates Cabo's natural landscape and native flora. A unique experience at the Playa Grande Resort called the Temazcal Ritual, is an ancient Mesoamerican tradition that takes place in a dark brick igloo-shaped sweat lodge and is supposed to be cleansing for mind and spirit.

There's also top-notch restaurants throughout the area with local and international cuisine and spectacular views of the mountains, sea and town. One not-to-miss dining experience is the Ridge Restaurant, perched high above the Playa Grande Luxury Villas. The bistro has outdoor seating surrounded by infinity pools that overlook both the Pacific Ocean on the west coast and the Cabo San Lucas cruise port to the east. It has spectacular views of the sunrise and sunset, as well as the twinkling lights of downtown Cabo San Lucas at night.

But the best way to prep for the next day of fun is grabbing some margaritas from the sunken Las Olas Pool Bar in the Land's End resort, wading over to the edge of the infinity pool and watching the massive Pacific waves pound the shore. It's hypnotic. Guaranteed, the next day the man-tripping crew will be ready for more adventures.