

A photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues. In the foreground, several lounge chairs with white cushions and towels are arranged on a sandy beach. Two large, white, tiered umbrellas stand prominently. The ocean is visible in the background, with gentle waves. The entire scene is reflected in a pool of water in the foreground.

abroad

MEXICO

Mexico's Spa Boom

Beautiful beaches, bountiful culture and fantastic resorts have made our southern neighbor a perennial favorite of American travelers. Now, the addition of new must-see spas — and a freshened-up classic — is adding to the buzz. Turn the page to see why. >

LAS VENTANAS



➔ **LOS CABOS** Since opening in 1997, **Las Ventanas al Paraiso** — a Mediterranean-inspired resort overlooking the Sea of Cortez — has made die-hard fans out of celebrities and mortals alike thanks to its luxe facilities (the 71 butler-serviced suites feature fine touches like wood-burning fireplaces and rooftop plunge pools) and on-point service (guests with the sniffles might find a custom-blended herbal tea and a “get well soon” note at their bed-sides). But even legends have to keep up with the times, particularly with all the new resorts in the area. So this December, Las Ventanas revealed a fully renovated and expanded spa. The new facility is still intimate and tranquil, with curved stone walls, a thatched-roof lounge and eight indoor-outdoor treatment cabanas. Signature services embrace the desert region’s natural gifts, such as the Flor de Luna body scrub (90 minutes, \$250), made with local sweet dragon fruit, and the detoxing Nopal Detox Desert wrap/massage (120 minutes, \$325), with a dry brushing, freshly blended cactus mask and essential oil rubdown. The spa uses both custom-made

herbal products and those from organic lines like Kahina and Tata Harper. *Rooms from \$704, rosewoodhotels.com* — Sandra Ramani

Another area favorite undergoing changes is Marquis Los Cabos. As of November 2011, the hotel rebranded itself as **Secrets Marquis Los Cabos** and now offers all-inclusive pricing that covers oceanfront accommodations, all meals and nonalcoholic drinks at six restaurants (our favorite, Canto del Mar, offers a six-course tasting menu that changes daily), premium liquor and beer and even 24-hour room service. To make the most of your stay, upgrade to a casita, where your private plunge pool overlooks the Pacific. The spa is now a Secrets Spa by Pevonia. Experience the line with the Luminous C and Sea facial, which uses vitamin C and dried seaweed (50 minutes, \$155). Opt for the Unlimited Spa package and you’ll also receive complimentary day passes for spa facilities (with six open-air Jacuzzis) and four 25-minute massages or hydrotherapy treatments per day. *Room from \$307, secretsresorts.com* — Susan Moynihan

RIVIERA MAYA After a major renovation late last year, The Tides Riviera Maya upped its ante by rebranding as **Viceroy Riviera Maya**. Eleven new villas bring the resort’s total to 41, and a new restaurant, fitness center and boutique liven up the property, which sits in a lush jungle landscape on the edge of the Caribbean. If you can peel yourself away from your palapa-roofed villa — complete with private plunge pool and outdoor shower — tree-lined walkways lead to the beach, where you can laze on chaise lounges, swim in the surf or take a yoga class at the edge of the pier. Afterward, retreat back to the six-room Mayan Spa for a seaweed wrap, temezcal session or our pick, the Ancient Mayan Massage (80 minutes, \$180), which includes a traditional Mayan *manteada*, or realignment of the body. The therapists liberally source from the spa’s fragrant herb garden and can whip up a curative concoction based on traditional Mayan healing practices for everything from sunburn to mosquito bites; these recipes have been passed down for centuries. *Rooms from \$605, viceroyrivieramaya.com* — Amy Cassell

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE Some believe this mountainous town in central Mexico was built on a bed of quartz crystal, amplifying its rejuvenating nature. Whether that’s true or not, San Miguel de Allende appeals on multiple senses, with cobblestone streets that date to the 18th century, colorful colonial-style buildings and a noted art scene. The new hacienda-style **Rosewood San Miguel de Allende** fits in perfectly and celebrates its surroundings. Indulge in the San Miguel Signature Mole (80 minutes, \$132), a mole scrub (a blend of cocoa and spices) and soothing shea-butter massage. Spa excursions are also offered, like the Thermal Waters Wellness Retreat (three hours 30 minutes, \$345) — a sunrise trip to La Gruta, (one of the area’s thermal pools) for yoga and a soaking session, followed by a treatment and breakfast back at the spa. Outside the spa, each of the 67 rooms and suites at the property features a private terrace or balcony, a large soaking tub (complete with Ohné bath salts) and a cozy fireplace. *Rooms from \$295; rosewoodhotels.com* — Rebecca Kinnear