

Top 6 Things to Do in Ensenada, Mexico



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As stories about Mexico's safety continue to be targeted by U.S. media, one region defies the reporting and continues to emerge as a safe and versatile destination: Baja.

Located in northern Baja, Ensenada is just a short drive from the California border and has everything desired for a vacation - rich culture, delicious food, friendly residents, myriad seaside and inland activities, colorful shopping venues, and of course, safety.

1. Beware the blowhole.

Just south of Ensenada, at the end of the Punta Banda peninsula is [La Bufadora](#), the world's second largest marine geyser. The waterspout is created when ocean waves and air are sucked into an underwater cave at the bottom of the cliff. Water is expelled upwards with a roaring surge, reaching as high as 100 feet above sea level, and frequently onto the observation ledge, much to the delight of children and other spectators. This natural wonder is a must-see.

2. Frolic at the fish market.

For a great photo opportunity as well as a chance to sample the legendary fresh fish tacos, the Mercado de Mariscos is the place to go. From the local catch of the day, to more varieties of fish than you knew existed, there's plenty to see (and smell!) in at the largest fish market in Ensenada, located on the malécon. Directly across from the row of shops exhibiting their colorful array of seafood are a line of small open-air restaurants, each one equipped with a vocal salesperson vying for potential patrons that are passing by.

3. Tour Baja's oldest winery.

Founded in 1888, [Bodegas de Santo Tomas](#) is the oldest winery in Baja. This historic winery claims to use an old-school but "secret" process which results in 26 different types of wine. Visitors can take a 45-minute tour of the facilities and then enjoy a vintage wine tasting session of award-winning wines. One of the former aging rooms has been turned into one of Ensenada's finest restaurants, La

Embotelladora Vieja and another former aging room just across the street hosts an art gallery, bookstore, and café.

4. Buy an authentic Baja hoodie.

Traditional Mexican sweaters - the stripped pullovers originally made popular in the hippie era - have made a comeback, especially with young people. This is due to the fact that are now available in vibrant colors, are durable and loose-fitting enough to be thrown over anything, and are now fashioned from materials not as "itchy" as they were in decades past. Online, these beauties will set you back \$25 to \$45, but in Ensenada you will pay a mere \$10.

5. Watch the sunrise on the marina.

Few things can compare to the awe of watching the colors of the rainbow emerge from the horizon. One of the best places to view Ensenada's spectacular sunrise is from your own private balcony overlooking the ocean at the [Coral Hotel and Marina](#). This resort is one of the few upscale, luxury resorts in northern Baja and one of the rare places to get pampered with the excellent service and indulge in their enormous buffet breakfast.

6. Hunt for the best margarita.

There is no shortage of establishments to conduct your quest, but two stand out above the rest. [Hussong's Cantina](#) is the best known and said to be the oldest watering hole in Mexico and has a rich history of famous (and infamous) patrons, with décor reminiscent of old Mexico. In 1941, bartender Don Carlis Orozoco invented the margarita here. Enjoy the mariachis, but don't be fooled by the somewhat diminutive margarita glasses - Hussong's libations are high octane. For bird-bath sized margaritas, go to Mesón de Don Fernando in downtown Ensenada, which has the advantage of also serving excellent, reasonably-priced Mexican cuisine and has the friendliest staff in town.

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