

Neal's Tips and Tricks for Rocky Point, MX

1. [Insurance](#) is a must have in Mexico. Your US policy will not cover you. Lack of insurance could make you face jail time (in Mexico) if you are pulled over or are involved in a collision.

A. Use the **AAA** website and go to the "International Insurance Tab". It will guide you through the process.

B. Or use **MEXPRO.com**, which is our go-to for insurance. It gives you three quotes from different companies. We usually try to get one that will pay US prices for repairs, in case we must do repairs in the US, once home.

C. Cost for either of those will vary for car, length of stay, etc..., but in our experience, it costs between \$18-25 per day. Sometimes these will also include roadside assistance and Med Evac coverage in case of emergencies.

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2. [Travel Companies](#): We have used and have been pleased with:

A. **FMI** rentals (FMIrentals.com)

a. They have lots of homes in the Las Conchas area.

B. **Casago** (formerly-Mar De Cortez) rentals (rockypointbeachhomerentals.com)

a. They have homes and condos and are good if you want a "budget friendly" rental in the Princessa resort.

b. They have good deals during winter months, like buy two nights, get the third free.

C. **Castaway's** rentals (castawaysrockypoint.com)

a. They have a good rental pool for the resorts, and we rented through them for the Bella Sirena resort.

D. We have not used **Oceana Rentals** or **Seaside Vacation** rentals, but have heard good things and would not hesitate to try.

E. We have used **VRBO (Home away)** on multiple occasions and have not had any problems. This has been the only way we have found property at Las Paloma's resort.

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3. **Places to Stay:** We have a few favorite resorts (for different reasons) and have stayed at a few others. We have also stayed at several residential housing areas.

A. **Bella Sirena** is well maintained and has a lush, tropical feel. We would recommend this resort for couples or an adult trip. This is our favorite. Plus, it has a cool on-site restaurant called SWIM, which has great food (but is a bit expensive).

B. **Las Palomas** is a huge resort with multiple pools, lazy river, and a small slide. It is more kid friendly and has been one of our go-to resorts. It is very clean and has room service and maid service. It is more of a “true” resort instead of a condo community, although each unit is individually owned.

C. We have stayed at the **Princessa** (which is a little older, but still clean). This has been a go-to budget resort for us when we are trying to save a few dollars. We love the Bocce Ball Court. Colin’s Cantina, on site, has a great breakfast burrito deal and decent prices on food and drinks.

D. We have also stayed at the **Sonoran Sun**. It was clean and maintained. The room, at least the one we were in, seemed a little dated. I probably wouldn’t make a second trip to that location.

E. I personally love staying in **Las Conchas**, with the serenity of being a little removed from town and being in a single-family home. Houses there can range from mansions that are ultra-updated to homes that haven’t been updated or changed for forty years. We like it for the solitude. Las Conchas is a residential community on the east side of town.

F. We have stayed in **Costa Diamonte**, which is the housing community on Sandy Beach near Las Palomas. It is nice to have a home near the excitement of Sandy Beach. There are only five or six homes truly beach front and the community pool is buried in the community. Overall, however, it is a nice place if you want to be near Sandy Beach. (RPVacation.com)

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4. **Places to Eat:** Here are some of our favorite food places:

A. **Pollo Lucas** is an open-air seating, giant palapa restaurant with super limited choice on food (whole chicken, half chicken, rice, beans, flour, or corn tortillas). It is not fancy, but the food is delicious. You can feed an entire family for around \$20. They only take cash.

B. **Wrecked at the Reef** has a night club feel with a beach front bar/restaurant. It is located west of the Sandy Beach (resorts area) on the road going to Cholla Bay. Prices are US prices. The atmosphere is fun. The kids love playing Ping Pong and Corn hole. They have very strong mixed drinks. They take cash and cards and have live music on Fri/Sat nights. *Expert tip: if you bring a donation for Barb’s Dog Rescue with you, they will give you your first drink free*

C. **Lucky’s Cantina** is fun. Lucky’s is located at the Malecon (boardwalk/fish market area). For breakfast you can purchase a drink (any drink) for \$8 and breakfast is free. Breakfast includes three eggs (any way cooked), sausage patty, bacon, potatoes, refried beans, flour tortillas. Good bang for the buck. They take cash and card.

D. **Kaffee Haus** has a German/Mexican blend of food. We have only been for breakfast, but it is one of the most amazing breakfasts you will find in Rocky Point. They have very yummy coffee drinks, stuffed French toast and apple strudel that will make your mouth water. It is on the road going into the Malecon, on the left. They only take cash, and the wait is usually long.

E. **Friendly Dolphin** is a neat, eclectic restaurant. They have super yummy bacon wrapped shrimp with three sauces. Muy Bueno! It is also on the road going towards the Malecon. They only take cash. Make sure to take a walk around the place. It is three stories and some of the displayed old Peñasco photos are awesome.

F. **Banditos** is walking distance from several of the resorts. It is a fun bar with music on the weekends. It is owned by Roger Clyne of Roger Clyne and the Peacemakers (my favorite all time band). The food isn't anything to write home about, but the vibe is fun.

G. **Candy Cake** is a dessert, lunch, breakfast place. We have bought cakes and have had breakfast. Everything we had was muy delicioso. Cash only.

H. **Churros Peñasco** is a churro, desert, fried plantain cart that doesn't open until around 7pm. The churros are so delicious that I order about twenty of them every time and it only costs about \$7. Cash only- pesos are recommended.

I. **Pan E Vino** is a nice Italian restaurant on Whale Hill overlooking the entire city. It is good for a "nice" dinner with great views of the Sea of Cortez and the sunset. It has two areas, "upstairs" is more formal and "downstairs" has a great wood burning pizza oven.

J. **Los Matz** is located near the marina. You can order a full fish cooked "Acapulco" style. You can also order table side tacos Al Pastor, with a spit which was pretty cool

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5A. Gringo Tips and Tricks for Travel:

A. Always go slowly through Ajo, Arizona. The Sheriff's Department doesn't mess around. Make sure to drive defensively, as many people try to speed and pass in no passing zones (on both sides of the border).

B. Always go slow through Sonoita, Mexico (border town). The police in Sonoita are known to be a little "crooked." If you are pulled over, the proper thing to do is pay the fine at the policia station. Don't let it scare you if that is what they ask you to do. It is the right thing to do. Beginning in 2018 we have seen the presence of the Mexican Military in Sonoita, and they have several check points now. We have heard a few stories of money being taken from tourists, if left in the car. I would suggest keeping your valuables with you if you are asked to exit the vehicle (i.e.: passports, cash, and purses).

C. Stop signs in Rocky Point are often hand painted and almost hidden. Be very vigilant and make sure to look at every corner for signage. Roundabouts in Mexico are treated like a four way stop, be aware.

D. When crossing into Mexico you may be waved to a secondary area (red light) at the border crossing. Don't worry. They want to know what you are bringing into their country. Remember, most fresh food is not allowed. We always do our grocery shopping in Rocky Point; it is much cheaper to buy there anyway. They may ask you for vehicle registration and insurance paperwork.

E. Almost everywhere in Penasco takes US dollars, but you may not get the best exchange rate paying in US dollars. We like to use our credit card, which gives the best exchange rate. We usually save about \$5 per \$100 by using it.

5B. Tips and Tricks for Fun:

F. There is an **aquarium** in the Mirador beach area. I can't give the exact location, but it is on Google Maps. It is fun for the kids to pet sea turtles, hold star fish etc. It is free but takes donations. It is very small and only takes about 20 minutes to see everything. *This may have closed due to COVID. Call first.

G. Get a **massage** on the beach (\$20-30 for half hour); they are setup all along Sandy Beach near the resorts.... just look for a table and umbrella. If you are staying in a house, they will usually come and set up on your balcony or patio in the shade.

H. **Jet Skis** can be rented right on the beach. If staying at a resort, vendors set up just outside. If staying in Los Conchas, they drive up and down the shoreline. Just wave at them and they will pull up. Cost varies depending on season. We have paid as little as \$20 for half hour up to \$40 for half hour.

I. **Banana boats** are a common sight and are set up all along the beach. The usual cost is about \$5 per person.

J. **Four wheelers** (side-by-sides) can be rented all over the place. Several places set up on the road alongside the resorts. Others can be found on Plutarco Elias Avenue and Calle 13. Cost varies by season. The last time (2019) we paid \$50 for an hour, which was probably high. We have heard some bad stories about vendors "making up" damages to gouge the tourists. I would be wary about renting from a non-reputable place. I would also take pictures prior to driving.

K. Puerto Peñasco is known for its large tidal swing. Make sure to go down when the tide is out. **The tide-pools** and rocky areas have tons of sea creatures. Octopus, seashells, starfish, and tons of other creatures can be found. Make sure to have a pair of crappy tennis shoes or water shoes to wear when exploring.

L. Take a tour to **CEDO**, which is an oceanic study/museum set-up in Las Conchas. They describe the history of the Sea of Cortez, show off whale bones and have some good tidal calendars. It is very small and only takes 15 minutes or so to look at everything.

M. **Whale watching** is huge from January to April. The Sea of Cortez was called the "The World's Aquarium" by Jacques Cousteau. On the whale tours you can see a huge assortment of wildlife, including dolphins and seals. Eco Fun rentals offers affordable whale/sunset cruises. The Pirate Ship "Rey del Mar" operates seasonally and is more geared for families.

Del Mar Charters has a catamaran that is AWESOME! Captain Oscar does a great job on the catamaran and gives everyone a personalized experience. This is our top pick

N. The **Rocky Point Zip Line** was a lot of fun. It was a little expensive, but worth it for a once over. It is on the road to Cholla Bay.

O. Do the **sting ray shuffle**. Our kiddo was stung and it's no joke.... if stung, most of the resorts have EMS on-site. (EMS has been extremely helpful during several medical issues we have had. They are included in your "resort fee" cost and are extremely professional). You can also visit the Red Cross clinic in town and they provide free treatment for stings.

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6. *A Sample Three-Night Itinerary:*

Arrival day: Grab groceries at Bodega Aurrera (essentially a Wal-Mart) or Sam's Club, on Benito Juarez Blvd. Eat Dinner at Wrecked at the Reef after checking into the resort. Take a cab so you can drink whatever you like. Cabs are easy to grab or have the front desk call one for you. Ask the price before you agree to the ride. Everything is agreed upon before driving.

Day 1: Hang out at the beach and pool. Enjoy a massage on the beach, jet skis, and a banana boat ride. Eat breakfast at the resort restaurant and lunch on the beach. Try some tostilocos, sandialocos, or pina coladas from vendors on the beach. Vendors are set up all over the beach with their brightly colored carts. Have dinner at Banditos, especially if it's a weekend.

Day 2: Start out by going down to the Malecón. It is the boardwalk area, and a complete tourist trap, but it is a fun experience. Go to Lucky's Cantina for breakfast. \$8 ain't bad. Walk around afterwards and shop. Go through the curio shops, bargain, and talk with the locals. When you are hungry again, hit up Pollo Lucas on your way back to the resort for lunch. You will probably have leftovers. It makes a great midnight snack. Eat dinner at the resort and make sure to watch the sunset. There is a legend that says a "green flash" is seen just as the sun passes past the ocean. It's said to be good luck if you see it. Take a walk along the beach just after sunset.

Day 3: Repeat Day 1. Relax. Discover a new restaurant if you want like El Buzzo or Mariscos El Conchal. Both are supposed to have GREAT seafood. Try a new bar like, Manny's at the Mirador or Changos.

Go Home Day: After checking out of resort, go to either Kaffee Haus or Candy Cake for breakfast. Both are great.....but be prepared to wait.... especially on busy weekends. Fill up your tummy and your car. Drive safely home.