

## What To Do- Sayulita, Mexico



### **Wake up early for pictures at the colorful flag street (“Slap Street”)**

Arguably the busiest street in Sayulita is the **Calle Delfines**, or what’s locally dubbed as “Slap Street.” It is a cute restaurant-lined street with hundreds of colorful flags (known as *papel picado*) strung above between palm trees.

Coming here to walk under the flags is a popular thing to do in Sayulita for first-time visitors.

So why is this street called “Slap Street” anyway?

According to the locals, this street was once the focal point of a hot debate between two gentlemen who wanted to redesign the street. Unfortunately, they couldn’t agree and tensions rose until one man, in the heat of the moment, raised his hand and slapped the other guy in the face. On-watchers stepped in and managed to calm the two men down. The street would then become popularly known as “Slap Street.” There is a sign at the end of the street explaining the story!

### **Hit up Sayulita’s sandy beaches**

One beach, two beaches, three beaches, four? Of all the things to do in Sayulita, going to the beach is an obvious one! But did you know there are several beaches in Sayulita other than the main beach (Sayulita Beach)? Yep! There are several beaches to discover in Sayulita and they all offer something a little different.

The best easy-to-reach beaches in Sayulita:

**Sayulita Beach:** The main beach directly accessible from downtown Sayulita. It is often crowded, lined with colorful beach loungers, and is packed with vendors eager to sell their products. It is also where everyone goes surfing (often dozens and dozens at a time!).

**Playa de Los Muertos:** The “beach of the dead” is aptly named as it sits right off the town’s local cemetery. This beach is a short 10-minute walk from downtown. Just follow the road lining the Sayulita main beach all the way to the left past all the shorefront hotels and villas. Soon you’ll reach the cemetery and down the dirt hill lies the semi-secluded Playa de Los Muertos. There are parking and restrooms for a small fee, along with one food shack for shrimp, drinks, and snacks.

**Playa Carricitos:** If you were to walk further along this dirt path through the jungle from Playa de Los Muertos, you’ll be on track to reach Playa Carricitos. It is a secluded beach, nice for relaxing off-grid style with no public anything!

**Playa Escondida:** Ever watched *The Bachelorette*? Well, you know the private beach where they film all the juicy drama? This is at [Playa Escondida](#) in Sayulita. It is not a public-access beach. I contacted them and asked if they do Day Passes, which they do for a \$100 USD entrance fee. The pass gives you access to the beach, pools, spa, restaurant, and bars, but all food/spa costs are separate.

**North Beach:** If you head right from Sayulita Beach, instead of left, then you’ll be on your way to North Beach. It’s the long stretch of sand you see on the right of Sayulita and it’s here where you can take a long stroll or a hike through the jungle to reach the neighboring pueblo of San Pancho. We often hike to Sayulita from San Pancho, and it takes about 1.5 hours. We really enjoy North Beach for its clear waters and quiet beach (there’s hardly anyone). Plus it’s so long and sandy!

## Go Surfing!

**Surfing is what Sayulita** is most famous for, so obviously it is one of the best things to do here. As soon as you walk out onto the main beach, there’ll be a sea of surfers of all skill levels riding the waves. And there are just as many surf shops in Sayulita where you can rent a board, or even sign up for surf lessons!

Lots of surf guides and shops have set up their own cabanas on the beach, so surfing in Sayulita couldn’t come by any easier. The prices will vary by shop, but you can expect to pay around **\$20 per day** for a standard surfboard rental and \$50-70 for a surf lesson.

## Visit the cemetery & Playa de Los Muertos

The town’s **local cemetery**, and the beach connected to it, is a sight to see! One of our favorite things to do in Sayulita is to take a leisurely walk from downtown to the Sayulita cemetery.

Here, it’s common to see tombstones colorfully decorated with remnants from Day of the Dead festivities — flags, flowers, candles, and memorabilia of the loved one’s favorite things. One grave is even marked with a surfboard.

Just down the hill off to the right sits a tranquil beach, the aptly-named **Playa de Los Muertos**. Here you can enjoy a section of the beach with calm waves, ideal for families with kids or for swimming.



There are lounge chairs for rent on the beach, plus paid parking and bathrooms, along with a small food shack for snacks and drinks.

### **Shop Sayulita's boho shops & art galleries**

Tons of cute boho stores filled with crochet swim tops, dreamcatchers, and flowy beach skirts line Sayulita's colorful streets. My favorite shops to visit all have this type of earthy, boho vibes; they are **Evoke the Spirit, R2 Fashion, Artefakto, Rosemary, Manantial** (just to name a few!) and the open-air shops down the street on the way to the beach are so cute too!

You'll also notice the plethora of stunning **art galleries** in and around Sayulita. Most of the art galleries feature Huichol art, beaded work, sculptures, paintings, jewelry, among other crafts. The Laughing Jaguar is kind of a mix between a shop and a gallery, featuring Mexican artwork and home decor.

### **Sip a margarita in style at the Atico Swing Bar**

There's no place that makes me feel like I'm in Sayulita more than the hip **Atico Hookah/Swing Bar**. It's here where you can test your balance on a swing while juggling a drink in your hand. (It's harder than it seems!) I really enjoy coming to Atico's simply for the atmosphere.

**Atico** is set in the heart of Sayulita amid one of the busiest streets. During the day, it's quite relaxed. At night, the place comes alive with music and maybe even a little dancing. It's all open-air, so you're immersed right into the vibrant night scene typical of Sayulita. You can also smoke hookah here, but we always just come for drinks and music! The margaritas are all good, strong, and rimmed nicely with either salt or a spicy mixture.

### **Stroll through the open-air Hippie Market**

The **Sayulita Hippie Market** is more touristy than local now, but it is the place to go to get a decent deal on Mexican handicrafts. It is an outdoor market found just before the bridge going into downtown Sayulita.

**Tip:** Other markets in Sayulita are the *Mercado del Pueblo* (Friday mornings) featuring artisanal goods and crafts, and the Sunday-only *Tianguis* (meaning open air) market near the beach (Calle Gaviotas) which features handmade artwork and handicrafts from locals of the native Huicholes of Nayarit.

### **Grab an icy treat at Wakika or Mexicolate**

Most people visit Sayulita for the sun and the beach, and nothing pairs better with a beachy vacation than ice cream! There are two delicious places to go for icy treats in Sayulita: **Wakika** or **Mexicolate**.

**Wakika Heladeria** serves up homemade ice pops and ice cream with all flavors and colors. It's on the right side of the plaza, just next to La Rustica pizzeria.



**Mexicolate** features an icy smoothie of native cacao chocolate with banana, organic peanut butter, and dates. No extra sugar is added, just pure goodness and wholesome ingredients! You can find the tiny Mexicolate hole-in-the-wall shop on the opposite end of La Plaza Principal, just in front of the church.

### **Hang out in Sayulita's colorful Plaza Principal**

Speaking of **La Plaza Principal**, it's here at the heart of the town where lots of events and things to do in Sayulita occur daily. You can find native Huichol art stands, food stalls, a ton of restaurants lining the plaza, art galleries... You name it!

### **Go whale watching (seasonal)**

**Whale watching in the Bandera's Bay** off the coast of Nayarit is one of the best things to do in Sayulita, Puerto Vallarta, and beyond! Large whales travel thousands of miles from the icy waters up north down to the warmer temperatures in the Bahia de Banderas

The whale watching season in Nayarit is from **mid-December to the end of March/beginning April**. Tours typically last a whole morning or afternoon, or around 4 hours. You can get the chance to see Blue Whales, Humpbacks, Grey and Sperm Whales, and not to mention lots of dolphins!



### **See live iguanas in The Iguana Tree**

**El Arbol del Iguana** – The iguana tree in Sayulita is a totally free thing to do and all it takes is just meandering your way to the tree to witness large, live iguanas hang out in their natural habitat.

They thrive in the tree-tops and often are seen scaling power lines, buildings, and tree branches. Sometimes they jump from one branch to another like a squirrel. These guys are a sight to see. If you visit the tree, please don't intervene in their space. Take photos from a distance and don't feed or approach these beasts.

### **Go salsa dancing at Don Pato's**

Where Sayulita seems like a calm, sleepy pueblo in the early mornings, Sayulita at night becomes like a wild party alive with music and sprawling bars and clubs. One of the most well-known bars to go to in Sayulita for dancing, drinks, and music is at **Don Pato's**.

It's also here where you can go salsa dancing on weekends and especially on Monday nights! There's also Don Pedro's near the beach but they require a cover charge. If ever Don Pato's is full, you'll easily find another bar not far away with live music and drinks.

### **Go fishing off the coast**

**Fishing in Sayulita** is one of the best outdoor activities to enjoy another view of the sea. There are TONS of local fishing boats and fishermen taking their boats out.

You can also cast your line in from the west side of the beach near the rocks. The fishing in Sayulita is good and that's where lots of the fresh catch of the days come in at. I've seen local fishermen carry a line full of fish back from the beach a few times in Sayulita and loads of time from the beaches of San Pancho.

### **Explore the charming pueblo of San Pancho**

If you are completely Sayulita'd out, then I have the perfect mini-getaway for you. Take a day trip from the crowded streets of Sayulita and go relax next door for a golden sunset in our charming pueblo of San Pancho (San Francisco, Nayarit).

This town has a loving, talented community with an authentic, homegrown organic-hippie vibe. You can tell the community here holds deep love and respect for the local Mexican culture. So, if that sounds like something you could be into, then go visit and support local business!

### **Tour the picturesque Islas Marietas**

**Las Islas Marietas** is one of the most popular things to do in Sayulita and in all of the Riviera Nayarit. Everyone wants to go see the islands which form an archipelago in Bandera's Bay.

## Five Hikes for views of the Sayulita Bay



1. The easiest is from beyond Villa Amor. Follow the bay side road to the south (left when facing the sea) and choose your spot.
2. For a greater view of Sayulita, starting in the plaza take Calle Marlin (the street leading towards Don Pedro's) and take the first left. Go down the dip and cross Calle Caracol (the first street you come to) and opposite you will see open land between two houses. Walk up the driveway or steps and take the floral zigzag path up the hill and you will be afforded a great view of the town and bay.
3. Another nice view of Sayulita is obtained from beside the top of Villa Amor. A 15/20 minute walk from the plaza take Av. Revolucion passed El Espresso, then first right and follow straight for about ½ a mile. The road then turns sharp right and up a short hill where it turns left and splits. Take the right fork and follow the road for outstanding views of Sayulita and the bay.
4. Gringo Hill lies behind the Sayulita plaza. Take Calle Marlin up hill and the first left following the road all the way to the top. Excellent north facing views over the town. Views directly over town and out to sea are not so easy to find but a helpful home owner/tenant may allow you to take in the view from their balcony.
5. Nanzal Hill - this one is going to take some effort. The view is breath taking – literally. The climb is very steep but the panorama is exceptional, taking in Sayulita town and the bay, Punta Sayulita (the headland), Monkey Mountain and beyond to Punta Mita. Stunning sunsets. Take Av. del Palmar, the street which parallels the beach, north across the river and passed the campgrounds. After the school take the second right Calle Saylo - Casa Del Mar Sur is on the corner - then the first left, and follow the main road to the top. Be careful not to get side tracked onto Calle Loma Alta which has no outlet though offers beautiful clear views. But, “you ain't seen nothin' yet!”, take deep breaths and push on to the top of Calle Nanzal where you can rest and recuperate with the most commanding view available of Sayulita.

### **Monkey Mountain – moderate/difficult**

Hiking monkey mountain near Sayulita Monkey mountain, near Sayulita is considered sacred to the Huichol Indians and is one of the most distinctive features of the surrounding landscape. Head south from Sayulita on the road to Punta



Mita. At the 5kms. marker take a right towards Playa Patzcuaro. There are no signs. About 1km. down this road you will come to a ranch. Just beyond and over the river the road splits with the main track straight ahead leading to Playa Patzcuaro while an unused road will take you south (left) from here through the jungle to a trail leading to the top of Monkey Mountain. Make sure to pack food and plenty of water for this 4-hour Sayulita hike.

### **Jungle north of Sayulita - easy/moderate**

Another jungle/hill hike from Sayulita is towards San Pancho, off of Playa Malpasos. Inland route: From town walk along Av. del Palmar (which parallels the beach) across the river, passed the campsites and school until it ends at a condo complex. Shortly you will cross a small river (dry in the winter) the main path appears to follow the river to the right but look straight ahead and you will see several large boulders. Clamber over or go around the rocks and follow the path across a cobblestone road (which is a private road from the beach-house to the main highway) and continue straight. You will go over a small rise and a dirt road will join from the right. Approximately 50 meters further the path splits; left goes to Las Cuevas Cove, you go straight ahead down the wide track for 20 meters and through an open gate and follow the path as it angles left and down towards the beach. You will come to a small yellow house in ruins and a cement block building in a clearing beside the beach.

Just beyond the cement block building you will see a set of double gates. They are open and ignore the signs saying "No Entry". The path winds its way up hill and is little used so some minor clearing of the way may be necessary, a sturdy stick will suffice. Eventually you will come to where another track joins from the right, continue uphill. Not far along you come to an interesting point, where two valleys back into one another separated by an earth dam. It is wide enough for a vehicle so there is no danger. Cross over and soon you will be surprised to find yourself on a cobblestone roadway for a short distance, and after a few more zigzags you will be at the top. Tall trees and bushes obscure the view looking towards San Pancho but the view back towards Sayulita is impressive and the jungled mountain slopes inland are beautiful to behold. On the way back you may want to take the beach route

SEE BELOW FOR DIRECTIONS, BUT BE AWARE THAT SWIMMING AT PLAYA MALPASOS IS NOT RECOMMENDED, THERE ARE STRONG UNDERTOWS AND RIPTIDES. USE EXTREME CAUTION.

### **San Francisco (a.k.a. San Pancho) moderate**

For real exercise, walk along Playa Malpasos to the neighboring village of San Francisco (aka San Pancho), four miles north of Sayulita. One end of the town beach is very swimmable and the other end is home to Costa Azul Adventure Resort, a nice place to have a drink and watch the sunset. In the middle lie the quiet cobblestone streets of San Pancho.

After Playa Malpasos, you'll pass the former estate of one of Mexico's former presidents. Here you might have to practice a bit of citizens' action because the new owners have blocked access, which is against Mexican law. People still cross by ignoring the "no trespassing" signs. Hopefully by the time you arrive, this situation will no longer be an issue. Refreshment, and a taxi ride back home, available in town.

San Pancho is accessible by Highway 200.

Please note that sometimes the gate at the end of Malpasos beach is chained and locked, so no access to town is possible via this route when gate is locked.