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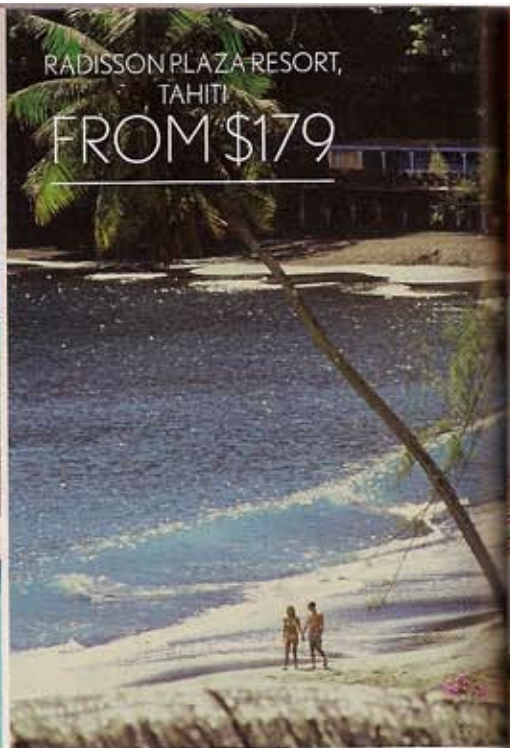
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MEXICO & BELIZE

Hotel Cielo Rojo, San Pancho, Mexico Stucco stairs lead to eight rooms at this boho-chic inn 30 miles north of Puerto Vallarta. It's a quick stroll to a beach with fab surfing and sunsets, and cool terra cotta floors and ceiling fans keep rooms comfy, since there's no A/C (from \$85, July to October, and \$95, November to June; hotelciolorojo.com).

ME Cancun, Cancun, Mexico The beach party gets some pizzazz at this resort with 448 soothing rooms and sexy dining/lounging venues by nightclub guru Rande Gerber: The Beach House, perched atop the sand, and cool club Rose Bar (from \$159, April to November; me-cancun.com).

Petit Hotel d'Hafa, Sayulita, Mexico Surf-loving duos should book one of six rooms with Moroccan-style windows, punched tin sconces and a thatch-ceiling bathroom at this Riviera Nayarit newcomer just two minutes' walk from the beach (from \$55, year-round; sayulitalife.com/hafa).

La Tortuga Hotel & Spa, Playa del Carmen, Mexico This contemporary hotel in the "capital" of Riviera Maya offers 51 rooms around an inviting pool and garden. Guests can access Mamitas Beach Club and Playa's shops and eateries (from \$114-\$160, year-round; hotellatortuga.com).

The Inn at Robert's Grove, Placencia, Belize Waterbabies will love this retreat with its endless sea adventures and two private isles. The 52 rooms and suites, all with eclectic artwork, are a perfect mix of comfort and sophistication. After dark, take a dip in a rooftop Jacuzzi as you count the stars (from \$200, June to November; robertsgrove.com).

Journey's End Resort, Ambergris Caye, Belize The nearby reefs are a draw, but you don't have to dive to adore this resort's barefoot vibe. Its 48 colorful cabanas and rooms, spread along the beach and a sealife-filled lagoon, have local paintings and hand-carved beds (from \$195, January to April, and \$159, May to December; journeysendresort.com).

Victoria House, Ambergris Caye, Belize What may be this isle's best resort may also be its best deal. Even the lowest-priced of the 42 Caribbean Colonial-style rooms and casitas has a canopy bed and is a stone's throw from the beach and infinity pool (from \$180, year-round; victoria-house.com).

HAWAII

Aqua Waikiki Wave, Oahu One block from the legendary action of Waikiki Beach, 247 Asian-inspired rooms with ocean views mix affordability and ambience. All rooms have super-comfy beds and flatscreen TVs, and free WiFi is included (from \$110, year-round; aquaresorts.com).

The Inn at Mama's Fish House, Maui For easy access to one of Maui's top eateries, book one of the owner's 12 cottages with full kitchens, fresh flowers and local-roasted coffee. Each has a meandering path through gardens to the idyllic beach (from \$175, year-round; mamasfishhouse.com).

Kaanapali Beach Hotel, Maui This 432-room resort, where "old Hawaii" thrives, is the spot for cultural activities: hula practice with a *kumu* (master teacher), ukulele lessons and lei making (from \$190, year-round; kbhmaui.com).

Outrigger Kiahuna Plantation, Kauai Spread over 30 palm-studded beachfront acres near sunny Poipu, this relaxed 207-unit condo resort has breezy plantation-style architecture, a large lagoon-like pool and two restaurants (from \$199, April to August; outriggerkiahunaplantation.com).

ResortQuest at Poipu Kai, Kauai Live like a local at this 70-condo complex overlooking two powdery strands. Clusters of one-, two- and three-bedroom dwellings, each with breezy lanais, are decorated in tasteful Hawaiiana (from \$195, year-round; resortquesthawaii.com).

Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa, Big Island Perched over lava sea cliffs, this sleekly renovated 521-room resort offers nearby snorkeling/diving and dolphin, manta ray and

PETIT HOTEL D'HAVA,
SAYULITA, MEXICO
FROM \$55



SHERATON KEAUHOU
BAY RESORT, BIG ISLAND
FROM \$170



whale spotting from the open-air Crystal Blue bar (from \$170, March to October; sheratonkeauhou.com).

Waikiki Parc Hotel, Oahu Just a block from Honolulu's famed strand, this newly remodeled 297-room hotel is the epitome of chic—there's even a Nobu eatery downstairs (from \$160 in 2009, with a three-night stay; waikikiparc.com).

CALIFORNIA & FLORIDA

Catamaran Resort Hotel & Spa, San Diego, CA South Pacific circa 1950 is the vibe at this Mission Bay resort, with its over-the-top tiki decor and 311 rooms offering bay and beach views (from \$159, September to February, \$169, March, and \$189, April to June; catamaranresort.com).

Dream Inn, Santa Cruz, CA Located seaside in this funky northern coastal town, the inn is walking distance to the Boardwalk amusement park. The 165 renovated rooms have cheery '60s decor and Santa Cruz Beach views (from \$199, November to March; dreaminnsantacruz.com).

Tower 23, San Diego, CA One of the few luxury hotels in the area that's right on the sand, it's named for a lifeguard tower on Pacific Beach. Most of the 44 design-savvy rooms have ocean views—so you'll tumble out of bed and into the surf (from \$179, November to April; tower23hotel.com).

Casa Monica Hotel, St. Augustine, FL At this 138-room hotel, Euro-style charm seamlessly blends with a modern vibe. Enjoy great food, WiFi by the pool and an easy stroll to downtown or to Serenata Beach Club to soak up some sun (from \$189, May to September; casamonica.com).

The Loft Hotel, South Beach, FL Its 57 apartment-style rooms with hip furnishings are close to both beachfront Ocean Drive and pedestrian-only Lincoln Road. Perks include free local calls and VIP passes to some of South Beach's top nightclubs (from \$99, year-round; thelofthotel.com).

La Playa Beach & Golf Resort, Naples, FL The powdery sand is

outdone only by the Gulf sunsets at this 189-room resort with tropical-toned rooms and palapa-topped bar and restaurant (from \$179, May to September; laplayaresort.com).

Safety Harbor Resort and Spa, Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL Old Floridian luxury infuses this 197-room sanctuary on Tampa Bay. After a day of kayaking or tennis, submerge yourself in centuries-old natural mineral springs or grab cocktails at the poolside Tiki Bar (from \$104–\$129, May to November, and \$149, December to April; safetyharborresort.com).

The Song of the Sea, Sanibel Island, FL Forgo the crowds at this 30-room hideaway set on soft sands lapped by warm Gulf waters. Beach chairs, breakfast, bicycles and a bottle of wine are all complimentary (from \$190, mid-April to May, and \$142, June to October; sanibelcollection.com).

SOUTH PACIFIC & ASIA

Anantara Resort, Hua Hin, Thailand This 14-acre mecca of terra cotta villas and orchid- and palm tree-lined shores overlooks the serene Gulf of Thailand, offering 149 rooms or suites, some with access to an exclusive lagoon-style pool (from \$129, April to October; anantara.com).

Radisson Plaza Resort, Tahiti Sleek decor and a black-sand beach make this 165-room resort a great spot to begin or end your Tahitian honeymoon. Rooms all have bamboo floors and oceanview balconies; outside an inviting infinity pool awaits (from \$179, December to July; radisson.com).

Westin Denarau Island Resort & Spa, Fiji Sink into a Heavenly Bed and the sands of a private beach at this 271-room resort. After massages at the Heavenly Spa, you'll be ready for the twilight fire dance (from \$169, December to April; westin.com/denarauresort). —Nicole Alper, Brian Berusch, Jad Davenport, Elaine Glusac, Donna Heiderstadt, Anita K. Henry, Katie McElveen, Gerit Quealy, Rich Rubin, Jean Tang, Joe Yogerst and Peter Zaremba