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SPECIAL FEATURE

Miyajima - The Shrine Island

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It's one of the most sacred sites in Japan, and Ben Hall finds Miyajima remains a symbol of the country's ancient traditions. Within minutes, the tide line covering the base of the torii gate drains outwards and scores of daytrippers head down the stairs and walk across to the structure

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In our increasingly modern world, travelling has become a means of getting from "A" to "B", with little or no appreciation for the experience of the journey itself. As Joanna Hall discovers, the Eastern & Oriental Express has changed all that. My first memory of a significant train ride dates back to early childhood: a summer day-trip to the then-quaint English coastal town of Brighton. Looking back it was far





MY PUERTO VALLARTA - ERE PEREZ

by Joanna Hall



Gallery



Acapulco, Mexico



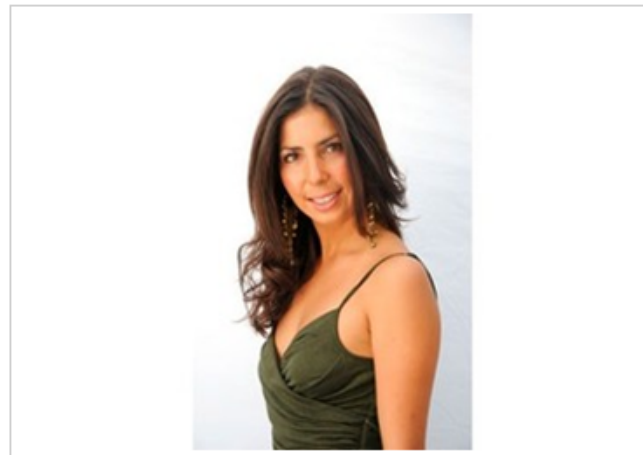
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Ere Perez is the founder and creative director of Ere Perez Natural Cosmetics and is a native of Mexico who has lived in Australia for over ten years. Ere started her beauty company in 2004, and her products are now sold in over 700 health food shops, pharmacies, salons and spas nationwide, as well as overseas. Here, she tells Ultimate Travel about her love of one of Mexico's most popular destinations - Puerto Vallarta - and shares some of her secrets about the famous resort.

UT: What is your favourite holiday destination and why?

I absolutely love Puerto Vallarta. It's one of those places where time just stops. I love how it combines a tourist resort with the mystique of a small Mexican colonial town. It has everything in one space: Mexican culture, great food, fantastic relaxing beaches and it's full of exciting nightlife.

UT: How often do you get to travel there?



FAST FACTS

For more information about Ere Perez and her cosmetic line, visit www.ereperez.com

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Vallarta - and shares some of her secrets about the famous resort.

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UT: How often do you get to travel there?

Not as often as I would like to. Last time I was at Puerta Vallarta was five years ago, although I travel regularly to Mexico. The last few years I've been too busy working (sourcing new ingredients and researching formula) or with my family when I've been back.

UT: What is your favourite food there, or your favourite places to eat?

I love a seafood stand in the middle of the town called Marisma. It looks like a Harry's Café de Wheels. They are famous for their yummy Prawn tacos and Chilli Marlin tacos. They are the best seafood tacos I've ever had, absolutely delicious! They are so good that they have opened at least two new locations. Any taxi driver will know where they are.

UT: What about shopping? Is there anything in particular which is a must-buy?

Huichol art is a must buy in this region. The Huicholes is one of Mexico's most ancient civilizations and fortunately there are still a few left in this region. Some of their best works are wooden sculptures decorated with multi-coloured tiny beads that are attached with beeswax.

UT: When it comes to partying or a night out, are there any special bars or clubs you'd recommend?

Walking on the Malecon.....main street. You can find heaps of bars and night clubs full of life. I recommend a great funky place in town called de Santos, good food and great atmosphere.

UT: What about quiet time? Any favourite secret spots with a view, or outdoor spots where you can soak up the great outdoors?

Sayulita Beach. No words can describe what an amazing little place this is. It is a remote hidden gem only accessible by boat where you can spend the whole day doing nothing but relax and enjoy nature at its best.

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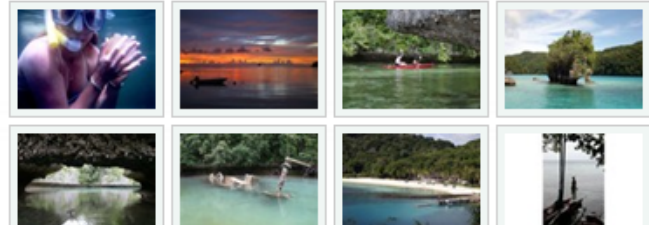
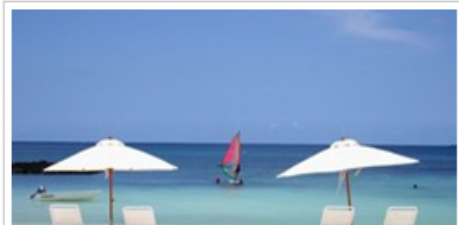
UT: What would be your insider tips for this place?

Any time of the year is a good time to go. But try to avoid spring break (northern hemisphere) or Mexican long weekends if you are not into being in a full on party place. Any other time is great. Some local friends suggested that next time we should organise a visit to the native communities and experience some of their traditions such a Temazcal (sauna), or a visit to the Shaman.

Palau - The Edge of Eden

Featured Destination

Selection by: Ben Hall



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