



# Los Arcos de Mismaloya

*The Traveler's Essential Guide*

Montserrat Regular

Montserrat Light

Unpacking Puerto Vallarta's #1 Marine Park—Insights, Logistics, and Reality Checks.

Based on 2026 Tripadvisor Data  
& 981 Traveler Reviews

# *The Jewel of Banderas Bay*

A protected National Marine Park since the 1980s, this cluster of granite islands features deep underwater tunnels, caves, and coral reefs. It serves as a sanctuary for marine life and the famous Blue-footed Boobies.

## Key Stats

**Rating:** 4.4/5 Stars ★  
(981 Reviews)

**Rank:** #16 of 226 things  
to do in Puerto Vallarta

**Location:** Offshore from  
Mismaloya Beach



# *Why Go: Otherworldly Beauty & Biodiversity*



**Above:** Granite Giants & Bird Sanctuary

**Below:** Deep Canyons & Marine Life

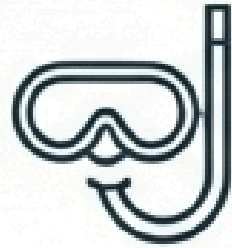
*“The rock formations rising out of the water feel almost otherworldly.”*

— Angelina, Jan 2026

*“Alive and unforgettable... a reminder of how magnificent creation really is.”*

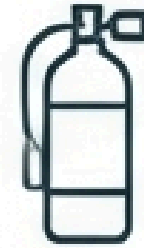


# *Choose Your Adventure: Activity Menu*



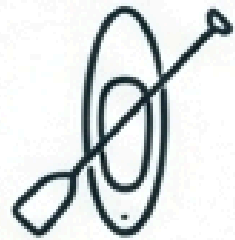
## **Snorkeling**

The standard experience. Swim with schools of angelfish and spotted rays.



## **Scuba Diving**

For certified divers. Access deep canyons and Devil's Canyon underwater caves.



## **SUP & Kayak**

Surface-level workout. Best for calm days and close-up rock viewing.



## **Cliff Jumping**

Adrenaline rush. Available on specific adventurous tours.



## **Bioluminescence**

Night tours. See the water glow (Subject to moon cycle).



# *Navigating the Price Tag*

**Budget / Shared**  
**\$39 – \$55 USD**



**Active / Small Group**  
**\$68 – \$101 USD**



**Luxury / Private**  
**\$550 – \$1,500+ USD**



Party boats & large catamarans.

**Pros:** Cheapest, social, open bar.

**Cons:** Crowded, fixed schedule, less snorkel time.

Guided eco-tours.

**Pros:** Eco-friendly, smaller groups, close to rocks.

**Cons:** Requires physical exertion.

Private charters (4-6 hours).

**Pros:** Complete freedom, comfort, personalized service.

**Cons:** High cost.



# The Local 'Panga' Hack

*How to save money and support locals.*



- ➡ Go to Mismaloya Beach by land (taxi/bus).
- 🧴 Find a local captain on the sand.
- 🧴 Negotiate directly.

*Real World Example (Tre T, March 2023):  
~\$1,800 MXN (\$90 USD) for a  
private boat for 3 people.  
Significantly cheaper than buying 3  
separate tour tickets.*



# Respect the Ocean: Safety Advisory



## *Strong Currents*

Reviewers warn currents can be “extremely strong” in specific spots. Life jackets are highly recommended, even for confident swimmers.

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## *Motion Sickness*

Open ocean conditions mean “choppy waters.” Reviewers report sickness even on kayaks. Check the chop before booking.

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## *The Fix*

Take motion sickness medication (Dramamine) 1 hour before departure. Don't wait until you are on the boat.

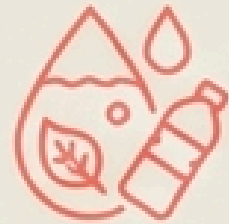


# Managing Expectations: The Reality Check



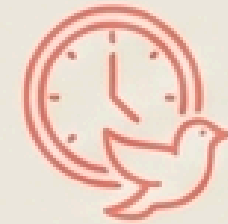
## *Crowds & Noise*

From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the park is busy with tours. Expect noise and boat traffic.



## *Visibility & Debris*

Water clarity is variable. Heavy rain can cause murkiness. While protected, currents occasionally bring bay trash into the caves.



## *Pro Tip: The Early Bird*

Go between 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM to beat the “party boat” flotilla and enjoy calmer waters.

# *The Bioluminescence Dilemma*



**The Promise:** Magical kayaking through glowing plankton.

**The Reality:** Highly dependent on conditions.



**Moon Phase:** Must be a New Moon (dark sky) for visibility.



**Water State:** Needs to be calm. Doing this in choppy water risks seasickness in the dark.

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**Verdict:** Only book if the moon cycle and weather align perfectly.

# Getting There: *Orientation & Access*



## Land Access to Mismaloya:

- **South** of the Romantic Zone.
- Take the orange & white **local bus** or Taxi/Uber.
- **Landmark:** Look for the “Night of the Iguana” set ruins on the hill.



# *Make it a Full Day: Mismaloya Beach*



## The Vibe

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Rustic fishing village feel.  
Famous filming site for **'The Night of the Iguana'** (1964).

## Dining

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My Tony (4.6/5) ★  
La Choza (4.6/5) ★  
El Jacalito (4.7/5) ★

## Note

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Beach loungers available but rustic. **Expect beach vendors.**



# *Beyond the Arches: Nearby Gems*



## **Colomitos Beach**

Tiny, hidden cove. Hiking or boat access only. Great for a **secluded swim**.

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## **Las Animas**

Larger beach with adventure parks and restaurants. **accessible by water taxi**.

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## **Vallarta Zoo**

Located just 0.6 miles from Mismaloya. **Interaction-focused animal encounters**.

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## **Los Muertos Pier**

Iconic sail-shaped pier. The **central hub for water taxis and sunsets**.



# *The Los Arcos Kit: What to Pack*

**Motion Sickness Meds**  
Essential for chop

**Waterproof Camera / GoPro**  
For underwater canyons



**Biodegradable Sunscreen**  
Mandatory for Marine Park

**Cash / Pesos**  
For tips & local boats

**Waterproof Camera**  
For underwater canyons

**Dry Bag & Towel**



# *The Verdict: Is It Worth It?*

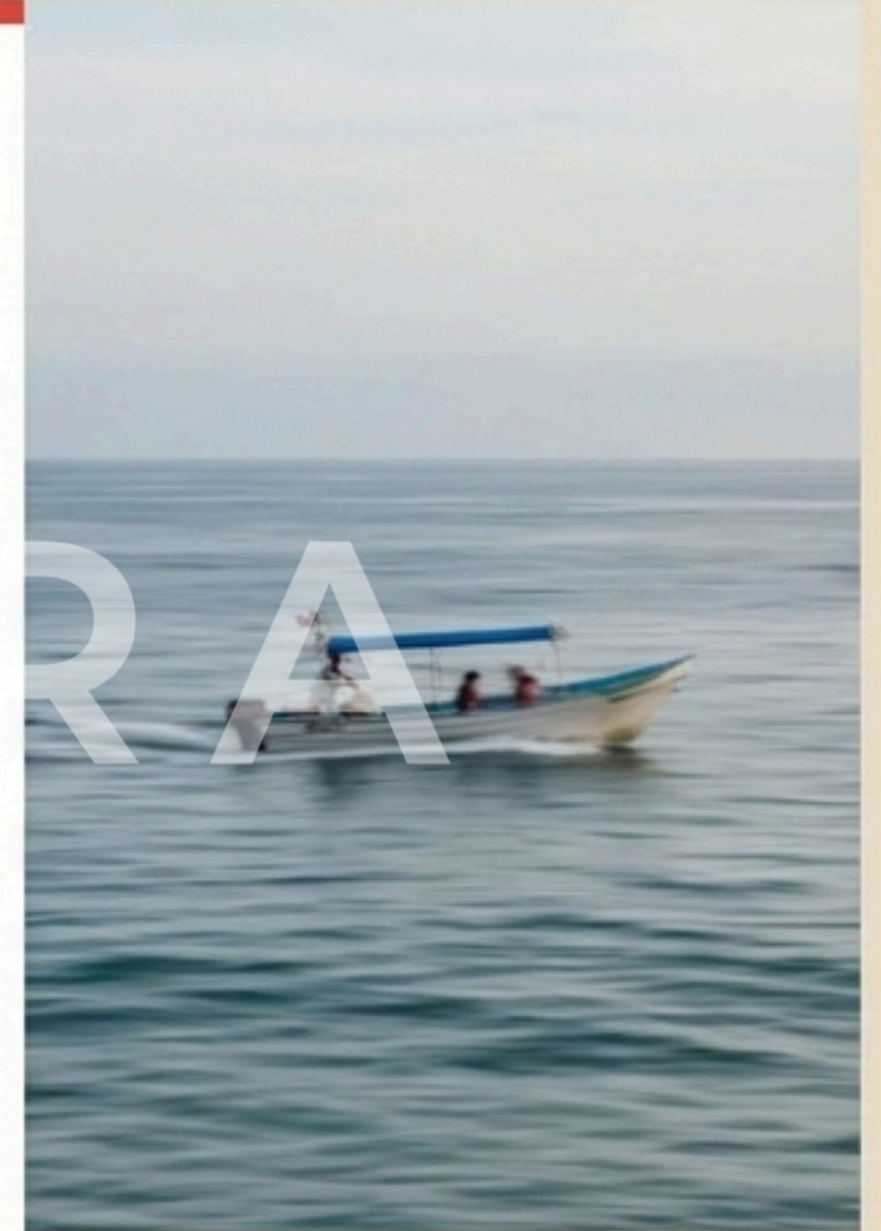


## **GO IF...**

- You love nature & biodiversity.
- You are a confident swimmer.
- You want iconic Puerto Vallarta scenery.

## **SKIP IF...**

- You suffer from severe motion sickness.
- You expect pristine, pool-like visibility every day.



*“The value for the experience is excellent... it reminds you how magnificent creation really is.” — Angelina*