

10 places you've got to see

Here are our latest picks, from an unspoiled beach in Mexico to Utah's newest adventure town



1. YELAPA, MEXICO

For beach bums and escapists

"This is exactly how I remember it," I say, standing on a wide, flat rock jutting into the sea. We're in Yelapa, Mexico, a tiny seaside village 45 minutes by boat — the only way to get here — from

bustling Puerto Vallarta. My husband, Pete, hops across a few small boulders and joins me. A rooster crows in the distance, and the low hum of an outboard motor draws our attention to a *panga* returning with the morning's catch. The sun sparkles on the water and small waves roll politely toward us. —Samantha Schoech

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2. MALIBU, CA

For surfers and celebs

Slip on your flip-flops and hit the newly renovated [Malibu Pier](#) (23000 Pacific Coast Hwy.; 888/310-7437), a 1940s icon set to reopen in spring 2008 after years of disrepair. Rent a board, check out the surf museum (scheduled to open in June 2008), grab a beer at the Beachcomber (bar scheduled to open in February 2008), and watch bronzed surfers tackle the same waves where Moondoggie taught Gidget to hang 10.

Where to stay Bed down in style on "Billionaires Beach" at David Geffen's new [Malibu Beach Inn](#) (from \$375; 310/456-6444). —Mackenzie Geidt

3. SAN FRANCISCO, CA

For culture hounds

Need an excuse to visit? Here are three: Two high-



profile museums and one revived jazz district enhance S.F.'s already world-class arts scene.

[The California Academy of Sciences](#) (set to open in October 2008; 415/321-8000), in Golden Gate Park, will

have wildflowers bursting from its green roof, 38,000 animals swimming in its aquarium, and a twinkling planetarium.

Downtown, the Daniel Libeskind–designed [Contemporary Jewish Museum](#) (set to open June 8, 2008; 415/344-8800) mixes steel and century-old brick with works from Andy Warhol to *New Yorker* cartoonist William Steig.

Where to dance Down-and-out for decades, the Fillmore District returns to its swinging 1950s roots. The new Fillmore Heritage Center and its [Yoshi's Jazz Club](#) (415/655-5600) lead the way. –Rachel Levin



Thomas J. Story

Golden Gate Park's Academy of Sciences

4. DENVER, CO

For posh politicians

Denver rolls out the red carpet for the [Democratic National Convention](#) August 25 to 28, 2008 (303/534-6200). The four-day blowout promises to either rope you in with its glitz and glam or send you running for the mountains. Make plans now to join the fun — but if politics isn't your scene, the year-old Frederic C. Hamilton Building at the [Denver Art Museum](#) (closed Mon; \$13; 720/865-5000) and the city's first Ritz-Carlton are worth a trip too.

–Lori Midson

5. TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, NM

For spiritual seekers

T or C may be best known for its mineral-rich hot springs and its proximity to Spaceport America, set to open in 2010 and boasting Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic as a tenant. But this tiny high-desert town has swelled in recent years with arty-holistic types seeking a different sort of journey. Galleries and artist studios have set up shop, and the town's healers and yoga instructors are attracting devotees from New York to Nairobi.

Citing its New Age scene and the power of the desert's

geothermal energy, some folks are calling it New Mexico's Sedona.

Where to soak Last year, the [Sierra Grande Lodge](#) (from \$99; 575/894-6976) opened two new mineral baths and a holistic spa, with treatments like reiki. —Kate Siber

6. MCCALL, ID

For Nordic skiers

Lately, vacationers, adventurers, and second-home buyers have been flocking to McCall for its three alpine ski resorts, hot springs, and vast backcountry terrain — but in March 2008 they'll be joined by a thousand nordic skiers from 22 countries, competing in the Masters World Cup cross-country ski championships. The last stateside host was New York's Lake Placid a decade ago, so this is a big deal for once-sleepy McCall. Anyone over the age of 30 is invited to enter the race. Gliding along the shores of Payette Lake, you won't care about coming in last.

Where to ski Join the [Masters](#) at Ponderosa State Park championship race course (Masters: March 1–7, 2008, \$160 entry fee and team registration, free to watch race, 208/315-3600; nonrace days: \$5–\$15; [idahoparks.org](#)). Or skate anytime at [Tamarack Resort](#) (\$15; 877/217-2158) and [Jug Mountain Ranch](#) (\$7.50; 208/634-5072). —Laura Stavoe

7. SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO

For history buffs

You can't step along the streets without tripping over history — or cobblestones. And 2008 is an appropriate time, as San Miguel de Allende bids to become a UNESCO World Heritage site. The cosmopolitan city is rich in 17th-century architecture: Browse baronial homes on Sunday house-and-garden tours. Book one of four suites at [Oasis](#) (from \$285 U.S.; 210/745-1457), with beds fit for royalty and a rooftop terrace for cocktails. —Peter Fish

8. MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA

For five-star travelers

Long lined with tchotchke- and wicker-filled B&Bs, Mendocino's gorgeous craggy coastline finally has the world-class digs it deserves. At the newly redone [Heritage House Inn](#) (800/235-5885), your toughest decision will be where to park yourself for maximum sybaritic bliss: the gazebo overlooking a precipitous bluff buffeted by waves; the window-walled dining room, where you might spot a whale breaching January through March; or

the tub that stands on legs, just an arm's length from your fireplace. Saunter mere steps away for a massage at the spa, slated to open in March 2008, or wander the inn's 35 acres, which include flowering gardens (dahlia lovers will be especially delighted come spring). But you'll want to hurry back to your cottage, where local wines and complimentary carafes of brandy await — along with your private porch, offering front-row seats for sunset. This luxury doesn't come cheap, but rates drop from \$550 to \$350 in winter. —Amy Wolf

9. OGDEN, UT

For adrenaline junkies

Locals have always considered Ogden their very own playground. But being home to heaps of fresh snow (about 500 inches of the real deal annually), three sprawling ski resorts (Powder Mountain, Snowbasin, and Wolf Mountain), and all sorts of daredevil sports (whitewater kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking), it was only a matter of time till word spread about just how good life is in the western foothills of the Wasatch Range. And spread to big-name brands such as Salomon, Atomic, and Suunto, no less, whose outdoorsy employees are moving here in droves — and bringing their friends — transforming the little town that hosted 2002 Olympic curling and downhill events into one of the West's hottest adventure spots. Just in case Ogden's great outdoors isn't enough, there's the new Salomon Center (801/399-4653), a \$20 million "high-adventure" hub.

Where to stay Jackson, Wyoming, or Boulder, Colorado, might boast similar activities, but the prices and laid-back vibe in burgeoning Ogden can't be beat. Rates start at \$89 at the cheery [Red Moose Lodge](#) (877/745-0333), 20 minutes from the slopes, where guests hit the equally affordable spa and sip wine by the fire. —Kelly Bastone



Douglas Merriam

Site Santa Fe. locus of the new Railvard District.

10. SANTA FE, NM

For modern-art lovers

Twelve years in the making, the much-anticipated [Railyard District](#)

(505/982-3373) is set to be fully completed midyear 2008, putting a decidedly modern face on historic Santa Fe. The 40-acre site — formerly a weedy parking lot and train yard — serves as a lively new downtown destination, with contemporary galleries like Evo and TAI, a 12-screen art-house movie theater, a permanent home for the farmers' market, and a park. Anchored by Site Santa Fe, a progressive arts space that's hosting its international biennial in 2008, the spare and airy Railyard scene offers a fresh alternative to traditional Canyon Road.

Where to eat Hit the Railyard Restaurant and Saloon (\$\$; 505/989-3300), a favorite for \$1 oysters on Thursdays. Or duck down nearby DeVargas Street for Spanish tapas at the Gatehouse (\$) 505/992-0957), which opened last year at the Inn of the Five Graces. Its owners also prettied up next door's Pink Adobe (\$\$\$; 505/983-7712); try the steak and green chile. —Katie Arnold

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