



PUERTO VALLARTA HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism is ingrained in the city's history, local culture, economy and development since the late 18th century. The people of Vallarta have been working in the hospitality industry for over 150 years.



1851 – First settlement by the Rio Cuale initially called Las Peñas. The Rio Cuale area became the transit point where muleteers came down from the silver mining towns up in the mountains to pick up salt, an essential element for processing silver and not found in the mountains. Salt was shipped into Los Muertos beach by boat and then transported to the silver mines up in the mountains.

1914 – After the discovery of a lesser grade of silver in the U.S., bringing down the price of the metal, miners from the mountain towns returned to farming and chose to settle in the fertile valley of the Ameca River that proved to be self-sufficient and produced enough surplus that could be sold in other parts of the country.

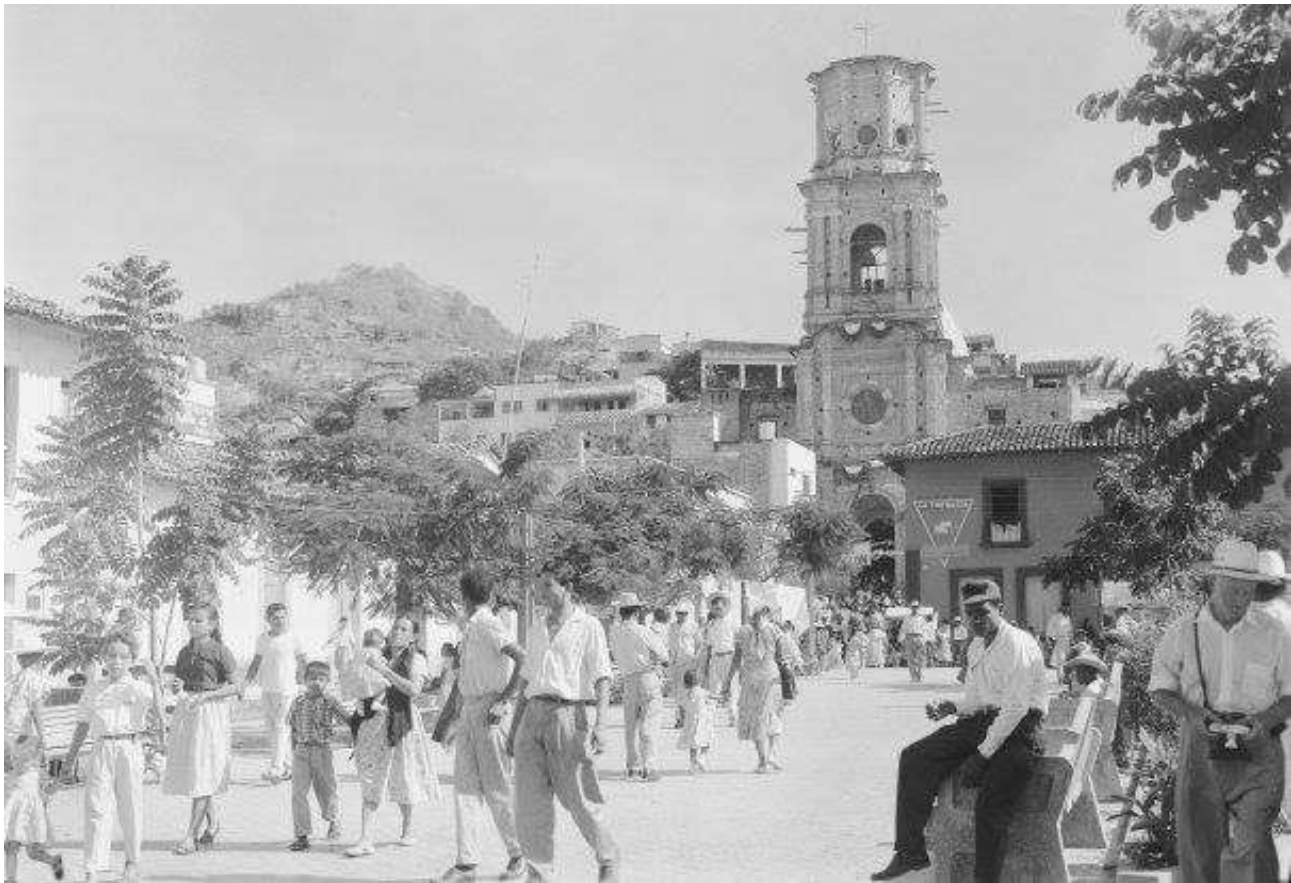
1918 – Las Peñas was granted the title of municipality and given a new name: Puerto Vallarta.

1920s - 1930s – The Puerto Vallarta area prospered with the rush for “green gold”, the unripe bananas that were grown and exported to the U.S. by the Montgomery Fruit Company. However, the enforcement of the land ownership laws adopted during the Mexican Revolution, only allowing Mexican citizens land ownership in Mexico, entailed the repossession of close to 65,000 acres of Montgomery’s land, ending the intensive agricultural phase of the area.

1935-1949 – Vallartans found a new source of wealth in sharks that inhabited the waters of Banderas Bay, exporting shark fins to New York for consumption in the Big Apple’s Chinese restaurants. Shark liver was also used by American soldiers as a nutritional supplement during the Second World War. The Puerto Vallarta area benefited from this trade until the end of World War II.

1942 – The first advertisement promoting Puerto Vallarta appeared in Modern Mexico, a magazine published in New York. It was placed by the Fierro brothers, founders of the first airline in service in the Vallarta area, and offered flights from Guadalajara to a “primitive place of hunting and fishing”.

1951 – Puerto Vallarta celebrated its one-hundredth Anniversary with pomp and ceremony. On this date, Doña Margarita Mantecón, from a well-established Vallartan family, married a counselor of then Mexican President Miguel Alemán, attracting many journalists and film crews. This event brought the beautiful scenery and faces of Puerto Vallarta to screens throughout Mexico and beyond. The city began to seduce many of Mexico’s leading intellectuals and artists as well as those from the United States including famed architects such as Fernando Freddy Romero who created the Vallarta Style of architecture with white-washed adobe façades, pitched red tile roofs, decorative wrought-iron grids and stone walls, evoking the atmosphere of a typical village.



1954 - Mexicana de Aviación inaugurated a Guadalajara-Puerto Vallarta flight which started bringing in visitors from the rest of Mexico and abroad.

1960s – The arrival to Puerto Vallarta of Guillermo Wulff, an engineer from Mexico City ushered in the second phase of the town’s construction style with the introduction of the cupola as an architectural element. Guillermo Wulff built several homes between the areas of Gringo Gulch and Mismaloya.

1962 – Mexicana airline began Puerto Vallarta-Mazatlan-Los Angeles service. Because of its affiliation with Pan American Airlines, Mexicana’s promotion of Puerto Vallarta was seen in Pan American’s offices worldwide. Puerto Vallarta then lacked paved access to the airport and arriving passengers had to cross the Pitillal River on a pontoon bridge.

1963 – The Night of the Iguana was filmed in Mismaloya, on the southern shore of Puerto Vallarta.

The film was directed by John Huston, and the cast included Richard Burton, Ava Gardner and Deborah Kerr. Tennessee Williams, author of *The Night of the Iguana* also visited the set regularly. Puerto Vallarta became famous with the Hollywood set and uncovered the romance of Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Charmed by Puerto Vallarta’s magic, the couple purchased a house there, Casa Kimberley. John Huston made Puerto Vallarta his permanent home and built his house in Las Caletas. The gathering of celebrities attracted the attention of the international media and Puerto Vallarta began receiving growing numbers of visitors.

1965-1971 – Francisco Medina Ascencio, then governor of the state of Jalisco, spearheaded efforts to make of Puerto Vallarta a first rate tourist destination, attracting investors and building modern infrastructure. One of Medina Ascencio’s great achievements was getting the presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon, and Mexico, Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, to meet in Puerto Vallarta in 1970.



1968 – Puerto Vallarta was granted the title of city and provided with the financial resources to build and upgrade its infrastructure. Some of the construction projects that were completed during this period include: the highway from Barra de Navidad (on the south shore) to Puerto Vallarta, the international airport, the Camino Real Hotel and the Banco Nacional de México (Banamex) branch. The city also received full electricity and telephone service.

1973 – The construction of large resort type hotels began after a decree signed by President Díaz Ordaz in 1970 which declared “residential and tourist development on the lands surrounding Banderas Bay in the states of Nayarit and Jalisco” of public convenience.

1980 – Sheraton Baganvillas Hotel opens.

1982 – The devaluation of the Mexican Peso, at the end of President López Portillo’s mandate, proved beneficial for Puerto Vallarta as foreigners took advantage of the favorable exchange rate to vacation in Mexico.

1985 – The construction of Marina Vallarta was begun by the Martínez Güitrón brothers of Guadalajara. The project included residential homes and apartments, condominiums, hotels, a school and a shopping mall along with 450 boat slips for the marina.

1996 – The Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board was created to promote travel to Puerto Vallarta. The fund is financed through a 2% tax on hotel room occupation and is comprised of hotels, restaurants, gallery owners, tour operators, and environmental groups.

Additional information on Puerto Vallarta is available at www.visitpuertovallarta.com



visitpuertovallarta.com

 [puertovallarta](https://www.facebook.com/puertovallarta)

 [@PuertoVallarta](https://twitter.com/PuertoVallarta)

 [@visitpuertovallarta](https://www.instagram.com/visitpuertovallarta)

 [visitpv](https://www.pinterest.com/visitpv)