



The perfect break

With incredible amenities and abundant activities, each of these six luxury beach resorts boasts top-class personalised experiences for all, as S.R. Loftis discovers

A gifted surfer can catch a great wave almost anywhere, but there are many places around the world that have just the right conditions and geography to create the perfect breaks. We drop in to Hawaii, South Africa, Bali, Tahiti, California and Oaxaca to check out the swell and the local vibe.

The finest hot spots in those regions have been surfed by professionals for competitions, documentaries and thrill-seeking for years and consistently live up to their reputations as the greatest surfing spots around the world.

Above: Ultimate thrill – surfing a barrel **Right: Bali wave-hunting**

PIPELINE, OAHU

Pipeline is one of the most famous surf spots in the world and is a favourite training ground for many pro surfers. While the beaches are always busy with locals and tourists alike, the winter months tend to be the best times to catch the optimal wave for surfing. This wave was first surfed in 1961 by Philip Edwards and hosts the Billabong Pipeline Masters competition each year. Other notable surfers that have been spotted at Pipeline include Andy Irons, Sunny Garcia and Gerry Lopez. Pipeline has appeared in media steadily since its discovery, including getting its name from Bruce Brown’s ‘Surfing Hollow



Days’ and gaining popularity due to the hit song of the same name by The Chantays. The famous ‘Banzai Pipeline’ episode of *Hawaii Five-0* also features the wave in all its glory.

Pipeline boasts waves from anywhere between nine and 20 feet with a left-hand break and requires thicker boards of 6’6” to 7’8”.
gohawaii.com

SUPERTUBES, JEFFREY’S BAY

Jeffrey’s Bay is a surf destination that provides many excellent waves for avid surfers, but none as tough as Supertubes. For this reason, the World Surf League is held here every year, and many surfers are spotted here regularly, such as Derek Hynd and Bruce Gold. Mick Fanning’s famous encounter with a great white shark in 2015 happened at Supertubes, where Mick punched the shark and swam for shore, escaping the attack with no injuries. Dolphin sightings are also common in this area, and the waves are best during the winter, from May through August, as the summer wind directions are not ideal for surfing and the cold fronts cause ground swells, resulting in better surfing conditions.

Supertubes is a long right point break wave with heights from four up to 12 feet. Shorter boards should be used and South Westerly winds are best.
www.Jeffreysbaytourism.org/general-information

TEAHUPO’O, TAHITI

As the yearly location for the Billabong Pro Tahiti competition, Teahupo’o is a surfing staple. Not only is this wave considered a thrill-seeking spot for bodyboarders, but it also boasts records such as ‘heaviest wave’ surfed by Laird Hamilton in 2000. During the filming of *Riding Giants* in 2003, Malik Joyeux rode one of the largest waves ever recorded. Despite these high honours, this location has only been popular

for surfing since 1998, though Mike Stewart and Ben Severson first bodyboarded this wave in 1986. Teahupo’o will also be the location for the summer Olympic Games surfing competition in 2024, which will be the furthest distance an event has ever been held from the host city.

The waves of Teahupo’o range from 6.6 to 9.8 feet, but can reach as high as 23 feet. The break is primarily a left reef break, though the outer reef can create right swells.
tahititourisme.com.au

ULUWATU, BALI

Uluwatu’s unique location is one of the features that makes this wave so fascinating. During the filming of surf film *Morning of the Earth*, Alby Falzon and David Elfick found

Uluwatu while shooting the surfs of nearby Kata. Steve Cooney took on the wave for the film, which caused a buzz upon its release. As the beach is hidden by the old temple on the cliffs, many locals believe that the perfect waves of Uluwatu are a blessing from the gods. There are five separate breaks here, Bombie, Temple, Outside Corner, Racetracks and Peak. Bombie is considered the best for expert surfers, as the waves are higher and tend to be more consistent due to the ground swells. The breaks are left-facing and at peak surfing conditions from May to October, with waves up to 20 feet.

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Below: Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca in Mexico





MAVERICKS, CALIFORNIA

Mavericks was first surfed in 1967 by Alex Matienzo, Jim Thompson and Dick Notmeyer, though the group was not able to mount the wave successfully. It was named for Matienzo's dog Maverick, who seemed to be the only member of their group who had any fun in the water that day.

In 1975, Jeff Clark was the first surfer to ride the wave successfully, but it wasn't until 1990 that the wave was widely known and used, as many surfers didn't believe California had waves of this size.

The Titans of Mavericks competition was run from 1999 through till 2018, and the wave has been memorialised in many documentaries, including TV show *Powerlines Surf Spots*, *High Noon at Low Tide*, *Twenty*

Top: Surfing in Hawaii is among the best in the world, with an incredible nightlife scene to boot
Above: Jumping above a wave on the North Shore of Oahu



Feet Under, Striking Peak, Riding Giants, and many works focused entirely on surfing this wave, such as the biopic *Chasing Mavericks* and the memoir *Making Mavericks*.

Mavericks has both left and right breaking waves, though the left break is much trickier to surf, as the right break is slower. Waves can crest at over 25 feet, and the

rock formations cause two angles to the wave front, resulting in a V-shaped wave.
californiabeaches.com

PUERTO ESCONDIDO, OAXACA

This wave, nicknamed the Mexican Pipeline, has a dangerous reputation, with broken boards being a common effect of surfing here. While lots of specialised

equipment is often recommended, the water is warmer than many other locations, meaning a full wetsuit isn't needed. Because of the high risks associated with this location, this is considered an expert level wave. It was discovered in the 50s but the shortboard revolution of the 70s made this a popular surfing destination. While a yearly surfing competition takes place in November and the ESPN X Games have taken place here, the wave is also known for Brad Domke's skimboard surfing and Bianca Valenti, who holds the record for largest wave surfed by a woman here.

Puerto Escondido has both left and right breaking waves and is known for enormous heights of up to 52 feet, though the swells range between two and 10 feet the majority of the time. South Westerly winds and winter weather are the beat conditions for surfing the Mexican Pipeline.
visitapuerto.com ■