

- **Do some research.** To check for complaints about the resort developer or management company, visit any **Profeco** office or call the toll-free Consumer call center in Mexico: 01-800-468-8722.
- **Take your time.** Study the paperwork outside of the presentation environment. **Read the contract thoroughly and verify it has a Profeco registration number** and that it includes all the obligations and benefits of the purchase; the complete name and address of the developer representative; all the costs,

Selling strategies

Mexican regulations forbid the offering of gifts, free vacation certificates or any other promotion strategies without informing the consumer the specific purpose of the offer.

So be wary of any salesperson that approaches you during your vacation and invites you to a free breakfast or a free stay at a resort, without telling you he is intending to sell you a timeshare.

If you can only get to know the resort by a brochure, walk away from the sale. An honest salesperson will always give you all the information you need, invite you to visit the resort and the developer office, solve all your doubts and put all his promises into writing.

maintenance fees, taxes, and payment methods; location of the resort and periods of use; guarantee conditions, and in case you chose an exchange system, the location options you have and all the terms to make it effective.

Make sure all the salesperson's promises are written into the contract. If possible, visit the local Profeco office, where our attorneys can review the contract for free and give you some legal advice to help you make a decision.

You can change your mind

By law, you have five business days to cancel the contract after you have signed it. If you decide to cancel the purchase within this period, notify the developer by email and certified mail. Keep the receipt as evidence you cancelled on time.

You should receive a prompt refund of all the money you have paid, without any cancelling penalties, within fifteen business days.

If the developer refuses to do so or arguments you resigned to this right when signing the contract, you may contact extranjeros@profeco.gob.mx. To submit a formal complaint, you must send the following paperwork: a brief description of the problem, copy of the contract and of your ID.

For further information

To learn more about vacation ownership in Mexico you can visit any **Profeco** office, or contact us at +52 (55) 5568-8722.

If you want to submit a complaint send an email to extranjeros@profeco.gob.mx, or visit the Mexican Embassy or the Mexican Consulate nearest to your home. All our services are free.

For tourist information, you can also call the toll-free call center in Mexico of the Ministry of Tourism: 01-800-903-9200.



Profeco

Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor



Take your time buying a timeshare



Yes, the resort is just like paradise and the offer of the salesperson sounds quite appealing, but do you fully understand the conditions of the purchase? Are you sure that's the best vacation plan for you? When buying a timeshare in Mexico you are protected by Mexican laws, so before signing any paper we suggest you do some homework.



The basics

When buying a timeshare in Mexico, the developer owns the resort, so your interest is legally not considered real estate. You only purchase the right to use one or more units for a specific number of weeks, during a certain number of years –usually 5 to 50.

In most cases, you have to pay an initial purchase price and periodic maintenance fees, which are likely to increase every year. If you want to sell or rent your right to use the interval, you may need the developer approval and the resale value will probably be lower than what you paid. This is why the value of a timeshare is not as investment, but just as a vacation option.

The plans

In general, timeshares are sold for weeks known as "intervals". Timeshare developers offer plans to use a unit with different interval options:

Fixed time. You purchase the unit for use during a specific week of the year.

Floating time. You use the unit in a certain season of the year. The first person to make a reservation is the one that is considered confirmed.

Splited-week. You can split your week of use into two or three periods in different dates. It's a good option for short vacations.

Vacation Clubs or Points-Based Vacation Plans. You purchase a certain number of points, and exchange them for the right to use a room or a unit, according to its size, length of the stay, location of the resort, and the season you want to use it.

Biennial Ownership. You use a resort unit every other year.



Exchange systems

An exchange allows you to trade your interval for another in a unit at an affiliated resort. This system is very attractive,

especially because you can choose a different destiny to the one you bought. It's important that you know you don't have to wait for another person to use your interval in order to make the exchange, the service is provided through a company that administers the intervals of the owners of different resorts, and has a direct relationship with the developer. Exchange systems usually have some restrictions, so ask the developer on what is the name of the exchange company he works with, which are the destinies available in his exchange system and in which countries; and if there are any other restrictions or extra fees.

Before buying



- **Calculate the total cost.** Include travel costs, exchange fees and maintenance fees. Remember maintenance fees are likely to increase every year based on inflation, so ask if your plan has a fee cap and make sure it's included in the contract.

- **Compare.** Visit the resort and evaluate its location and quality. Try talking to current timeshare owners and ask them about their experience. Is the timeshare a better option than similar accommodations in the same location?

- **Don't act on impulse or under pressure.** The salesperson may offer you purchase incentives, but don't feel pressured to make an immediate decision; you have the

right to choose the timing of the purchase, and get the offer and all promises in writing.

Be careful with any bonus offer or any clause that implies waiving your right to cancel. Any waiver is illegal.

- **Don't sign any document only in Spanish.** Even if you are fluent in the language, you may not understand all the legal terminology. Make sure that an official translation is provided to you before making a decision, or take the time to get a detailed translation by a certified translator.