

MI CASA, SU CASA

Golf star Lorena Ochoa welcomes new friends to Mexico.

Before Lorena Ochoa burst onto the circuit, few Mexicans played golf, despite the exciting courses and great conditions. But after she starred at the University of Arizona, turning pro in 2002, Mexican kids flocked to the game, and golfers flocked to Mexico.

“Golf is really growing in Mexico. Number one: the weather is beautiful,” Lorena states without controversy. “There are so many wonderful resorts and golf courses close to the water in Riviera Maya,” the golf destination that includes PGA tour site El Camaleón Mayakoba. “Play golf; have some fun; go to a beautiful resort. It’s a great combination: everything you need to relax and have a family vacation or honeymoon,” she effuses. “And the beaches here are the best — the sands, the water, the diving!”

“I like everyone to experience our culture, to walk in the towns, go to the shops, get little presents typical of this place. When my friends visit Mexico, they all want to come back and stay. I’m very proud to be Mexican, to represent my country.”

Born 1981 in Guadalajara, her country is proud of her too. All along the tour, crowds of Mexicans wave the flag and cheer, “¡Go Lorena. Go Mexico!” “That’s something very special,” she smiles. “Many work on the golf course. I tell them ‘We appreciate your hard work.’ Lorena’s own hard work began at five, playing with her dad. “I really liked it. I played my first tournament when I was six.” By 2006, she had reached the top of the LPGA’s money list.

Now the Lorena Ochoa Foundation (www.fundacionlorenaochoa.org) gives other kids the opportunity to learn golf — not a cheap game — as well as to triumph over more serious issues. “The first thing I wanted to do was to help others. We

help with organ donations. We give scholarships. We help kids with cancer and disabilities. We have programs for young women." She hopes to do more after golf.

For now, Lorena Ochoa keeps busy winning tournaments, representing Mexico, and urging new friends to come visit Riviera Maya.

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