

CELEBRATING WORLDLY INDULGENCES & LUXURY LIVING

CAVIAR AFFAIR

Paradise Found

The Summer Escapes Issue

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destinations

MEXICO

Paradise Found

Story and Photography by Peter Sukonik

RUSTIC LOCAL CHARM AND ARTISTIC
MODERN DETAILS UNITE IN A PICTURESQUE
RESORT BY THE CARIBBEAN SEA



Sunset Las Olas Pool
Mahekal Beach Resort

THE OLD EXPRESSION, "LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION" IS NEVER MORE RELEVANT THAN WHEN CHOOSING A VACATION SPOT, AND WHEN IT COMES TO DAZZLING LOCALES, THE MAHEKAL BEACH RESORT IN PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO IS HARD TO BEAT. Nestled between lush tropical gardens and 800 feet of pristine white sand beach along the brilliant turquoise water of the Caribbean, the enchanting oceanfront haven formerly-known as Shangri La Caribe is welcoming visitors after a multi-million dollar reimagining. Though the 122 thatched roof, palapa-style bungalows remain authentic to the area with the natural, rustic feel of a local village, newer amenities bring modern conveniences to paradise. The stylish resort is home to a seaside Jacuzzi, two brand new swimming pools, a dive shop and water sports center, two open-air, newly renovated restaurants (Cocina and Las Olas) and three new bars (Itzi, Boli's, and Las Olas). The varied offerings make the oasis a popular destination for weddings and special celebrations and quiet getaways alike.



Lobby of Mahekal Beach Resort Mexico

One of the first sights to greet arriving guests is an inviting fireplace seating area in the open-air lobby. Mahekal's bohemian interior design features colorful Mexican accents influenced by the gypsy lifestyle. This bright and eclectic style is evident in the impressive main lobby bar and activity center, where Missoni-esque fabrics are displayed alongside bright orange and cobalt blue ping pong and billiard tables. After check-in visitors can walk through the perfectly manicured grounds and up the hand-laid stone pathways leading to each doorstep. Whether oceanfront or nestled in the Riviera Maya jungle, all bungalows include outdoor terraces with personal hammocks, tempting guests to relax in their own private bohemian retreats. The private, uncrowded beach provides the perfect setting for a barefoot walk, and a convenient jumping off point for snorkeling, diving and refreshing afternoon swims in turquoise waters.

With breakfast, lunch and dinner served at Mahekal's two restaurants, dining is as convenient as stepping outside. Cocina offers a casual dining experience with a well-curated buffet. For an upscale evening, Los Olas serves specialty dinners in a romantic ocean-side setting. Just steps from the beach, guests enjoy signature cocktails like the effervescent Paloma, made with fresh grapefruit juice and fruit infused tequila, alongside fresh regional dishes featuring bright Mexican flavors.

During the day the picture-perfect beach is hard to beat, but even those who prefer the pool can have the best of both worlds with Los Olas Pool and Bar, which overlooks the beach, making it a perfect spot for al fresco lunches or refreshing libations during the nightly happy hour. Sample the quintessential Mexican spirit at a tequila tasting event while enjoying the mariachi band before dinner at Cocina. Kid-friendly activities like pottery painting are also available, making the resort a sought-after destination for families and adults alike. Whether through a thoughtful sommelier's locally produced wine recommendation, or a personalized on-site dive lesson, guests can experience the local hospitality through the friendly and knowledgeable staff.

A short walk from Mahekal's front doors, energy abounds on Playa del Carmen's famed



Deluxe Ocean Front with 2 Queen beds Mahekal Beach Resort Mexico

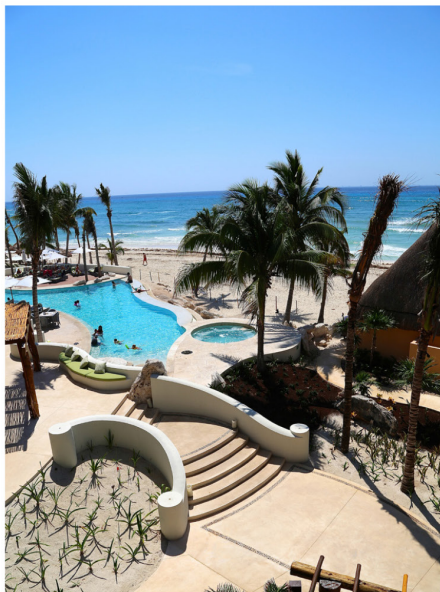
Grounds Mahekal Beach Resort Mexico



Quinta Avenida (Fifth Avenue). The town's reputation was traditionally that of a charming fishing village and artists' colony, but since a ferry from Cozumel helped tourists discover the hidden gem, it has developed rapidly, with designer brands and luxury boutiques quickly populating the walkway. Located just one or two blocks inland from the beach, Fifth Avenue is now lined with hundreds of world-class shops, bars and restaurants. For an exceptional dinner on the avenue, head to Axiote, where Iron Chef winner Xavier Pérez Stone prepares creative dishes like tender octopus and duck tacos in an open kitchen while bartenders meticulously craft each cocktail from scratch. From live music venues to the trendy dining and dancing spots springing up all over the district, if you're looking for an authentic Mexican experience on the incomparable Caribbean Sea, Playa Del Carmen is the place to be.

Seasoned history buffs and young Instagram-ers alike will enjoy nearby Tulum, a picturesque treasure of the ancient Mayan world. Scholars still debate the reasons for the rather mysterious disappearance of the advanced Maya civilization, and the ancient fortress city continues to attract curious travelers. With spectacular views of the ocean, beaches and surrounding coastal region, this stunning archaeological site is the only one in the Riviera Maya to have been built overlooking the sea. Perched in a lush green landscape on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sparkling blue waters of the Caribbean, the iconic Castillo structure is often captured in postcard-perfect images famously associated with the region. After touring the ruins consider taking advantage of the beach staircase to fit in some sunbathing or even a refreshing dip in the waves.

Other popular excursions available in nearby locations include guided jungle tours, jet-skiing, snorkeling, scuba diving, swimming with dolphins, zip-lining, horseback riding, sailing, and lounging in the beautiful, naturally-created swimming holes known as cenotes. However with a plethora of activities, a welcoming and helpful staff, breathtaking sights and comfortable amenities all on-site, visitors could be forgiven for spending their entire stay on the blissful grounds of Makehal. ☼



Top Left to Right: Private deck and pool at deluxe oceanfront units; Long shot of Las Olas pool Mahekal Beach Resort; Exotic fare includes Caribbean lobster & hoja santa leaf wrapped in corvina fish, crusted with polenta and Huitlacoche sauce. Left: Hammocks outside bungalow. Below: Castillo (Castle) Tulum Ruins is a popular nearby attraction.

