Our style preview takes you on a girlfriend getaway.

spring fling

Color us green with envy over a 1956 Fleetwood Cadillac.

Out and about with two very fashionable dogs.

Why throw pillows are our favorite home accessory.
A TALE OF TWO BEACHES

Tulum

Tulum, that once sleepy village near the Mayan ruins of the same name, scarcely resembles the hippie-dippie beach retreat of a few years back. The backpacker destination that was not so long ago a wide spot in a bumpy road has evolved into a chic beach hideout less than two hours south of Cancun. Meanwhile, more grown-up Playa del Carmen has produced a resort that offers a bubble of serenity within the Caribbean-front party spot. A recent journey along this stretch of the Yucatan Peninsula revealed reasons to spend time in the sand and waves, interrupted by intriguing dining opportunities and fine wine lists, along with shopping finds. Here’s what seekers of luxurious, intimate spots in the sun can expect at these hideouts just a short flight from home.
In stark contrast to Tulum, Playa del Carmen’s uninhibited growth since the late 1990s changed its character from laid-back to flashy. That said, Mahekal Beach Resort easily readjusts opinions that Playa is all about frenzied fun, thanks to its remove within a thick palm tree forest and a private, 900-foot-long reach of Caribbean beachfront. Co-owned by Dallasite Lamont Meek, Mahekal revives the simplicity that first seduced us along this stretch of the Riviera Maya. A thatched-roof design throughout the resort exudes an authentic beachside palapa mood, but luxurious details abound, from beautifully textured upholstery in suites, restaurants and common areas to elegant bath products in rooms. Exceptional wine lists at restaurants are delivered by sommeliers knowledgeable about the joys of Baja wines. Each of four swimming pools has its own spirit of seclusion, and all premium oceanfront suites are outfitted with individual plunge pools, ideal for a dip before breakfast on your private patio. New treats at Mahekal include choosing your lunch protein from fishermen bringing in the daily catch and watching chefs prep and cook it on the beach. Or choose to spend a morning in the resort’s Mayan Culinary Casita, where you help make dishes according to ancient techniques and recipes. Candlelight dinners on the beach, involving a custom menu and market-fresh ingredients, are another pleasure. Afternoon pottery classes produce pieces you paint and staff artisans glaze and fire for you. There’s always a morning yoga class, followed by spa time (the massage involving reiki therapy is hard to beat), as well as snorkeling and kayaking off the Mahekal beach and scuba diving and cenote tours arranged by the resort’s on-site dive center. Grab a bicycle from the front desk and wheel around the corner to 5th Avenue, the street lined with boutiques and sidewalk cafes; the best section is between 16th and 32nd streets.
MEXICO

THE DETAILS
Mi Amor and Mezzanine, Tulum
Both about 1 hour and 45 minutes south of the Cancun airport in the Zona Costera, Tulum; tulumhotelmiamor.com and mezzaniinetulum.com.
Mahekal Beach Resort, Playa del Carmen
It’s located less than two hours from the Cancun airport; mahekalbeachresort.com.

Who goes here
Mi Amor and Mezzanine attract adults looking for cozy resorts, thoughtfully prepared ethnic cuisines and low-key nightlife. At Mahekal, couples, girlfriend groups and families enjoy beachfront suites with private plunge pools, with just a short walk to small pools, bars and restaurants, and assorted nightspots nearby.

What to take
Sunscreen and hats for everyone, tennis shoes for exploring the ruins, beach bag for touring cenotes and sundresses for evening. Credit cards accepted everywhere; U.S. dollars are appreciated when tipping.

What to do
In Tulum, sand and surf time is punctuated with massage and yoga sessions. Reservations are a good idea for dinner outings. At Mahekal, ask for a fresh fish lunch on the beach, a romantic dinner for two on the sand and a cooking class in the Mayan cultural center. Wherever you stay, be sure to arrange daylong tours to cenotes and/or Mayan ruins as soon as possible after arrival; good guides are often booked up.

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