

BELLA

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The
Beauty
Issue

with

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(continued)

Travel

Cinco de My, Oh My!

By Sascha Zuger

Forget trips to some far-flung island. These South-of-the-Border escapes bring the spice for Cinco de Mayo and beyond.



Banyan Tree, Mayakoba, BanyanTree.com

Board a gondola and escape to the Venice of the Riviera Maya. As you glide through the mangrove-lined canals, past endless species of indigenous birds and wildlife, you'll experience an otherworldly sense of serenity. Every villa in this luxe resort boasts a private pool, outdoor tub (flower petal-filled on request), aromatherapy, and pillow menus and décor with a soothing fusion of Asian and Mayan influences. Though it might be tempting to enjoy the seclusion, villa bicycles encourage exploration of the surrounding jungle and lagoons. A romantic meal on the dining gondola named after the moon goddess, Ixchel, or a visit to The Rainforest — with a hammam, an ice fountain, and a steamy waterfall — is a perfect finish after an eco-adventure boat excursion.

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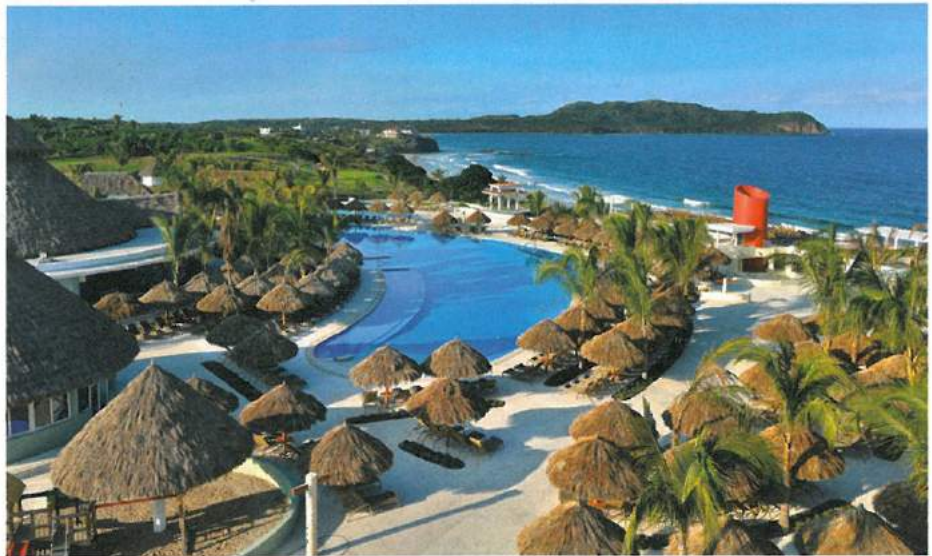
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Mahekal Beach Resort
 Playa del Carmen
MahekalBeachResort.com

From the moment you stroll down the hand-laid stone pathway to your private palapa-style bungalow, it's obvious you have left the land of condo-skyrises for a different kind of Mexican-Caribbean experience. Luxury abounds, from the private plunge pool and moon shower of your open-air terrace (yes, that swaying hammock does look tempting for a nap) to the frosty handcrafted cucumber jalapeño margarita delivered as you float in a hot tub with the sea lapping at its edge.

It's anything but a cookie-cutter getaway – romance can be rekindled after a “farm to fork” meal of fire-roasted local delicacies at Fuego as you cuddle next to the beachside fire pit, or during a starry stroll under the palms. Extend the serenity with a visit to the Mayan-inspired Revive Spa, where an intimate VIP therapy room features an indoor/outdoor shower, freestanding bathtub, and private access to an artfully manicured Zen Garden.



IBEROSTAR Playa Mita, Riviera Nayarit, Iberostar.com

Want to enjoy the fiesta without blowing your bod just before bikini season? This activity-packed, five-star inclusive between the Pacific Ocean and the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains will have you kayaking, windsurfing, catamaran sailing, snorkeling, beach zumba-ing, cycling, golfing, and *ohmming* off those margarita calories. Ideal for traveling with kids in tow, the resort offers endless options for your mini-me's (e.g., kids and teen club, kids-only waterpark, shows) to keep them happy and busy while you hit the adults-only disco, Sensations spa, and evening entertainment. **18**