



Magical Mahekal Beach Resort

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The mysticism that surrounds Mexico makes it one of the most interesting places to visit. For centuries this country has been explored, researched, and studied by literates and travelers who wonder at the magnificent history and architecture that it has to offer, and **Playa Del Carmen in the Riviera Maya** personifies everything that this country is known for. Ancient archeological sites, ecological diversity, and unique gastronomic experiences are some of the many things you will get to experience here. They are also few of the reasons why we have chosen it as a Top Destination To Visit in 2016.

However, growing tourism in the vicinity of Cancun has threatened to turn this one-of-a-kind hidden treasure into an overcrowded hub, which is why choosing where to begin the trip is of the utmost importance. I feel confident that you will find **Mahekal Beach Resort** to embody everything that is needed to experience Playa Del Carmen the right way. Located in between the Mayan jungle and one of the best beaches in

the city, this retreat style resort will turn a regular vacation into a spiritual journey where reconnecting with one self and nature will be achieved organically and pleasantly.

The Balance Between Luxe and Artisan

No detail has been left behind at this property where high-end touches and

locally inspired features perfectly meet in the middle. The location itself gives ample room for including the Mayan culture while maintaining a modern portfolio of services and amenities. In fact, is this delicate balance between the celebration of the past and the inclusion of the present what makes **Mahekal Beach Resort** truly magical. From the moment you arrive, you will find yourself inspired and revitalized.



Stone pathways and walls make the resort feel enticing and mysterious, while mesmerizing views of the Caribbean Sea bring a sensation of peace and calmness. Regardless of the time of the day you will enjoy a stunning unblocked view of the water ideal for swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, tanning, napping, and anything else your heart and mind desires.

This is especially true from Las Olas oceanfront infinity pool that spills into the horizon. Each of the pools has a purpose and style to please any type of moos. Have a drink and lounge on a chaise at the Itzi Pool, enjoy the day in a cabana or destress in the heated tub at the Fuego Pool, or have some private time surrounded by nature at the Treehouse Pool.

Sleep & Spa Is The Go-To R & R

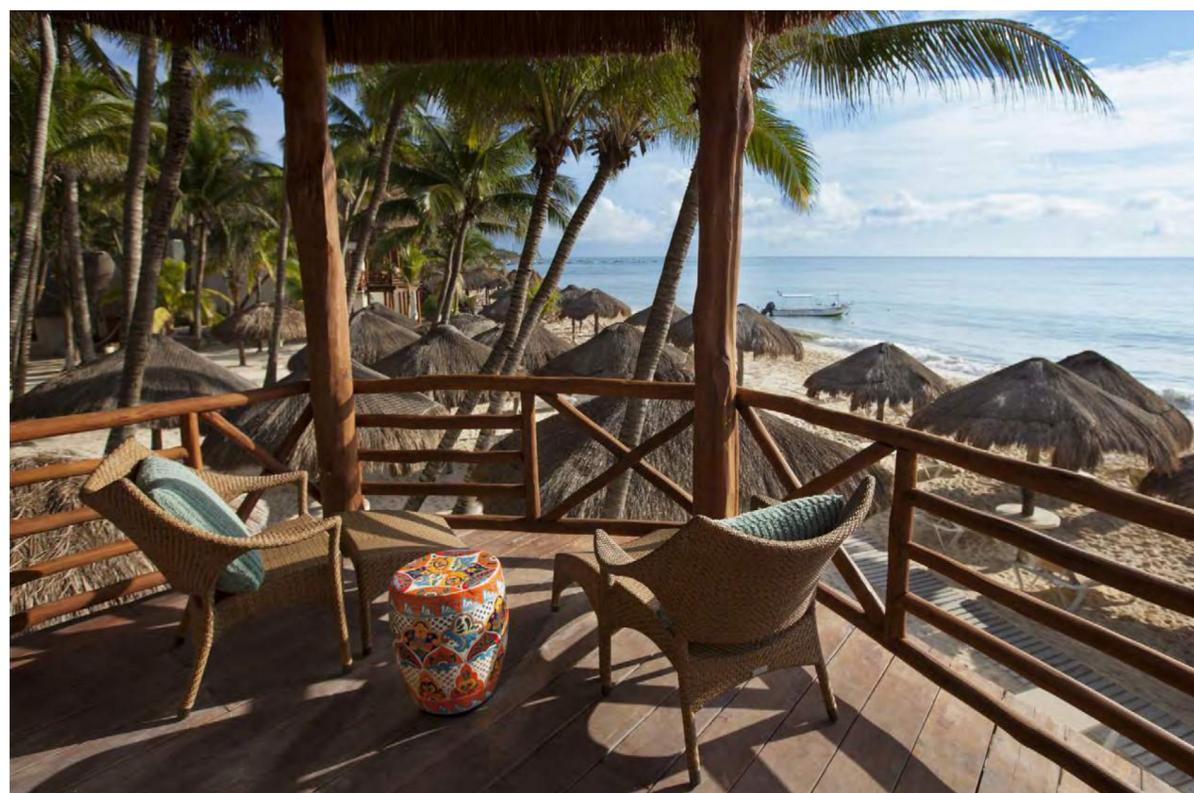
Bungalows, penthouses, and ocean front suites are some of the accommodations you can choose from to fit your travel needs. But, these are not your average rooms. I am talking about

an outdoor dining area in your private porch, all deck-out with your own individual plunge pool and hammocks. Perfect for taking a romantic dip after a hot day, relax under the light of the moon, or catch up on your reading after a day out exploring.

An indoor suite with king sized bed will make you feel as rested as Sleeping Beauty, while a rain shower will take

all your troubles away. Needless to say, there is plenty to enjoy even when choosing to stay in, as the hotel offers a wide selection of exquisite wines and in-room options. After all, dinner in bed is probably the most underrated, yet totally uplifting, option.

The remodeling of the property brought the **Revive Spa** to life, and with that, your new best friend. The gorgeous





Mayan inspired center is nestled between natural gardens reminiscent of an enchanted forest where the ultimate goal is to achieve inner harmony. Taken from the ancient Mayan philosophy that body and soul must work as one, their space is a sanctuary away from the noises of the world and the hectic pace of routine.

Coconut, Cacao, Aloe Vera and Crystal Quarts are some of the elements used during treatments. The Revive Spa 5 Senses massage integrates the relax-

ation of the body with the synchronization of the spirit, turning this treatment an extra sensorial experience. Each alternative is carefully crafted making them a spa that cares as much for the well-being of the body, as for the reviving of the soul.

Walking Distance Dining and Dancing

However, do not think retreat means boring because the resort is everything, but that. There are fun bars and

delicious restaurants, including the **Mayan Culinary Casita** where dishes are prepared according to their traditions, which is sure to make this a memorable trip. The dining experience is unique as every plate is made with locally sourced ingredients and crafted in a way that follows the ancient cooking styles.

Las Olas, Fuego and Cocina Restaurants have some of the finest traditional Mexican dishes I have tasted. I recommend the tropical ceviche, green chilaquiles, octopus in oregano oil, slow roasted grouper, guacamole with chili salt, mushroom crepes, smoke duck, thyme lamb, and the coconut shrimp. If you are feeling a bit adventurous, try the aguachiles and chili covered tamarinds. Do not forget to visit **Boli's Bar**. Named after their beloved concierge, this full-service lounge is ideal for some low-key, yet fun times sipping on a margarita or mezcal.

The proximity to **5th Avenue** makes the location incomparable. A local hot spot filled with souvenir shops, au-





thentic cuisine and international dining, outdoor bars and lounges, and Latin style dancing clubs. You will surely find something to do, eat or buy here. La Cueva restaurant and La Fisheria has some of the best food and ambience in the area without breaking the bank. Easy to navigate and in total walking distance, promised by someone who does not appreciate long walks, is a life saver when it comes to getting last minute gifts before departing to the airport.

Explore and Marvel In Natural Beauty

There is a lot of sight-seeing to do in Playa Del Carmen. You can easily combine a romantic getaway with an outdoorsy itinerary, and enjoy the best of both worlds. Begin at the **Vida Aquatica Dive Center at Mahekal Beach**

Resort. There you can choose from different packages to snorkel in natural cenotes, visit marine life sanctuaries, plan a fishing trip, or venture off on night dives. I loved the day tour to the Mesoamerican reef, the second largest reef in the world, where we were able to swim with sting rays, colorful fishes, turtles, and an assortment of intricate corals.

Venture off-property to explore even more. Here are top three things to visit in Playa Del Carmen:

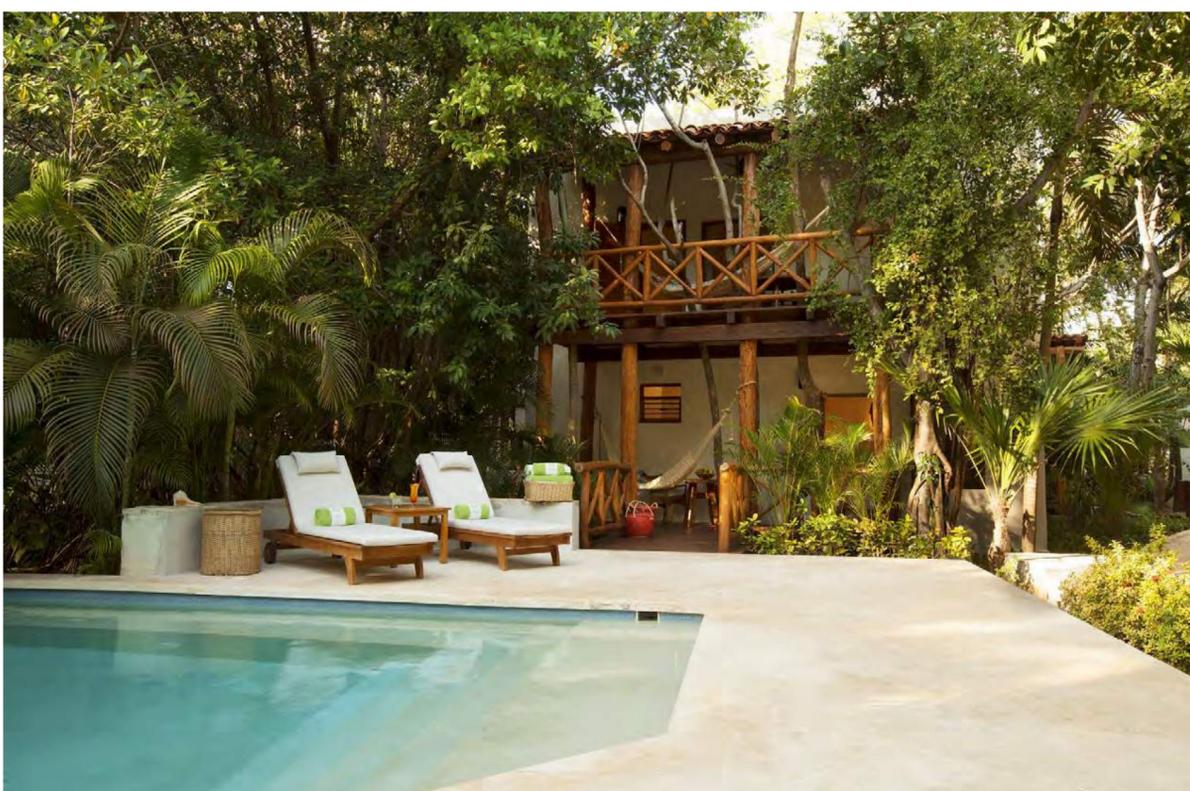
Spend the day in **the Tulum Ruins:** Known for their grandiosity and secrecy, the UNESCO World Heritage Site is an astonishing survival of time. The closer you get to the pyramids, the more details come to the surface that show us how complex the Mayan society was.

Beyond the idea that they sacrificed people, which I might add was an honor to them because only important people was chosen for that task, there is much more to learn and admire about their culture. Each symbol represents their perspective on time, the universe, and life. Through their concepts they teach us a valuable lesson and is that balance is the most important thing as it brings harmony to one's life within ourselves and our surroundings.

Meet your new besties at **Delphinus Riviera Maya:** One of the most amazing experiences I have had in my life has been interacting with dolphins at this sanctuary. This is not a place where you go and kiss a dolphin, take a picture, and leave. This is where you go to learn about their lives, how they interact, what are some of the issues they face on the wild, how to help conserve their species, and educate yourself about marine life.

Their I belong, I learn, I reflect, and I commit philosophy, made them the 4th establishment in the world to earn the Humane Conservation certification by the American Humane Society as a safe haven for dolphins. They also entered the Guinness world record for most successful dolphin births where both mother and baby survived.

With their motto: For a Brilliant Blue Planet, they have created a program that ensures the welfare of these animals, researches their habits and ill-





nesses to help them, and provides a safe environment where they can be healthy and happy. Small groups of visitors secure a better experience, and the state of the art labs showcase how the work goes behind training and maintain the habitat.

So much to learn from these beautiful animals and their loving trainers. They prefer to be active and be playing. To them staying positive, stimulating the attitude and mood, and evaluating them through behavioral sciences are some of the ways to make sure they are comfortable.

I have to say that this is the first time that I feel that an activity has taken me back to my childhood. I was in a complete state of joy and happiness, so much that I giggled and smiled the whole time. My heart was filled with love for these kind animals, and for the opportunity to get to know them and befriend them.

If this is not enough of a good example for you to take a chance on Delphinus, then how about the fact that they interact because their skin changes every two hours and touching helps getting rid of dead skin? At the same time that you will give them a hand on exfolia-

tion, contact stimulates them in a good way.

The beauty of their program is that you get to interact with the dolphins, kiss them, dance with them, ride with them, and many more fun things, at the same time that you are provided with an invaluable learning moment about these wonderful creatures. You will leave the conservation center feeling happy and helpful, for they take great care of these animals and their habitat.

Lastly visit the Mayan Underworld at **Rio Secreto**: Concealed from the

world, and only accessible through a hike of about 100 feet underground, Rio Secreto is one of the most spectacular excursions in the entire Yucatan Peninsula. In these caves, history is written through the depth and structure of the rock formations which have been slowly shaped by the ecosystem around it.

It has taken millions of years for nature to accomplish such gorgeous and powerful natural sculptures, where the intensity of the environment makes you feel as if time stood still. Honestly, it is one of the most unique expeditions you could embark on where it does not mat-



ter how remote and secluded the area is because you can still feel the beauty of the Universe in each engraved wall that surrounds those caverns.

Crystal clear water, although incredibly cold, is the perfect backdrop for these dramatic caverns. In the beginning a passage through cenotes and vegetation brings a familiar feeling, until you reach the profundity of the cave and find yourself surrounded by magnificent stalactites and stalagmites. Both bio phenomena consist of the calcification of minerals and water mixed together through out an extensive period of time.

However, the difference between them is that stalactites are shaped as pointy icicles and hang from the ceiling, while stalagmites form on the floor of the cave and most have rounded tips. However, they are both very delicate and prone to breaking, which is extremely important for the conservation group that directs this trip to make sure the formations remain as untouched as possible.

What is most amazing is that life happens in these natural sculptures. Through the layers of water and miner-



al that come from rain or underground rivers, many fishes like the Blind Fish and Bats are able to sustain themselves and call this isolated space their home. By the end of this mile-long hike, and refreshing swim, you will feel connected with the atmosphere and emotionally rejuvenated.

As a note: I would personally advise not taking children under the age of 6 years old, unless they are extremely outdoorsy, as the path includes many sudden water declinations which can make anyone prone to minor incidents.

There are many more sites to explore in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico, and that is why we truly recommend making it a top choice for your next vacation.

To Book Your Stay at the beautiful **Mahekal Beach Resort**, please visit: www.MahekalBeachResort.com

To Plan your visit to **Delphinus Riviera Maya**, please go to www.DelphinusWorld.com

To Plan Your visit to **Rio Secreto**, please go to: www.RioSecreto.com

