

## **Hotel Heaven**

*Three hotels in the Cancun area offer their own unique experience*

When you think Cancun, it's easy to imagine spring breakers looking to blow off steam before finals. But it truly offers beauty to travelers of all ages, especially if you allow the scope to be extended to Playa del Carmen and Riviera Maya. We unite all three with a top hotel from each when it comes to affordability and ambience:

### **Westin Regina**

A reasonable all-inclusive buy, this Cancun hotel is situated right on the water with ocean views easily attained. Obvious plusses include the lunch bar area, where shrimp and pizza highlight sumptuous food served to your heart's content as the lilting surf rolls in. Drinks also are never watered down—always a question with all-inclusive—and the extent of what they serve is thorough. Stone floors have a classic Mexican architecture along with comfy beds for a much-needed siesta. Drawbacks include a lack of dinner options in the all-inclusive package and the quality isn't on par considering what you get in your first two meals. In addition, pool chairs are extremely hard to come by, making you feel obligated to get up early or find yourself standing up while everyone else is lounging.

Reservations: (52)(998) 848 7400

### **Occidental Grand Xcaret**

Situated in the zoo-like atmosphere of Xcaret, you can find yourself coming upon an exotic animal as easily as sun worshippers. In addition, you may find the extra calories melt away as sports are in abundance, the staff priding itself on getting groups together to play and to get to know one another. Meals are superior, from breakfasts featuring high-level omelettes to dinners with a restaurant representing seemingly every common ethnic food. Two oddities: some of the best Asian food you're likely to have in the area yet the Mexican restaurant is actually the weakest of its offerings. Pizza snack bars stay open late, along with a good-natured club within the premises. The sole negative of this Playa del Carmen hotel is although the animals are alluring, being away from the beach can be annoying.

Reservations: (800) 858-2258

### **Azul Beach Hotel**

While the previous two accommodations are massive and for the masses, this is a lighter touch, with only a few hundred guests at any one time. Your rooms are all right at the beach and what a beautiful beach it is, their sand particularly soothing to the feet. Find a ping-pong game or eat in a laid back lunching area, this Riviera Maya resort oozes relaxation. The bar is a particular standout with top shelf liquor in many different forms and generous servings. With intimacy and personal catering to its guests, your experience

will be different from most that come to the area. On the flip side, meals tend to take much longer to be served, to the point where it interrupts your itinerary. Still, with these kind of views, are you necessarily in a hurry?

Reservations: (888) 280-8810