

# Rest Easy in the Riviera



## Riviera Maya, Mexico

By Lisa Horten

**R**ich in history and natural splendor, the area known as Riviera Maya spans the northern half of Mexico's Caribbean coastline. Merging a tropical, beachfront paradise with some of the world's best spas, ancient ruins and eco-adventures, there's something for everyone on Mexico's Caribbean coast. So what are you waiting for?

**STAY:** Nestled in a lush tropical forest near the picturesque village of Xcalacoco, The Tides Riviera Maya offers the ultimate in luxury on seven miles of white-sand beach. The intimate, 30-villa property prides itself on unpretentious elegance. Start your day with a Hatha Yoga class on the beach, then check out the Casita Maya—a rustic outdoor kitchen where traditional Mayan cooking techniques are practiced.

Looking for some larger-scale excitement? The Aventura Spa Palace is a 777-room, adults-only luxury resort in the heart of Riviera Maya. More adventuresome types will love the property's 100-foot climbing tower, jungle obstacle course and semi-Olympic lap pool.

Eco-minded newlyweds should check out one of EcoTulum Resort and Spa's three rustic seaside properties, Azulik, Zahra and Copal. That said, free early-morning yoga classes and in-room massages sound like the kind of "roughing it" that we can totally get behind.

Head to the spa at Aventura Spa Palace for its hydrotherapy services.



**EXPLORE:** Pay a visit to Hidden Worlds, where you can create your own day of adventure exploring its *cenotes*, or underground caverns and waterways. Discovered in the 1980s by a group of adventurous and eco-conscious divers, careful measures have been taken to ensure that the underwater park's natural splendor has been protected. See Hidden Worlds from an entirely different perspective by way of the park's Zipline or SkyCycle.

Experience 11th-century history after dark at the Tulum Ruins. You won't want to miss the *Visitas Nocturnas*, a 45-minute nighttime tour of the ancient walled city. Tulum's 15 ancient pyramids are illuminated in shades of red, blue and amber while guests explore their surroundings.

**EAT:** For a special dinner in Playa del Carmen, grab a table on the Roof Garden at La Casa del Agua. With a view overlooking the Caribbean Sea, the stylish eatery features seafood specialties—try the Seabass in Romesco Sauce for some local flavor. You can practically feel the sand between your toes at the Maroma Resort and Spa's El Sol, where Yucatan cuisine is served ocean-side.

**SIP:** Tequila! This is Mexico, after all. In Playa del Carmen, stop by the Blue Parrot hotel's Playasia for a round of romantic cocktails in a dramatic open-air environment. ➔

Ask for a "skinny" margarita (no sugary mix) to cut major calories. ➔

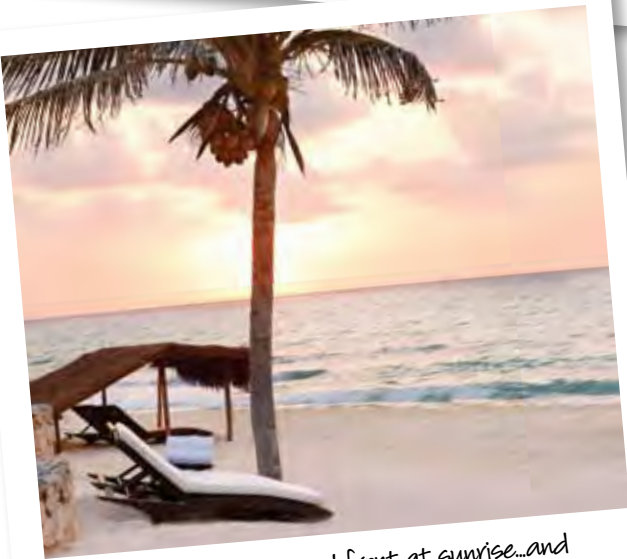




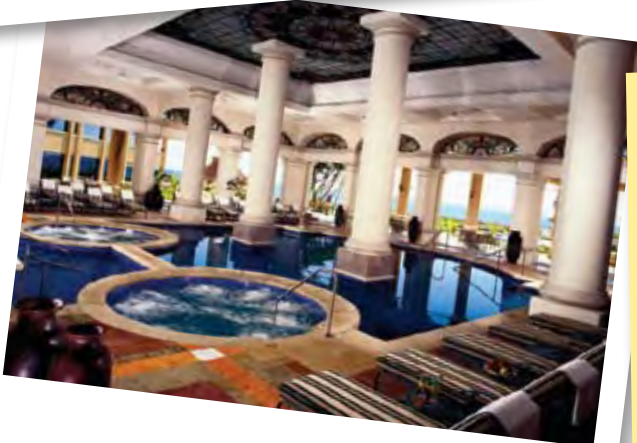
The Tides' La Marea Restaurant affords diners spectacular views of the Caribbean Sea.



Hang loose at one of the Tides Riviera Maya's Luxury Villas with private plunge pools.



Early riser? Hit the beachfront at sunrise...and stake your lounge chair claim for the day.



Take a dip in the Aventura Spa Palace's indoor liquid sound pool.



### Things to know:

- 1. Save your pesos!** Hotel rates in the Riviera Maya are often discounted by as much as 50% in the low season (September through mid-December).
- 2. Alert your bank** and credit card company that you're traveling to Mexico to avoid an unexpected (and inconvenient) suspension of your card when you whip it out, which often happens as part of a fraud-protection program.
- 3. Don't tip taxis.** Rates are high, and the tip is usually built in, as taxi drivers are part of a strong union and have a monopoly on the tourist transportation industry.
- 4. Meeting someone in Mexico?** The proper way to introduce yourself is with a handshake, sharing your name, and saying *mucho gusto* (much pleasure). Look at you, fitting right in!

#### CHECK IT OUT:

Tides Riviera Maya, [rivieramaya.com](http://rivieramaya.com)  
 La Casa del Agua, [lacasadelagua.com](http://lacasadelagua.com)  
 Maroma Resort and Spa, [maromahotel.com](http://maromahotel.com)  
 The Aventura Spa Palace,  
[palaceresorts.com/aventuraspapalace](http://palaceresorts.com/aventuraspapalace)  
 Eco Tulum Resort and Spa, [ecotulum.com](http://ecotulum.com)  
 Hidden Worlds, [hiddenworlds.com](http://hiddenworlds.com)  
 Playasia, [blueparrot.com/playasia-restaurant](http://blueparrot.com/playasia-restaurant)