



# MEXICO CULINARY DELIGHTS

Mexico offers world-renowned gastronomy curated by acclaimed celebrity and Michelin star chefs. Delivering a variety of culinary delights from each region, Mexico's food has been honored by UNESCO World Heritage List as Intangible Cultural Heritage. From intimate open-air dining under a beach palapa or angling your own dinner in the Sea of Cortez to signature carne y pollo delicacies and tequila tastings, Mexico offers unparalleled culinary experiences. With the country's distinctive gastronomic flair, savor organic ingredients, limitless fresh seafood and ancient dishes fused with innovation and inspiration for a delightful epicurean adventure.



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## Culinary Excellence in Cancún & Riviera Maya

Below is just a sample of the immersive itineraries our Destination Specialists can create.

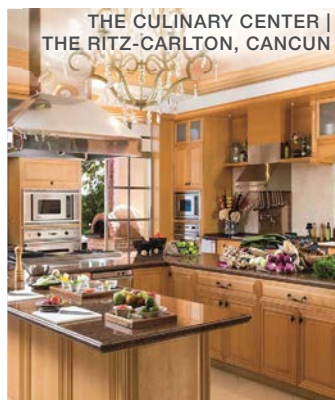
**Day 1 | USA/CANCÚN** | Arrive at *The Ritz-Carlton, Cancun* and relax in spectacular beachfront luxury for four nights. Begin your first evening at the champagne bar at The Club Grill, enjoying live jazz, followed by a sumptuous gourmet presentation featuring a signature pear salad, sweet corn soup, roasted Canadian duck with agave tequila sauce and a scrumptious soufflé.

**DAY 2** | Spend the day enjoying endless sunshine along the white-sand beaches, visit Luxury Avenue shopping or wander open-air markets. Tonight, sail under the stars in the Nichupté Lagoon aboard the Spanish Galleon Columbus on the *Columbus Lobster Dinner Cruise*, indulge in surf 'n' turf or lobster dinner, accompanied with fine wine, and live music among the sparkling lights of the bay.

**DAY 3** | Whet your appetite for adventure with a *Chartered Fishing Trip* on Mexico's Caribbean Sea for an opportunity to catch anything from marlin and sailfish to mahi-mahi, king mackerel and wahoo alongside a professional crew. Bring back your proud ocean catch to prepare at the resort for a delectable fresh seafood feast.

**DAY 4** | Ideal for gourmands and newbies alike, celebrate your last evening in Cancún with a fun, interactive cooking lesson at The Culinary Center. Featuring traditional cuisine, discover the magical ingredients and masterful techniques from the entertaining chefs, preparing creative dishes and learning wine pairings.

**DAY 5** | Relax in your private transfer to the Beyond All-inclusive, Beyond All Compare™ *Grand Velas Riviera Maya* for three superb nights in your sumptuous suite. Be pampered with personalized butler service amidst pristine beaches and lush mangroves. Savor AAA Five Diamond Award fare at Cocina de Autor with its reinterpretation of classic dishes or fine Mexican delicacies at Frida, beginning with blue fin tuna tartare. Next delight in zucchini stuffed with prickly pear cactus, followed by ribs served in a pot of mole with truffle mashed potatoes and ending with a decadent buñuelo dessert served with banana candy.



**DAY 6** | Start your day with an al-fresco breakfast of French toast, custom omelettes or Playa del Carmen-style eggs at the French-inspired Bistro Restaurant. After a day of fun, relax in a casual open-air terrace at Azul, offering an international buffet with everything from fresh, handmade sushi and burritos to hamburgers, pizza and croissant sandwiches.

**DAYS 7 - 8** | Explore the best of Riviera Maya, with the *Tulum & Xel-Há All-inclusive Experience*. Your private guide will show you this Mayan seaport overlooking Mexico's turquoise seas, then introduce you to the alluring beauty of Xel-Há. This full-day adventure includes lunch and private transfers.

On your last day, enjoy access to the exclusive *Cancun Airport VIP Lounge* before boarding your comfortable flight home. Then, begin planning your next extraordinary vacation filled with local culinary pleasures.



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## INSIDER TIDBITS

- A traditional condiment made with tomatoes, onions and chilies, salsa dates back to the ancient Aztecs, Maya and Incas who used the freshest ingredients available.
- Mole is generally a dark red or brown sauce primarily used over meats or poultry with many flavors and chili peppers and chocolate as the common ingredients.
- The pre-historic *molcajete*, a classic stone version of the mortar and pestle, is still used today to grind various ingredients for traditional Mexican cooking.



## JOURNESE' CULINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

### CANCÚN & RIVIERA MAYA

**Alux Caverna Restaurant** | Step inside a mystical 10,000-year-old cavern for an exotic dining experience in Playa del Carmen. Marvel at stunning visual spectacles as you immerse in ancient Mexican and international cuisine. Relish flavors from the earth and sea, beginning with a sea urchin and serrano chili appetizer, then feast on grilled oysters, beef fillet with red wine sauce or a Caribbean lobster risotto.

**Cocina de Autor at Grand Velas Riviera Maya** | Chef Nahúm Velasco steals the show with beautiful, sensorial gastronomic offerings incorporating the essence of new flavors and textures with a playful creative experience. This AAA Five Diamond award-winning restaurant boasts an innovative blend of Mexican and Caribbean influences utilizing only the freshest ingredients and authentic cultural techniques in everything from beef and poultry dishes to the catch of the day.

**Fantino at The Ritz-Carlton, Cancun** | Don your resort elegance for an exquisite epicurean journey at this AAA Five Diamond award-winning restaurant. A medley of Mediterranean charm, rich natural ingredients and sophisticated cultivation, savor dishes of filet mignon with parmesan gnocchi and a Port wine reduction, New Zealand lamb chops with cous cous and handmade tagliatelle in truffle butter.

**Ha' at Hotel Xcaret Mexico** | Discover an incredible seven-course tasting menu paired with the best Mexican wines at this sophisticated AAA Five Diamond restaurant by the first Mexican chef to receive a Michelin Star, Carlos Gaytán.

**Harry's Prime Steakhouse & Raw Bar** | With panoramic views over Nichupté Lagoon, a lively atmosphere and incomparable service, savor USDA prime, Black Onyx and Kobe beef prepared to perfection. In addition to elevated steaks, delight in garden-to-table starters, tenderloin and marrow tacos, risottos, vegetarian entrees, fresh seafood and an extensive raw bar.

**La Casa del Agua** | Enjoy indoor or rooftop garden open-air dining, live music and a wine cellar just steps from the sea. Offering an international menu, savor everything from garlic shrimp, tortilla soup and top sirloin cuts to galician octopus, sea bass or fresh catch of the day.

**Porfirio's** | Escape to a spirited night full of dancers, mariachis and a tequila and mezcal cart that mixes cocktails at your table, featuring Mexican haute cuisine with soul and flavor. Tempt your palate with New York aguachile flamed at your table, salmon ceviche with mango, grilled nopales or a chicharron quesadilla.

**Restaurante La Habichuel** | Delighting locals and visitors since 1977 with a tribute to Mayan culture, relish the favorites of Mexican cuisine and the fruity flavors of the Caribbean sea. Relish specialties including fish fillet in amaranth and almond gabardine, fettuccine with frutti di mare, rossini medallions in a brandy and red wine sauce and flamed dishes prepared at your table.

**Secrets The Vine Cancun** | This Unlimited-Luxury®, adults-only resort is home to one of the largest selections of wines in the country. Delight in Sommelier-led wine tasting and pairing or mixology cocktail classes, then enjoy fine Italian cuisine at Nebbiolo Ristorante, Mediterranean fare at Olio, flavors of the Far East at Dragons or the finest seafood at Sea Salt Grill.



### CULINARY TIDBITS

**CANCUN & RIVERIA MAYA** | A combination of Mayan and Spanish flare, typical dishes for the Yucatan area include achiote and chimole paste with fresh ingredients including cilantro, chili peppers and oregano.

**CANCUN & RIVERIA MAYA** | Be sure to try Papadzules, a cream dish with pork chicken, eggs or cheese; cochinita pibil, pork marinated in achiote paste, habaneros and red onions, prepared in banana leaves; or huevos motulenos, fried eggs with black beans and topped with tomato sauce and hot salsa on a bed of tortillas.

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## CULINARY TIDBITS

**COZUMEL** | With a base of Mayan and Spanish Creole cooking, Cozumel's cuisine expanded in the 1980s when norteño (northern Mexico) foods began to show along side the originals. More outside influence came when cruise ships began hiring Indonesian and Filipino employees, some of whom started ethnic restaurants on the islands, and grocery stores began carrying Asian ingredients.

**LOS CABOS** | With a natural bounty of seafood provided by the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Cortez, you'll find plenty of almejas chocolatas (chocolate clams), abalone, shrimp, lobster, stingray, crab, squid and marlin throughout its dishes.

**LOS CABOS** | Local fare is often served with clamato (tomato and clam drink) or Damiana liquor (damiana plant, sugar cane alcohol, water and sugar) which was originally produced by the Guaycura Indians for their ceremonies.



## COZUMEL

**Ix Kool Mayan** | Tradition finds its meaning at this fine dining venue showcasing Mayan traditions inherited for generations. Try the beans with pork from an ancestral recipe, cochinita pibil marinated in a sour orange juice only found in Southeastern Mexico and sikilp' aak', an appetizer of tomatoes roasted over a coal fire.

**Paprika Restaurant** | Enjoy soft sea breezes in the outdoor setting with a collection of authentic yet creative dishes. Sample their famous fish tacos or poke bowl, share a mariscos (seafood) tower and finish with grilled pineapple with cinnamon and ice cream.

## LOS CABOS

**El Farallon at Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal** | Perched above the ocean with dramatic vistas, feast upon a daily changing menu featuring Baja's bountiful selection from the sea. Sample the trio of appetizers with a choice of ceviche, hot dish and salad, followed by a mix grill of fish, lobster, steak, shrimp and clams with a selection of sauces and side dishes.

**El Mercado** | A modern and innovative concept for buying and distributing food, more than 20 local vendors and open-kitchens offer the freshest meat, seafood, fruits, baked goods, frozen yogurt, beer, wines and more. Shop for favorite ingredients to go, stay for a casual gastronomic experience or savor fine dining restaurants with menus created by acclaimed chefs.



**Fiesta Dinner Cruise** | Dance the night away to Latin rhythms aboard a luxurious catamaran. Sip icy margaritas and cold cervezas as you cruise by Los Arcos and Lover's Beach, then feast on a variety of tacos accompanied by different types of salsas.

**Flora Farms** | Tucked in the foothills of the Sierra de la Laguna Mountains, this 25-acre organic farm offers a restaurant, bar, grocery, cooking classes, farm tours, tastings, live entertainment and more. Relish a fresh seasonal menu, wood-fired pizzas, fruit and vegetable infused craft cocktails and house-made sorbets.

**Gardenias Shrimp & Fish Tacos** | Serving delicious tacos for more than 30 years, this family-run establishment utilizes the finest products. Relish their specialty shrimp molcajetes or try different tacos, from fish, shrimp and nopales to chicharron and barbacoa.

**Lorenzillo's** | Delight in a marina setting with spectacular sunsets as you savor international cuisine combined with acclaimed live lobster offerings from its own lobster farm, imaginative seafood combinations, soups and salads, pasta dishes, chicken and roasted Angus beef.

**Noah Japanese Food** | An under-the-radar favorite of local chefs, savor Japanese cuisine rooted in ultra-fresh seafood, plus sushi and shahimi with Mexican undertones including the Emma roll (tempura shrimp, avocado, ginger and serrano) and Noah roll (fish, cucumber, avocado and grilled jalapeno).

**SEARED at One&Only Palmilla** | An elegant wood-fired grill showcasing Michelin-starred chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's culinary prowess. Dine al fresco on the ocean-facing terrace as you savor a choice of high-end cuts of meats from around the world, seafood entrées with delectable sauces, a raw bar, vast wine selection and sweet delicacies for dessert.

**Taller 17** | The ideal place to go for strong cold brews and espressos, perfectly cinnamon Mexican hot chocolate, homemade kombucha and fresh-out-of-the-oven pastries, indulge in buttery blueberry scones, rich brownies, flaky fruit pies and chewy-crispy cookies.

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## GUADALAJARA

**Fonda Doña Gabina Escolástica** | The quaint Tapatia inn highlights one of Mexico's famous dishes, pozole, their red hominy soup with pork head stock and meat is served with shredded lettuce, limes, onions, radishes and tostadas. They also offer a vegetarian version.

**Tortas Ahogadas El Profe Jimenez** | This restaurant was founded by a former teacher turned chef, who earned the nickname "el profe" Jiménez as he emerged as one of the most respected tortas ahogadas (drowned sandwich) vendors in the city. Savor homemade salsa, tender carnitas and bread sourced from the Jalisco valley.

## HUATULCO

**La Fragua Del Abuelo Chelo** | This family-run country restaurant sits atop what was once grandpa Chelo's metal workshop. Today his daughter works here preparing handmade tortillas, pumpkin tamales and speciality caldo de gallina (farmhouse chicken soup).

**Restaurante Ay Caray!** | Directly on the beach beneath a palapa in Bahía Maguey, fresh seafood is prepared in a traditional oven with delicacies such as seafood-stuffed pineapples with blistered cheese, whole-roasted spiny lobsters, seafood moles and roasted parrotfish, all enjoyed best with a cold michelada.

## IXTAPA & ZIHUATANEJO

**Coconuts Restaurant & Bar** | Located in a historical building in Zihuatanejo with fine dining, courtyard seating, a friendly bar and live entertainment, begin with a hearts of palm salad or tuna sashimi, followed by a grilled chile relleno, classic coconut shrimp, filet mignon in pepper gravy and a decadent banana flambé finish.

**Restaurant La Brisa II at Las Brisas Ixtapa** | Set on the beach with romantic ocean views and excellent international cuisine, relish indulgent dishes from tuna tartar and rosemary chicken mignon to caramelized pork fillet with sweet potato confit, giant shrimp with vegetable salpicon or classic mushroom risotto.

## CULINARY TIDBITS

**GUADALAJARA** | Known for agave grown just north of town and authentic dishes including tortas ahogadas (drowned sandwich), birria (goat stew) and jericalla (similar to crème brûlée).

**HUATULCO** | One of Oaxaca's most famous street foods is tlayudas, or Mexican pizza, with a thin tortilla smothered with asiento (pork lard) and toasted crisp on a hot comal, then loaded with toppings.

**IXTAPA & ZIHUATANEJO** | Chilate is a Mexican cocoa-based drink fusing Mexican ingredients with African influence and is served cold, aerated and frothy.

**MÉRIDA** | Start your day off right with a northern Yucatán dish, huevos motuleños. Fried tortillas are topped with eggs, onion, beans, habaneros, cheese, plantains and spicy salsa foja for a delicious bite.

## MÉRIDA

**La Chaya Maya** | Loved by locals and visitors alike, try the not-to-be-missed pibil chicken marinated with achiote and wrapped in banana leaves or the tikin xic, a fish fillet stuffed with shrimp, squid and clams or the poc-chuc, traditionally seasoned pork leg.

**Manjar Blanco** | Showcased in the Netflix series *Taco Chronicles*, this regional restaurant combines authentic recipes of abuelas (grandmothers) with the gastronomic versatility of their grandchildren. Be tempted by the queso relleno negro (blackened chile stuffed with cheese), sopa de lima (lime soup) or empanadas stuffed with pibil suckling pig and a speciality tomato sauce.

**Mercado de Santa Ana** | Choose from dozens of vendors offering traditional Yucatec dishes at great prices. Sit outdoors and taste local favorites like cochinita pibil tacos, panuchos (fried tortillas filled with black beans, pulled chicken pickled onion, tomato, avocado and jalapeño), and flavorful juices including papaya, carrot, watermelon and cactus.

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## MEXICO CITY

**Diana Restaurant at *The St. Regis Mexico City*** | With incredible views of the fountain of Diana the Huntress, find traditional Mexican cuisine infused with modern flair. Savor fine plates of foie gras medallions, roasted sea bass and beef tenderloin with a red wine sauce and finish the evening with a peanut cake with chocolate candy and glass of cognac.

**El Huequito Tacos Gourmet** | Since 1959, this spot has specialized in tacos, in particular their al pastor - marinated pork with a unique orange sauce. Now boasting several locations, feast on chicharron, nopalitas or chorizo tacos, various tortas, rellenos, steaks and ribs.

**Pujol** | Celebrity chef Enrique Olvera offers a journey through indigenous ingredients at this fine dining establishment. The multiple-course changing tasting menu features bites such as raw kampachi with watermelon radish, eggplant with green mole, fish chorizo and a coffee tamale with hazelnut ice cream finale.

### CULINARY TIDBITS

**MEXICO CITY** | Elotes (dressed corncobs) and their off-the-cob sibling esquites can be found at many street vendors and are roasted with a choice of salt, lime, mayonnaise, chile powder or con todo (the works!).

**PUERTO VALLARTA** | Be sure to visit El Malécon in downtown. The boardwalk is lined with restaurants, vendors and stands serving everything from fish on a stick, ceviche, tacos and tortas to sweet treats such as nieve de garrafa (sorbet) and ice pops with exotic fruits.

**PUERTO VALLARTA & RIVIERA NAYARIT** | Start your day with a local favorite, chilaquiles - tortilla chips cooked in salsa then topped with eggs, queso fresco and crema, and stewed meats with a coupe (coconut cake) finale.

## PUERTO VALLARTA & RIVIERA NAYARIT

**Café des Artistes** | French-trained Chef Thierry Blouet presents masterful gastronomic elegance and authentic ambience at this fine dining oasis. Indulge in culinary pleasures such as foie gras rougié, beef fillet in a port sauce, tuna tartare on a block of salt, and habanero chili with passion fruit mousse for the grand finale.

**Carolina at *The St. Regis Punta Mita*** | A sensual fusion of casual luxury, ocean views and mosaic of culinary styles, this signature AAA Five Diamond award-winning restaurant offers contemporary Mexican flavors. Indulge in unique dishes such as nixtamalized beetroot with sea water foam, catch of the day with sea urchin and a sweet tamal with coconut ice cream dessert.

**La Palapa** | Revel in tropical Mexican cuisine under an open-air thatched-roof palapa alongside the ocean. Be sure to sample blue crab eggs benedict or chilaquiles for breakfast, a variety of fresh seafood salads, ceviche and specialties including mole enchiladas, organic chicken breast in a citrus sauce or a vegan symphony with truffled vegetables, plus tasty desserts.

**Le Kliff** | Perched on a cliff high above Banderas Bay, this dazzling palapa-covered restaurant is a perfect setting for a memorable meal or special event. Choose from international menu items such as seafood tapas, duck BBQ tacos, satay shrimp with coconut cream sauce and pork belly with pickled beets.

**Mariscos Tinos** | Known as the Cathedral of Seafood since 1990, sip specialty tequilas along with an octopus cocktail, shrimp ceviche or crab tacos. Then try traditional entrées like ajillo-style seafood featuring conch, octopus and mussels in a guajillo chile sauce or try Fish Zarandeado, served with fresh fish, tortillas, onions and secret sauces.

**Taco Lovers Experience** | Save your appetite for the evening foodie tour that takes you to street food stands in the heart of downtown Vallarta. Sample a variety of tacos including carne asada, al pastor, seafood and cabeza, from eight authentic restaurants and vendors.

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