



11 Best Hotels in Playa del Carmen, Mexico

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HOTEL

Hotel Esencia→

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Right on Xpu-ha beach, the best stretch of white sands on this part of Mexico's Caribbean coast, Esencia is one of those hotels that is spoken about in hushed tones by bohemians in the know, none of whom want to let this secret get out. But those who do make it here discover a small, natural beauty of place set on a palm-swaying estate on the edge of the tumbling sea. There are hammocks to laze in, and a dimly lit spa where lotions and potions made from garden herbs are crushed into poultices to smooth out knots. For **snorkeling** among rainbow-colored fish, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef is a five-minute hop on the hotel's catamaran. There are ceviches and *tiraditos* to try at Mistura, a restaurant with views of the moon-dappled sea, and a wooden beach bar that does the best Margaritas in Mexico. Then there are the rooms. The interiors of the house, originally built as a hideaway for an Italian duchess, have splashes of '50s art, and huge bedrooms with generous terraces. There are jungle suites with plunge pools and beach suites that are a study in white. All in all, it is perfect. —*Mary Lussiana*

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PLACES TO STAY

11 Best Hotels in Playa del Carmen, Mexico

Here's where to stay in this oceanside area, from ethereal estates to seaside villas.

BY MICHAELA TRIMBLE