

POSTCARD FROM . . .

MEET ME IN MEXICO

AVENUE's senior editor Wendy Sy ventures to the Riviera Maya

Shopping spree

A visit to the boutiques and street vendors in the area are a must. I bought a number of goods, including a map-printed scarf, sunglasses, string bracelets and little keepsakes such as keychains that are perfect for gift-giving.



Where to stay

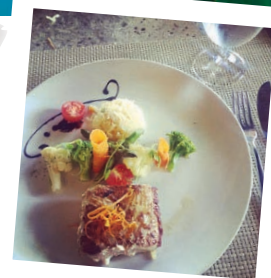
I spent my trip at the Grand Velas Riviera Maya, a 205-acre all-inclusive luxury resort with three distinct areas of suites to stay in and hang out at—the Zen Grand, the Ambassador and the Grand Class. Each has its own ambience, and all of the suites feature a private terrace, a walk-in closet, a fully stocked minibar and a huge Jacuzzi. It's so cozy that I wanted to just stay in, but there was much more outside to explore! You can hop on the 24-hour shuttle at the lobby of each area to easily get from one place to another.



C/O VELAS RESORTS

Food baby

There is definitely NOT a short supply of dining options in the Riviera Maya. At the Grand Velas resort, there are eight unique restaurants, each featuring a menu curated by acclaimed chefs. Be sure to try the grilled mahi mahi at Chaká, the rice pasta with tomato, basil and zucchini at Frida, and the sweet crème brûlée at Piaf.



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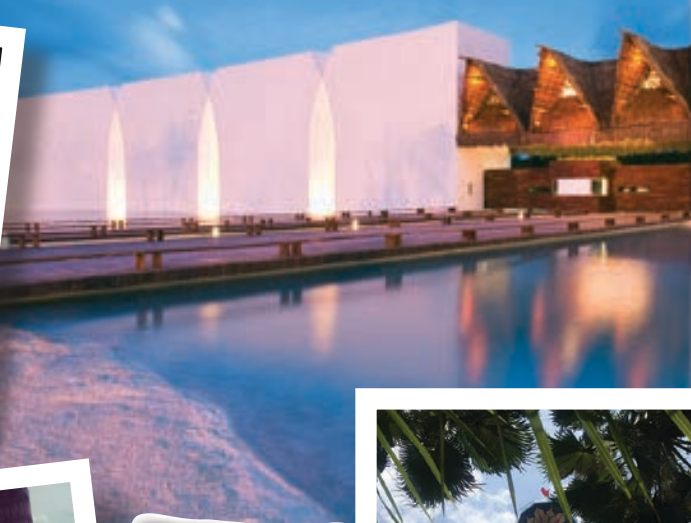
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Bring on the bliss

Inspired by the jungle and natural water pools of the Yucatán Peninsula, the spa at Grand Velas is the definition of tranquility. Guided by a personal valet, I took an hour-long Water Journey, a relaxation ritual composed of seven different water experiences, including a shower infused with Vitamin C essential oils, following a visit to the sauna, steam room, clay room and ice room. Afterward, I took a swim in the hydrotherapy pool, then went for a Hindu Foot and Scalp massage. The treatment was so comfortable that I fell asleep!



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Under the sea

One must-do activity is the Sea Trek. It's similar to scuba diving but, instead of breathing underwater through a mask and snorkel, you wear an astronaut-like helmet and walk through a guided path to discover the colorful fish, turtles and stingrays in the ocean.



View from above

An entire day of my trip was spent visiting the eco-archaeological site Xcaret Park. It was a lot walking, but so worth it to see all of the animals, including birds, jaguars and coatis. The site has a rotating Scenic Tower, which goes up to 260 feet, providing panoramic views of the Caribbean—the crystal clear blue and turquoise shades of the water are unbelievably beautiful.



Beach bound

The beaches of Playa del Carmen have the softest white sand. I went for a run there after the spa visit—no sneakers required! I'll take this workout over the gym any day.



I can't travel without . . .

A notebook and pen—you never know where you'll find inspiration. ♦

