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ESENCIA RIVIERA MAYA MEXICO HOTEL AND SPA

by Barb & Ron Kroll

Esencia is a Mayan Riviera resort, located about 70 minutes south of Cancun Airport (code CUN), 20 minutes south of Playa del Carmen, just north of Xelha and 45 minutes north of the Tulum Mayan ruins.

The Mexico resort is located on Xpu-ha beach in a residential area of the Riviera Maya. Esencia Estate used to be the private home of Duchess Rosa d' Ferrari, who turned it into a luxury hotel before she moved back to Italy.

Luxury hotel rooms

Plunge pools highlight some of the garden view suites in the 29-room white stucco resort. Nine rooms are in the three-storey main house.

Esencia has two cottages, so large that they are more like Mayan Riviera villas. The larger cottage accommodates a family of four.

The cottages each have a swimming pool, a living room, a media room with large flat-screen televisions and a gourmet kitchen, used by Esencia chefs to cook meals for private gatherings.

Esencia Resort, Mayan Riviera. Mexico.
Photo credit: Hotel Esencia.

Suite in Esencia Hotel. Riviera Maya, Mexico.
Photo credit: Hotel Esencia.

Resort dining

Esencia is not an all-inclusive resort, but rates include breakfast. The Mexican hotel also offers seasonal packages with meal plans, such as Gourmet by SLH, which makes your Riviera Maya vacation more affordable.

In addition to dining in Sal y Fuego restaurant, you can request other dining locations, like the garden. Try the meat or seafood wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in an underground oven. The tasty Meso American cuisine motivates guests to sign up for the chef's Mexican cooking classes.

There are no hotels next to Esencia. You feel like a guest in the elegant, but unpretentious, home of Duchess Rosa d' Ferrari.

Hotel Esencia has no lobby. On arrival, you first see a Mayan house, which helps you understand how people live in the Yucatan peninsula.

Organic spa

Esencia rooms and suites have no room numbers. You don't have to sign for meals, tours or spa treatments, because the staff know you by name.

Aroma Spa kitchen. Escencia Estate.
Photo credit: Hotel Esencia.

Therapies at Esencia's Aroma Spa incorporate organic herbs and roots, grown in the resort's garden. In the spa kitchen, you can watch therapists mix indigenous Mexican fruits and plant ingredients with oils for traditional Mayan treatments. Try the chocolate massage.

Besides facials, massages and other body treatments, the Esencia spa has steam rooms and Jacuzzis. You can also enjoy free yoga and tai chi classes.

Chichen Itza excursion

The Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza are three hours from Hotel Esencia. The resort can arrange flights to and from Chichen Itza, tours and picnic lunches.

Mayan Riviera vacations are easy to arrange, because Esencia is close to Playa del Carmen, Tulum, Akumal and Cozumel. Hotel staff can arrange tours, kite-surfing, SCUBA certification and swimming with whale sharks in the Gulf of Mexico.

Driving directions to Esencia

The Esencia Hotel address is Predio Rustico Xpu-ha, Lote 18, Quintana Roo, Mexico CP 77710. To get to Esencia, drive south to kilometer 264 on the Carretera Cancun-Tulum portion of Highway 307 (Cancun to Chetumal route).

You can also arrange a private transfer service from Cancun Airport to the Esencia resort for a fee. Some Esencia packages, such as The Gourmand Experience, include airport transportation.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Hotel Esencia: www.hotelesencia.com

Small Luxury Hotels of the World: www.slh.com/esencia

Mexico Tourism Board: www.visitmexico.com

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