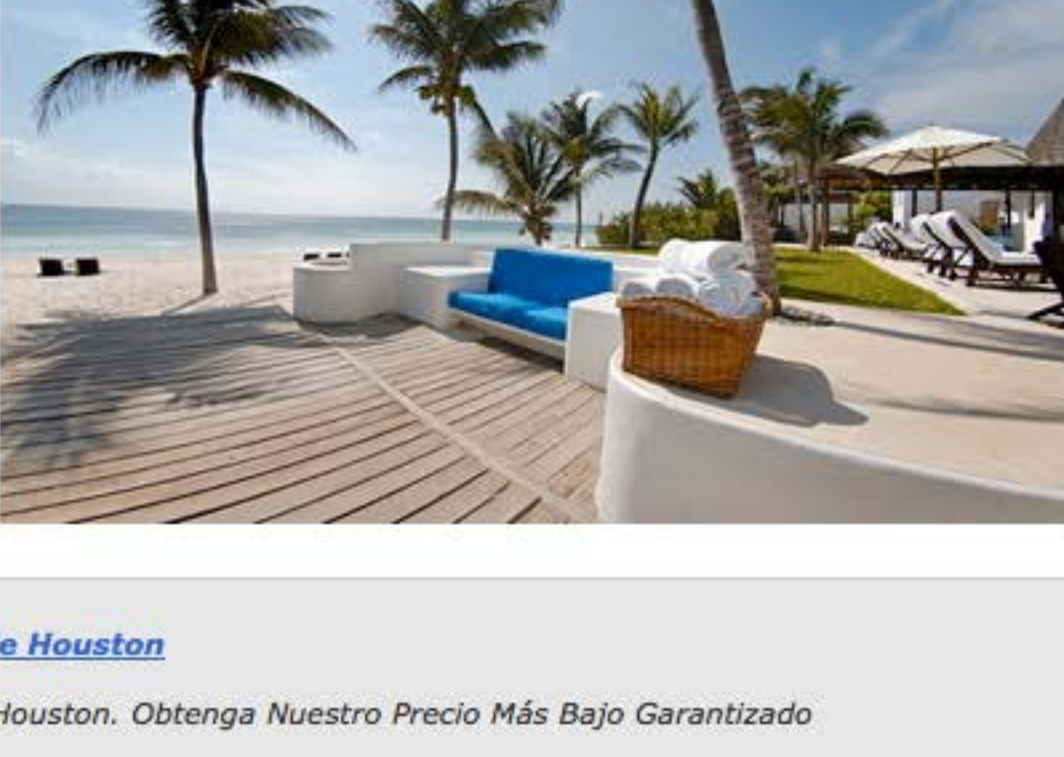


Esencia Hotel on Mexico's Riviera Maya

By [Gerrie Summers](#), Guest Author

Esencia, a One-of-a-Kind Luxury Hotel on the Riviera Maya 1 of 4 | < Previous Next >



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Mexico's Caribbean coast is Esencia's back yard.
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Esencia Is an Inspired Hotel for Luxury Travelers

Esencia is a small, deluxe beach hotel on Mexico's [Riviera Maya](#).

Its 50 acres are bookended by a **two-mile Caribbean beach** and virgin jungle.

- The property is set toward the southern end of the Riviera Maya, not far from the ancient Mayan temple of Tulum
- Esencia is around 45 minutes from Cancun international airport, reachable via [nonstop flights](#) from numerous North American cities

Esencia Is Not a Cookie-Cutter Branded Hotel

Esencia is a **one-of-a-kind hotel** that is privately owned. You won't find any "branding" here. On the contrary, everything about Esencia is unique.

- Esencia was originally a private estate
- It was built by an adventurous Italian aristocrat, Rosa di Ferrari
- The resort still feels like the beachfront retreat of a family (a very tasteful extended family)
- Its 29 accommodations (rooms, suites, *casita* cottages) are all different
- Décor is sunny white with splashes of color
- Mayan touches, like thatched *palapa* roofs, permeate the property
- Esencia is green and full of trees; you get around on footpaths or by golf carts

Will You Like Esencia? Take this Quiz

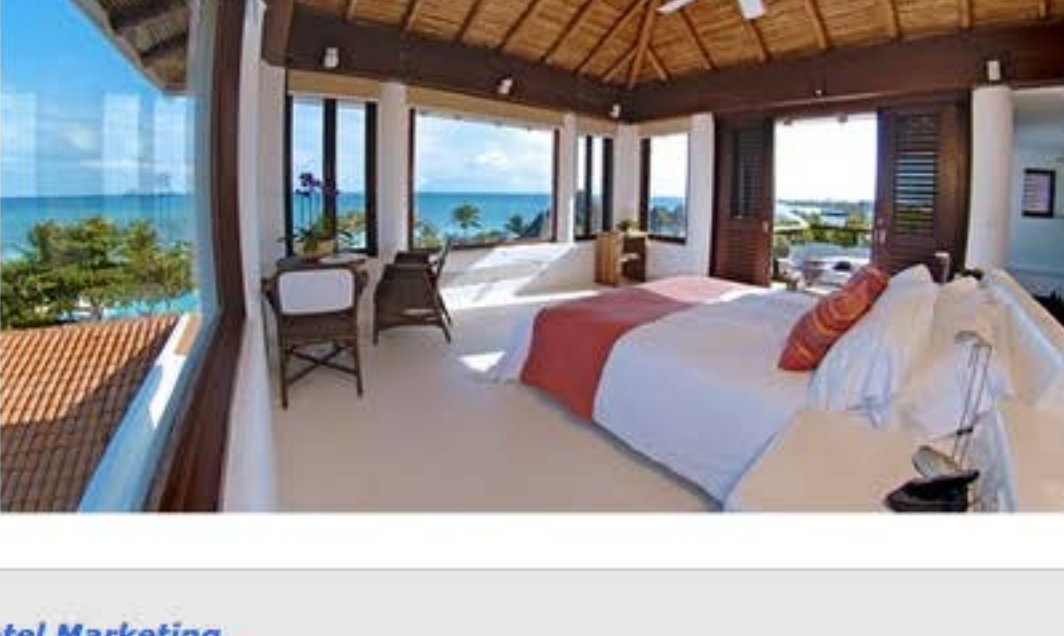
Esencia may very well be your patch of **Mexican heaven** if:

- You're looking for a small, low-key, private-feeling [boutique hotel](#)
- You want to relax and unwind amidst beautiful, serene surroundings
- You like vintage hotels with a lot of **character**
- And a fascinating pedigree (duchesses rate with you!)
- You want a Mexican hotel with a strong sense of place (Esencia never lets you forget you're on the Riviera Maya)
- You'll be OK with two pools...
- And a vast, magnificent beach
- You appreciate a hotel that offers [promotional packages and deals](#)

Esencia **may not be** your ideal South of the Border hotel if:

- You crave a bog hotel's many options (dining, recreation, social)
- You want a nightlife scene beyond a beachfront bar
- You're traveling with restless kids (Esencia welcomes youngsters, but this is not a family-centric hotel)
- You prefer all-inclusive hotel pricing
- The presence of a gym at your hotel is non-negotiable (no gym here!)
- You want to be near [Cancun](#) for a change of pace; Esencia is an hour south
- You prefer sleek, modern hotels like Cancun's [Le Blanc Resort](#))

Esencia Hotel's Guest Rooms and Suites 2 of 4 | < Previous Next >



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An Ocean View Suite at Esencia.
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Esencia offers 29 spacious accommodations: rooms, suites, and *casita* cottages.

- Rooms and suites are spacious
- They offer either a garden view or the more preferable beach view
- The private *casita* cottage is big, with two bedrooms, a sizable pool, hammocks, and lounge areas

Esencia's design is spare and minimalist, yet with ample Mayan flair.

- Rooms are designed to complement, not compete with, the pristine environment
- Their design and decor is rustic yet elegant
- Walls and floors are bright white
- Furniture is handcrafted of native hardwood furnishings
- Ceilings begin 12 feet up, often tapering into arched, wood-and-thatch *palapa* roofs
- Louvered mahogany doors open to terraces hidden within lush jungle foliage
- Large windows reveal views of tropical gardens and (with ocean-view rooms) the sea
- Extra-large bathrooms have rainfall showers and sliding glass sliding doors that lead to...
- Private plunge pools

In-room amenities for all Esencia accommodations include:

- Large flatscreen TV with satellite stations
- DVD player
- iPod docking station (preloaded iPod minis are provided)
- Push-button blackout window shades
- In-room safe
- Dual bedside controls for lights
- Super-deluxe bedding: 600 thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets and duvet covers; down pillows
- Molton Brown toiletries
- Sub-Zero fridge stocked with complimentary water, soft drinks, and beer
- In the A.M., coffee, tea, and Mexican pastries are deposited in a metal box on your balcony or terrace to prevent roaming [coatamundis](#) (Central American raccoons) from burgling your brioche)
- A not-so-great detail: wifi is free in lobbies, but rooms are not wired

Best Rooms at Esencia

All accommodations at Esencia are peaceful and pretty. These are the resort's highest-end digs:.

Torre Deluxe Ocean View Suite:

Located in the Casa Principal, this Torre ("tower") Suite has a 360-degree view that takes in the beach

- Plus a spacious terrace to watch the sun rise over the Caribbean
- The bedroom can also serve as a private movie screening room with retractable shades, surround-sound, a widescreen high-def screen

Rosa Ocean View Master Suite:

- This suite was the original home of the duchess and considered the best guest suite
- The sitting room has a domed brick ceiling
- Two spacious ocean-view terraces have sun-chairs and tables
- A sundeck has a plunge pool
- The enormous bathroom a huge shower room plus a deep soaking tub
- This suite overlooks the gardens, but guests can opt to connecting to an adjoining ocean-view room

Casita Cottages:

- The setting: secluded tropical gardens
- Cottages are duplexes with two floors, a rambling terrace, and plenty of lounging space
- Which means there's always a spot to escape and read or snooze
- The terrace has a dining area
- The swimming pool is circled by a wooden sundeck and lounge chairs
- Cottages' media room features surround-sound and lots of tech toys
- The bathroom has a double vanity, shower room, and deep bathtub
- A walk-in closet serves as a dressing room
- Upstairs master bedroom has a terrace and sitting area
- Families can opt for a second bedroom with twin beds and its own bathroom
- Cottage guests may request the services of a butler and/or private chef

The Guest Experience at Esencia: Dining, Beach, Pool, Spa, & Kids' Stuff 3 of 4 | < Previous Next >



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Esencia's Sol y Fuego (Sun and Sand) restaurant spotlights fresh-caught Caribbean lobster.
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For a hotel with only 29 rooms and suites, there's a lot for guests to do and enjoy.

Dining at Esencia

Esencia is committed to introducing its guest to savory **Yucatecan cuisine**, considered by some foodies Mexico's best. Many ingredients, especially produce and herbs, are grown in the property's gardens. Seafood served was caught that morning and brought to Esencia's dock by Riviera Maya fishermen.

Sal y Fuego ("Salt and Fire") is Esencia's main restaurant.

- Chef Bernardo's **Riviera Maya recipes** spotlight the catch of the day
- The international wine list offers some Baja California wines from Mexico's west coast
- Diners can make arrange to have dinner served on their private terrace or on the beach in a private *palapa* pavilion

Poolside **Sol y Arena** ("Sun and Sand") is more informal.

- Its menu also focuses on local cuisine
- Guests can watch their meal being cooked in the open kitchen
- Talented cooks employ traditional Yucatecan touches like banana leaves to wrap fish and tamales, and *pib* earth oven to roast dishes
- One to try: the most famous Mayan dish, *pib*-roasted *cochinita pibil*, or succulent roast pork
- My personal recommendation: Soy y Arena's sparkling-fresh *ceviches*
- The resort's complimentary Continental breakfast is served here...
- ...I loved the juices and smoothies that showcase local tropical fruits

Other dining and drinking options at Esencia:

- **Bar Cenote** serves rums, martinis, champagne and other drinks, as well as hors d'oeuvres
- The bar is named for the Riviera Maya's mysterious *cenote* caves, which visitors can now [snorkel and dive through](#)
- The resort hosts teatime/happy hour daily before dinner, on the house

Pool and Beach Fun

You'll want to bring more than one swimsuit to Esencia for its:

- Two swimming pools surrounded by lounge chairs
- The larger pool is adults-only
- The Caribbean beach is picture-postcard perfect
- It tempts with ample loungers, *palapa* umbrellas, spotless ivory sand, swaying palms
- Gentle Caribbean waters are crystal-clear, **turquoise-blue**, and around 82° F. (28° C.)
- Great service extends to the beach. Example: a staffer who noticed me come outside and wave to a colleague immediately set up a loungeur next to hers

Esencia's Aroma Spa

Aroma Spa is the Riviera Maya's only all-organic spa.

- Its soaring *palapa*-roofed atrium feels like a Mayan temple
- The spa has five treatment rooms
- Face and body services incorporate **Mayan ingredients** and techniques
- Guests can opt for private tub rooms
- A spa specialty: two traditional, domed-ceiling *temezcal* Mayan steam rooms
- A Mayan *Temazcalero* leads the Temazcal Ritual, held in a sweat lodge near the beach

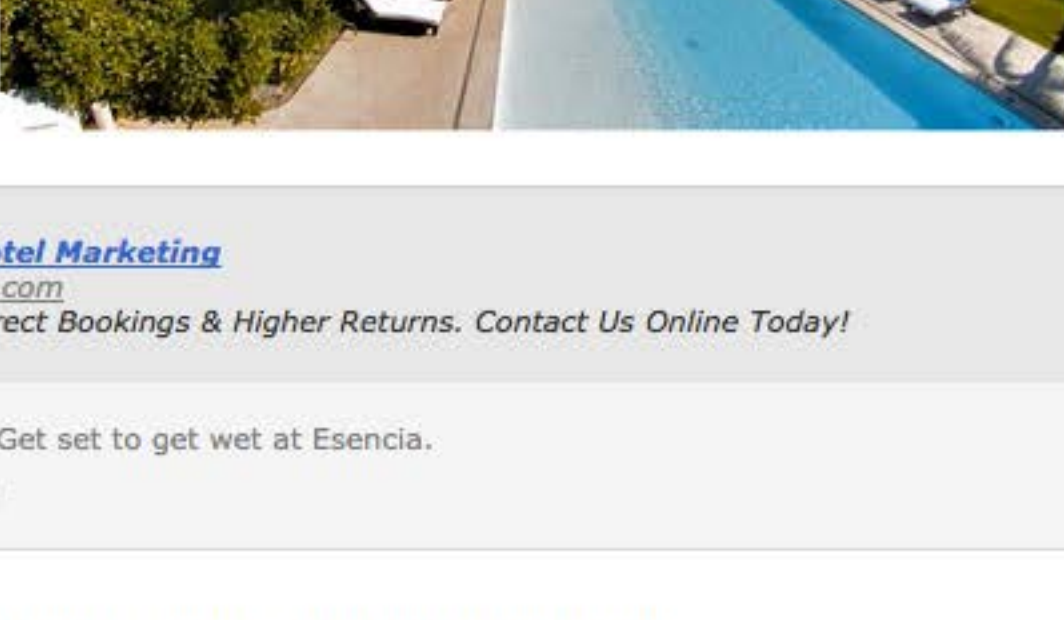
More Leisure Activities at Esencia

- There's no gym here
- However, fitness equipment like mats, exercise balls, and free weights can be requested at no charge
- Snorkeling **masks and fins** are also offered
- Guest can join in a complimentary **morning yoga** class
- Trainers are on call for private "energetic arts" lessons (yoga, chi kung, tai chi, Pilates)
- The concierge arranges outings for scuba, snorkeling, *cenote* excursions, boating, fishing (the chef will serve up your catch!)
- A Yucatecan cooking class teaches the basics; then then, the secrets of Esencia's signature margarita

For Niños (Kids) at Esencia

- Young guests 4 to 8 and 9 to 12 are invited to resort's "Junior Chef" classes (no mixology)
- The concierge staff keeps your *chiquitos* busy with kites on the beach, afternoon movies, aquatic toys and floats
- Babysitting service is **free for the first two hours**

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Pool or beach? Get set to get wet at Esencia.
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< Previous 1 2 3 4 Next >

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