



A Grand Getaway

Grand Residences Riviera Cancun uses technology to give guests a home away from home.

BY LYSSA GOLDBERG

Photos courtesy of Grand Residences Riviera Cancun

A two-hour flight to Mexico, half-hour transfer from Cancun's airport and one welcome margarita into my trip, I stood alone in a private foyer leading to the door of my master suite. I swiped my wearable bracelet to enter and felt like I was in a spy movie. But with no audience of my own, I put the cocktail down on the kitchen counter and raced around the room like a curious child.

The head-on view of the turquoise Caribbean caught my eye, but the sheer size of the hotel room had me floored. Even still, I don't think I truly understood how large it was (1,862 square feet, to be exact) until my friend arrived shortly after. He managed to open the door, make his way across the living room and over to where I was waiting on the balcony, without me hearing him enter. Granted, the music of the waves crashing against the sand may have helped to mask his footsteps.

Tucked away on a quiet stretch of beach, south of the happenin' Cancun hotel strip, the five-star Grand Residences Riviera Cancun resort offers travelers a secluded Caribbean escape. On-site amenities at the optional all-inclusive (if you ask me, the only option is to go for it) range from tennis courts to a kids' club and spa, making it ideal for large families and honeymooners alike. Either way, it has made itself a leading example of luxury.

Now there's luxury, and then there's having your every need—not to mention your almost undreamable whims—preemptively anticipated at every turn. That's what the all-suite Grand Residences does for its guests to create a home away from home; that is, if your home offers a California king bed with a sample pillow menu to fit your firmness preference, an opulent bathroom stocked with fragrant Bulgari soaps and cosmetics, and an outdoor Jacuzzi on the panoramic terrace overlooking the ocean.

After my friend and I had thoroughly explored the suite, the bellman arrived with our bags and gave us a tour of his own, pointing out attributes we might not have noticed otherwise: the Smart TV could directly stream Spotify or Netflix; the special gifts left for us in the bedroom (a sun hat, a tote bag and handcrafted knick-knacks) had been made by Mexican artisans; and the on-off switch by the front door would let housekeeping know when it's OK to enter.

With 24-hour room service at our disposal and nightly turndowns to keep things tidy, we could easily have spent the entire trip indoors, but a whole hotel (and beach) awaited. First order of business: a dip in the double infinity pool, which looks like it could almost spill out into the ocean, and drinks at the swim-up bar. Sitting at the Heaven Beach Bar afterward for lunch, we welcomed ourselves to Mexico by sharing a plate of fresh seafood ceviche and tacos.

Later for dinner at El Faro Steakhouse, which had for the night transformed into an Asian market, our waiter approached with the wine list—on a tablet device. We used an interactive map to select our wine varietals by the region and, again, I noticed how Grand Residences uses technology to add a personal touch.



The double infinity pool with an ocean view



Entrance at Grand Residences



Oceanfront master bedroom

The weather turned rainy the next day, but at least it was an excuse to stay in and take advantage of our hotel suite. When it was time to venture back outdoors for our spa appointments in the main building, I was glad to notice the hotel already had an umbrella stand waiting for us in the foyer. If only I had someone this attentive to my needs back at home.

Real life called when my 4 a.m. alarm went off for a way-too-early morning flight home. I said goodbye to my friend, who'd be heading out later in the day, and to the hotel property, which at that pre-dawn hour, was silent but for the sound of those melodic ocean waves.

As soon as I touched down in South Florida, my phone pinged with a new picture message: a trio of crème brûlées against a blue ocean backdrop, which my friend was (oddly) eating for breakfast on the balcony. The caption read: "Wish you were here." I wished I was, too.

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