

All-Inclusive Iberostar Paraiso Maya Pleases All

By Lyssa Goldberg



Traveling with kids shouldn't stop you from experiencing an upscale vacation. At [IBEROSTAR's Paraíso Maya](#), the ultra-hospitable staff will treat the whole family like royals. The family-friendly, five-star [all-inclusive resort](#) is located on Playa Paraiso along the Riviera Maya – a stretch of coastline on the Yucatan Peninsula that meets the Caribbean Sea.

Less than a half-hour ride from Cancun International Airport, the IBEROSTAR Paraiso complex includes five hotels in total—from the adults-only Grand Hotel Paraiso, which has been ranked atop the list of best all-inclusives in the world, to the more economical, family-friendly [Premium and Premium Gold-level hotels](#).

(Read more on the pro's and con's of all-inclusives [here](#).)

Upon arrival, expect to be swept around the property on a golf cart with a strawberry daiquiri already in hand. Between the nightly entertainment and the dance club, the resort experience will feel like a cruise ship on land. All the while, the friendliest of hotel staff will greet you at every turn with a warm *Hola* or *Buenos Días* and let you practice your Spanish with them.

What we loved at IBEROSTAR Paraíso Maya:

- Round-the-clock room service (that's 24 hours of free food and drink delivered to your door!)
- Mini bar is included, and the hotel staff will restock 'til your heart's content
- Free WiFi in your room, the lobby and other common spaces
- Bellhops in golf carts to shuttle you around the complex
- A concierge desk on the first floor of every hotel building to assist throughout your stay
- 9 outdoor pools, including a lazy river and Riviera Maya's only wave pool
- A gym facility that offers free workout classes throughout the day
- Complimentary access to all of the spa's wet areas, from the hammam to the rain showers
- Want to learn archery or dance salsa? Activities and entertainment await at every corner
- Friendly animals roam the property, like peacocks and coatí (hog-nosed raccoons)

Junior Suites at Paraiso Maya



All 434 [rooms](#) at the Paraíso Maya are spacious and inviting Junior Suites for couples or families. Warm tones, from the orange-yellow walls to the deep red bedding accents, provide a welcoming atmosphere. The more than 600 square feet of space include a bathroom fit for a few, the bedroom area with either two double beds or one king, and an additional working/living space with a desk and couch that leads into the balcony.

The bathroom decor complements the Mayan design throughout the rest of the hotel, with stone features and artwork replicating carved artifacts one would find hidden amongst the ruins. Large enough for multiple people at a time, the bathroom has a double vanity sink, plus a whirlpool tub in addition to the shower.

Suite prices vary by location and view. Some rooms come with a garden view, while others face the pool. There are also priority location suites that are a convenient walk to the pool and beach, plus family suites that connect to each other for larger families.

All Junior Suites feature:

- Mini bar stocked with Dos Equis and other beers, soft drinks, and bottled water
- Private balcony with outdoor seating and a hammock
- Whirlpool tub
- Nightly turndown service
- Free WiFi connection in the room
- Flat screen TV, digital safe, coffee maker and more

Kid-Friendly Features at Paraiso Maya



At this resort the kids won't feel left behind. They can enjoy **splash parks**, a **kids club** or teen club to keep them occupied in the daytime, and the "Underground" dance club for teenagers at night. The family-friendly Paraíso Maya even offers a **baby kitchen** stocked with pureed baby food and other essentials, so you don't have to weigh down your luggage with supplies.

Dining at Paraiso Maya

Two international buffets and five specialty restaurants (Japanese, Mexican, Mediterranean, Steakhouse and Gourmet) at the Paraiso Maya represent IBEROSTAR's signature gastronomical value. The buffets serve a striking array of cheeses, meats, fruits, vegetables, eggs prepared every which way during breakfast, other dishes for lunch and dinner – and don't forget about the dessert selection – as if to make a clear statement that IBEROSTAR guests deserve more than any average culinary experience.

The best thing about the Paraiso Maya – besides everything we've already mentioned – is that staying at the hotel automatically gives guests access [to 11 other specialty restaurants and 14 bars throughout the sister properties at the resort](#). (It doesn't work the other way around if you're staying at one of the hotels in a lower tier.)

The concierge can help you make reservations, and guests with children staying in the family suites can even set up those dinner reservations ahead of their arrival so the kids won't have to wait one minute for dinner.

One of the restaurants we tried, **La Geisha**, is a Japanese teppanyaki restaurant, where the chef prepares your meal in front of you on a hibachi grill. Even better than the food is the enthusiasm behind the performance: The chef's elaborate knife-work was impressive, and he served up laughs throughout the entirety of his culinary show.

The Mexican restaurant at Paraiso Maya, **El Tapatio**, features a buffet at breakfast and lunchtime and special sit-down service for dinner.

While vacationing in Mexico means you have an excuse to eat nachos for breakfast, at dinner, the restaurant serves favorites like tortilla soup, authentic street tacos and churrasco steak.

Here are a few of our favorite food finds:

- The StarCafe coffee shop in the lobby – walk up and grab a blended iced coffee without the wait
- Chips and guac from the buffet on the beach so you can snack in the sand
- The fresh, house-made doughnut selection at the hotel's buffets
- Made-to-order tacos from the Antojitos taqueria and custom crêpes topped off with gelato of your choice from the crêperie and ice cream parlor – both at the central Shopping Mall and included in your stay

Pools at Paraíso Maya

The pools at Paraíso Maya are the heart of the resort. Stretching from nearly the lobby to the sea, it features a swim-up bar, lazy river, Riviera Maya's only wave pool, two lake swimming pools, three private pools, an activity pool, and a Splash Park for the kids. Two personal favorite features were the waterfalls and the pool chairs sitting in the water along the edge of the pool.

Most of the pool area is shared by guests at the Paraíso Lindo, IBEROSTAR's adjacent Premium Gold-level hotel on the complex, but the private pools are exclusive to Paraíso Maya's patrons.

In addition to the wet bar hidden underneath decorative rocks, there's another poolside bar called Las Olas. Make sure to grab a drink from either one of them before floating down the lazy river.

With such elaborate poolside entertainment, it's easy to forget what brought you to the Mexican coastline in the first place: the Caribbean Sea. Play in the white sand, sit out on a beach chair, or take a dip in the turquoise waters. You can also participate in non-motorized water sports and enjoy the beachside Coco Bar. Pool and beach activities include water aerobics, basketball and volleyball; beach soccer and volleyball; and other pool games.

Spa

Besides the pools and beach, the 32,000-square-foot Spa Sensations at the shopping center offers a relaxing and rejuvenating experience. Give your feet a bath in the central open-air Pediluvium, where you can take a therapeutic walk on rocks inside water baths of varying temperatures. Next, enjoy the rain showers, including ones for Swedish and chromotherapy treatments. Finally, take advantage of the Roman Bath-style setup with dipping pools set to a range of temperatures, from a cold bath to the jacuzzi.

There's also a plunge pool, sauna, hammam and juice bars.

While all of these wet areas are complimentary for the adults to use, guests can also set up an appointment for any of the additional beauty and spa options (one of the few things at the resort that will cost you). Choose from a selection of massages, facials and other treatments; manicures and pedicures; make-up and hair styling – even Caribbean braids. There are a few spa treatment options for the kids, too!

Family Excursion at XPlor



If you're looking to leave the resort (not that there's any need to), continue the family adventure at a nearby [eco-park called XPlor](#), where you can explore the natural setting of the underground park, or even soar above the treetops.

XPlor offers a full day's worth of activities, and it's only 15 minutes from the resort. Admission includes access to all four of the park's activities – zip-lining, driving amphibious vehicles, hand rafting through caves, and swimming through stalactite rivers – as well as the extensive buffet at the El Troglodita restaurant.

(The all-inclusive vacation never ends!)

At XPlor, you can glide along two circuits of [seven zip-lines each](#) (that's 14 lines in total). Zip-lining may seem like the least kid-friendly activity of the four, but it's safe for children who are at least 7 or 8 years old, depending on weight. The doubled-up ropes can hold up to 300 lbs., so a parent can (and should) ride along with a child.

Bring your bathing suit – even the zip-lines will get you wet as you land in the water on your last stretch of line. The park offers lockers and dressing rooms. Best of all, cameras are set up throughout all four activity areas so you can have your pictures taken and buy them too.

Before you're ready to check out of IBEROSTAR's Paraíso Maya and wrap up your stay (is anyone ever ready to say goodbye to a five-star all-inclusive?), head over to the Paraíso Plaza shopping center one last time and buy an artfully crafted trinket or two from the independently owned gift shops.