

UNICO 2087: Quite Possibly the BEST All-Inclusive Luxury Resort in the Riviera Maya

Chances are you've heard of the Riviera Maya. A stretch of rainforest and white sand beaches between Cancun and Tulum, this is the idyllic sort of place people dream of when they use the phrase "Relaxing on a beach somewhere...".

I wasn't sure what to expect when I first came to this hotel because usually when I think all-inclusive I imagine that corners are cut so that the resort can still make a profit. Let me just start right here and say, I was VERY surprised (in a good way).



Luxury unveiled the minute you walk in

The minute you enter you notice the attention to detail and design. The doormen help you to the check-in counter where you're sat at one of the couches in the lobby and given a welcome drink and even asked what type of candle you'd like to choose for your room scent. I was also shown the app (YES! An App!) for the hotel, which was by FAR the most full featured app I've ever seen for everything from ordering room service 24/7, to having your room cleaned or turned down WHENEVER you'd like, and even allowed you to request different TYPES of pillows according to your preference in sleeping position. I was VERY pleasantly surprised and hesitant that something like this would work in operation but more on that later...



Welcome drinks + Relaxation Candles. This is how you welcome guests!

Now onto the property itself. This place is a VERY large.

Lets list it out – Too many pools to count (including an Adult-only pool), a Mexican, Mediterranean, AND Sushi/Teppanyaki Restaurant, along with poolside tacos and a beach front cafe. I honestly could have spent an entire week without feeling like I was at a lack of things to do and eat. Speaking of – it just so happened that it rained for a bit of my stay, but that didn't ruin a single thing. They had live music, a nightclub within the resort, TOP-SHELF liquor at the bars, and every room contains an outdoor hottub or direct access to a plunge pool.



Don't want a hottub? Then choose a room with direct access to a plunge pool



Don't want a plunge pool room and prefer a hottub with a view? They have that too

Lets get to the food and drinks. This is one of the biggest problems I have with all-inclusive resorts – they skimp on the quality. Not here – as an avid “Foodie” and a food writer I have to say the quality of the dishes and selection at this resort was simply outstanding! Particularly delicious were the poolside tacos along with the incredible Mediterranean inspired kitchen and the breakfast pastries in the main lobby’s coffee shop (yes, all you can drink coffee and pastries – highly dangerous here).

Of course, the room itself is itself enough to write an entire article about. The interior is modern yet homey with just the right hints of stone and wood, and everything from the locally sourced soap, to the Mexican candy and all you can eat snacks were icing on the cake.



An absolute delight, comfortable and modern, these were some of the nicest rooms i've seen in the 5 star category

Now if you decide to leave the property (Which I highly encourage doing), they have an incredibly helpful concierge and booking service. Through them we got locals type tours of Cenote's (cave swimming holes), and of the local ruins of Tulum. Seeing as how the resort is ideally located Tulum is only 25 minutes away so this is sort of the perfect place to stay without being in the hustle of the city and being able to enjoy Resort life AND Tulum life.

It is truly rare that I find something that I enjoy so fully, especially in the all-inclusive category, something is usually found wrong, whether its quality of the rooms, quality of the food, or somewhere that the property decides to cut corners on, but with UNICO, I really couldn't find fault.

RATING:

Hard Product:

-Location (How close is this to top attractions in the surrounding area?)

On its own private beach, not too far from the airport, and

close enough to local sights like Tulum

10/10

-Cleanliness (Is the grout in the bathroom clean? How good is maid service here?)

The app really kills it here. They are on top of their game and its a very new property at time of writing (September 2018)

10/10

-Upkeep (Is the hotel in need of a remodel, or is it being constantly kept up?)

Still a relatively new property, nothing at fault here

10/10

-Public Spaces (How unique/inventive/useful are the public spaces?)

The Gym is one of the most full featured ones including even a yoga room. The spa was on par with any 5-star resort, and with restaurants and bars galore along with unique spaces to just relax and read a book or just have a drink, this was high up there.

9/10

Soft Product:

-Service (How good is the service here?)

Staff were attentive and easy to speak to, concierge was great. No personal butler here but at this price point it was incredible service.

8/10

-Restaurants On-Site (Are the restaurants on site somewhere even the locals would go to?)

One of the best perks of this place, the quality of food and service.

9/10

-Concierge (Specifically, how effective is the Concierge at helping you with a new locale?)

Lovely concierge service with great local suggestions

8/10

TOTAL: 64/70

(35/70 is average)

PROS:

- Modern, refined, All-Inclusive
- Every room is a great room here with either an outdoor tub or a plunge pool
- Attention to detail with the easy to use App really made this place incredible

CONS:

- At this price point there really are none

SECRETS:

- Don't stay in Tulum. Although the hotels there have lots of their unique qualities, if you want a full service resort but want to explore Tulum on the side THIS is the place to go. d

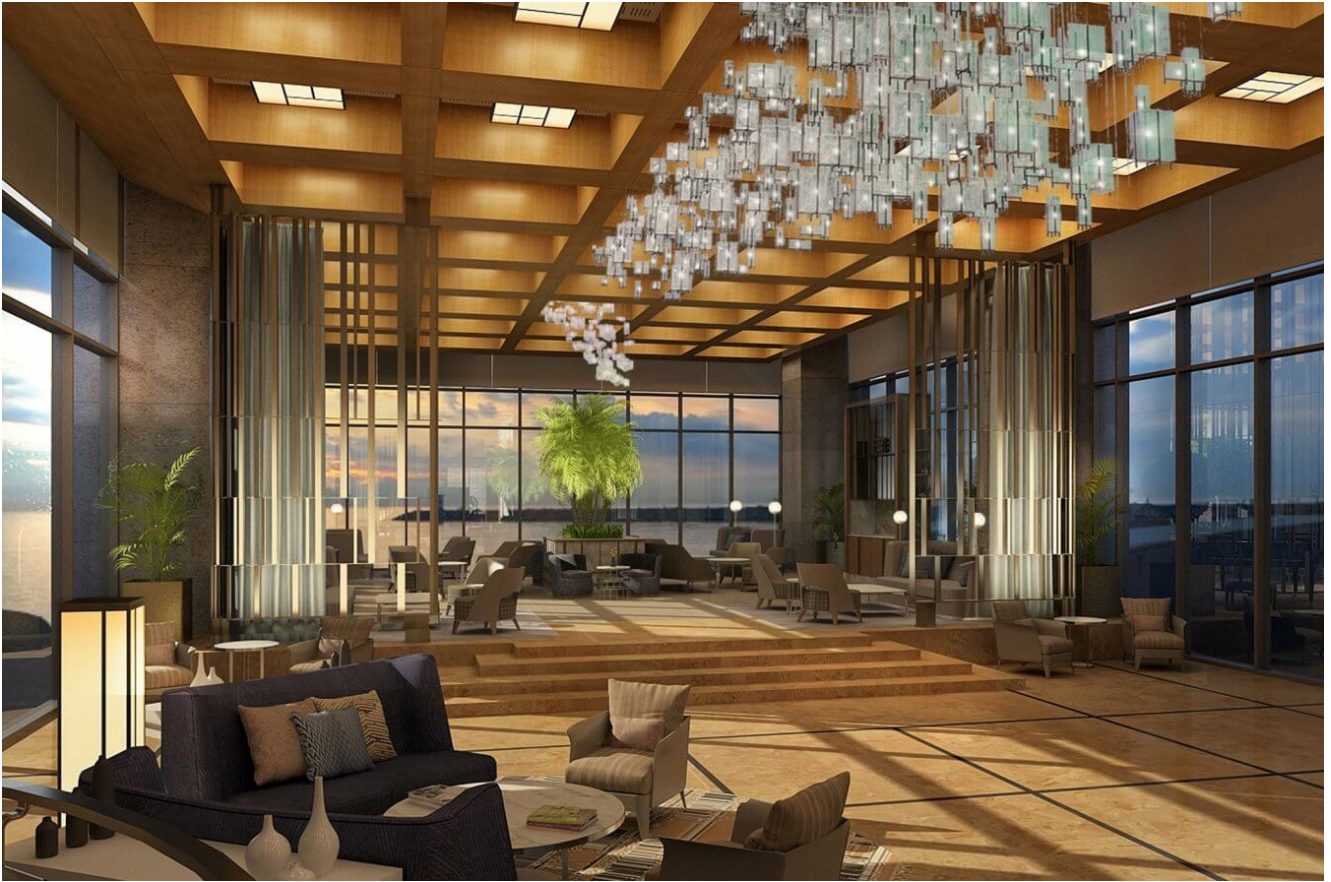
A Perfect Day in Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv is an interesting and unique city on its own. In the 90's and early 2000's Israel was a hotbed and the culture of the people reflects what they have been through – the absolute love of life, the attention to food, and the warm camaraderie is all part of what I experienced when I visited this city for a too-short stay of 2 days.

Oddly enough, Tel Aviv does not have many luxury resorts, and there are no traditional chains here but the Hilton does happen to be one of them. Staying at this grand hotel reminded me of the luxury of Hilton in its heyday. Although the exterior of the building may look slightly weathered once you enter you realize that this property competes with some of the best urban luxury resorts in the world.



By the beach ain't bad...ever



The stunning lobby was peaceful and the perfect spot for a cocktail at sunset

After settling into the hotel in a suite with a view fit for a king and newly remodeled bathrooms with bathtubs and windows that opened to the sea, I decided my first stop was to check out the beach scene.

I opted to ride one of the rideshare bikes that are prevalent all throughout the city and essentially rode the boardwalk South stopping along the way to take pictures and have a beer while enjoying the scenery. What struck me the most about being here was just how full of energy the city felt and how beautiful the ocean was. If you had just dropped me off here I would probably say it reminded me of a combination of Santa Monica California and Venice Beach (also in California).



This is where the cool kids of Tel Aviv hang out

My next stop was Jaffa and Jaffa Heights. At the south end of the beach you arrive at the old port city which put Tel Aviv on the international map. Established 1800 years BCE, this was an incredible sight to walk around and visit given that it was such a juxtaposition from the rest of the urban nature of Tel Aviv.



Jaffa Heights from my Drone's view

After quite a bit of walking and filming I realized that my next stop had to be for more food. After consulting Tripadvisor (which can be hit or miss – but still useful), I decided upon a place called “Ha’Pizza”. I had found based on my past few days in Jerusalem, that oddly enough – the Pizza in Israel was possibly as good or better than some of the best Neapolitan pizza i’ve had in the US in Brooklyn. I was told that this was because of the unique soil in the region and the resulting freshness of the grown tomatoes. As to whether this is true or not I’m not sure, but the pizza was damn good.



Pizza in Israel?? Yes.

Of course I couldn't just stop eating there. I had been told by an Israeli friend of mine that the most LOCAL dish I had to try was something called Sabich. A unique dish to this region, it consists of a sauteed or grilled juicy eggplant along with sliced hard boiled egg, generous amounts of creamy hummus, crunchy israeli salad, and Tahini and pickled sweet & sour mango, all on top of a fresh pita – this dish was essentially a to-go explosion of many flavors.

After stuffing myself to max capacity I decided to walk back to my hotel. Sunset was approaching and my solution was to soak in the bathtub with a view at the Hilton while listening to some Audiobooks. Tel Aviv – you have won my heart.



Yes, it's the local dish you want to try



Tub with an ocean view AND an opening window and balcony? This is right next to the word "Relaxation" in the dictionary