

Welcoming Wellness

MEXICO'S CONRAD PUNTA DE MITA OFFERS EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR THE ULTIMATE LAID-BACK VACATION.

By ASHLEY RYAN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONRAD PUNTA DE MITA

FROM THE WHITE SAND BEACHES OF CANCUN AND energetic nightlife of Cabo to Mexico City's vibrant art, architecture and history, there's no doubt that vacationing south of the border offers ample adventures to uncover. But, if it's rest and relaxation you seek, there's a hidden gem that you simply must experience—and it just happens to lie along Mexico's western coastline.

Conrad Punta de Mita resort, along 2 miles of beach





Top and bottom right: Every room features at least a partial ocean view at Conrad de Punta Mita. Bottom left: a patio with plunge pool

Less than an hour's drive from tourist hub Puerto Vallarta—which you can reach by direct flight from Los Angeles International Airport—the private peninsula of Punta Mita is a lesser-known piece of paradise right on the Pacific. Head straight for Conrad Punta de Mita, a mecca for slow “living” that will elevate your stay with wellness activities, cultural elements and indulgent Mexican cuisine.

REST YOUR HEAD

Conrad Punta de Mita boasts a tranquil atmosphere the moment you set foot on the property, entering the lobby through a tunnel—welcome drink in hand—that is said to cleanse the body, designed to act as a metaphorical portal between the real world and the luxurious realm of the Conrad. Owned by Hilton, Conrad resorts are less plentiful than those of its parent brand, situated

solely in destinations that are filled with culture and showcase a connection to the natural landscape.

One way that Conrad Punta de Mita highlights local culture is through an eclectic art program, showcasing varied pieces by Mexican artists throughout the hotel, in guest rooms, the spa, the lobby and beyond. The resort also features an artist-in-residence program, with bold sculptures by Oaxacan native Sabino Guisu on display through the end of March.

Every room at the Conrad offers at least a partial ocean view, with the entire property oriented toward the sea. And while the rooms in the main building range from simple to spectacular—like the sprawling 3,200-square-foot penthouse suite—you can't beat the beachfront suites, which feature king-size beds, a rainfall shower and soaking

tub, daily breakfast buffet, spa access, nightly cocktail hour, transportation to and from the airport, and an expansive balcony with a private plunge pool just steps from the sand.

Another benefit of booking a stay in the beachfront suites (and some of those in the main building, too) are the Personal Concierge services offered, creating an unparalleled hospitality experience. Enjoy a private, in-room check-in process and specially curated itinerary designed by your assigned concierge, who can assist with things like scheduling spa treatments, dinner reservations or activities like chartered yachts, tequila tastings or s'mores on the beach with a fire pit. You may also find special treats in your room to help you unwind, from a bottle of Valle de Guadalupe wine to a bath drawn exclusively for you with fragrant oils, salts and florals.



Several swimming pools and a spa (opposite page) make the resort a relaxing space.

STAY & PLAY

Add a touch of magic to your trip without ever leaving the resort—especially if your focus is on rest and relaxation. Throughout the duration of your trip, make Conrad Spa your hub. Home to holistic experiences that will keep self-discovery in the forefront of your mind, you can work your way through unique sessions that are centered around the mystical ancient Huichol culture. Try the healing Maraakame Copal Purification Experience with the burning of incense and detoxifying massage, the Muvieri body wrap for cleansing your energy or the chocolate-scented Chilate, which uses cacao beans—an antioxidant—to evoke tranquility.

Perhaps the most intriguing, though, is the

Temazcal experience, which takes place in a clay dome known as the “womb of the earth.” These were once placed at the entrance to ancient Mexican cities so that guests could rest and be cleansed of disease or illness before visiting. Led by a local shaman, the ceremony, which is said to represent rebirth and offer new beginnings, is a transformative, emotional encounter that uses steam, heated stones and meditation to reduce stress.

A number of facials and massages are also available, creating serenity with the soothing sound of rolling waves, soft sheets embroidered with Mexican-inspired designs and aromatic essential oil blends. Special “nests” with thatched roofs also offer a tranquil spot for breezy outdoor treatments,

surrounding the spa’s outdoor pool, whirlpool spa, cold plunge and vibrant garden; a sauna, hair salon and fitness center can also be found indoors.

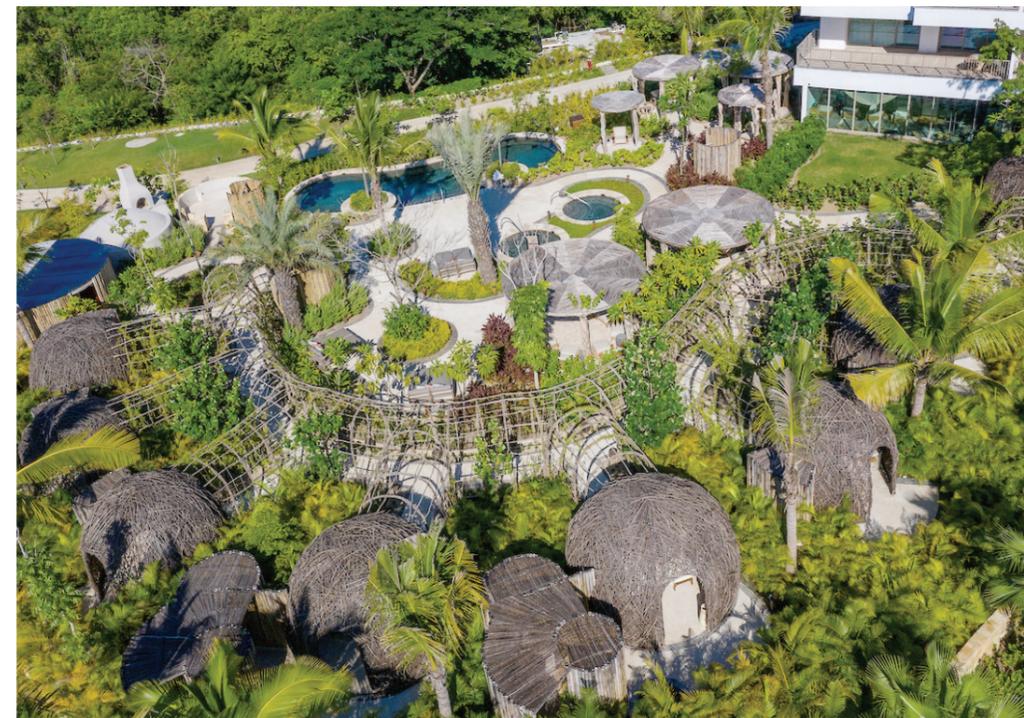
In between treatments, slip out to the private, 2-mile beach, where chairs adorn the sand. Sit for a while, enjoying the views, scents and sounds of the ocean, or dive in for a swim in the warm water. This is an especially reposeful place at sunset, when the glowing sun sinks down below the expansive waves, painting the sky purple and pink.

Or you can opt to lounge by one of the resort’s many pools. The main pool features an infinity edge that overlooks the beach with unrivaled views of the Riviera Nayarit coastline, while the Aura pool—for adults

only—offers a swim-up pool bar and cabanas that can be reserved for the day. Get the perfect photo opp by ordering a cocktail served in a coconut, stamped with the resort’s name. Those with children have options too, including the family pool, which has a water slide, as well as the kiddie pool with a splash pad for the littlest guests.

Elsewhere, children can enjoy the Turi Kids Club, where they can construct cultural crafts like creating their own God’s eye, or practice healthy competition over foosball, table tennis or billiards in the resort’s game room. Meeting spaces are also available for corporate events or weddings of up to 600 people, with event planning teams on-site to help with your every need.

Of course, if relaxation isn’t your aim, there are plenty of exciting ways to explore the region, from snorkeling to stand-up paddleboarding, whale watching, surfing, sport fishing, kayaking or golfing at the nearby Higuera Golf Club, exploring the Marieta Islands or shopping for treasures in the charming town of Sayulita to the north.



Spa Conrad features special “nests” with thatched roofs for outdoor treatments surrounding the spa’s pool.



DINING DESTINATIONS

No vacation is complete without an array of eateries to choose from, and the Conrad aims to impress with culinary destinations that span from dining on the sand to an opulent, innovative signature restaurant.

Hidden amongst the trees in a little oasis along the sand is Codex, the resort's crown jewel. Named for an ancient Aztec manuscript, this secluded signature spot—which was recently honored in the 2023 Mexico Gastronomic Guide, a list of the top 250 restaurants in Mexico by Culinaria Mexicana—offers bold takes on the country's heritage. Upon arrival, all guests are cleansed with a copal blessing ceremony before being escorted inside. Start with a drink from the inventive mixology program, which features ancestral beverages in addition to cocktails like Chak, a red drink that represents the color of the rising sun with tequila, orange liqueur, hibiscus and lemon, or Kisín, a blend of mezcal, tequila, blackberry, cranberry, lemon and habanero named for a Mayan god. On the menu, you'll find dishes like tomato salad, soft shell crab, pork belly, shrimp, sea bass, oysters and lamb loin, simply named but masterfully plated. For dessert, you can try the goat cheesecake or Mexique Chocolate cake, but it's the Black Velvet that really stands out: a sugar sphere stuffed with strawberries and cherries, served alongside white chocolate mousse, a nut crumble and flower petals that are frozen tableside with dry ice before they're sprinkled over the plate.

Another great dining spot is Mezquite. Also on the sand—though not nearly as tucked away as Codex—this open-air grill



Top left: Conrad Punta de Mita's floating breakfast in a plunge pool; top middle and bottom right: signature restaurant Codex; top right: zarandeado, a traditional beach barbecue; bottom middle: Mezquite's beach bar



offers a seasonal menu for breakfast, lunch, dinner and evening cocktails. Try the fruity Pineapple Dust, which combines rum with roasted pineapple, horchata and pineapple juice, or Rabbit, a bourbon drink with apple juice, smoked cinnamon and biters. Flavorful entrees include the San Blas shrimp, prepared with a Nayarit-style jerk marinade, as well as grilled octopus, short rib ravioli, a whole chicken, prime beef cuts and yellowfin tuna. But the shared plates—particularly the tuna sashimi and charred avocado tacos—are also worth tasting. And don't forget the crispy, authentic churros, served with chocolate and vanilla sauces.

Paleta, located alongside one of the pools, is a great lunch spot. On a hot day, this shady patio is the perfect place to take a break—maybe with a ice pop-topped margarita. Paleta serves up easy eats like poke bowls, pizza, Baja-style fish tacos (made with the catch of the day) and fresh ceviche. Or, for a more unique spread, arrange a zarandeado, a traditional beach barbecue offered by the Conrad. Local fishermen arrive with their fresh catches in order to prepare your meal,

with the main attraction being fish, like red snapper, that is grilled before your eyes on the sand. The feast is rounded out with regional dishes like mahi-mahi ceviche, shrimp, grilled octopus, salad, vegetables, desserts and tableside margaritas.

To start the day, visit Arbol's breakfast buffet or dine on a la carte items like chilaquiles, an acai bowl, cinnamon toast, chicken enchiladas, an egg white vegetable frittata or a chocolate and bacon waffle. Or enjoy your morning meals from the comfort of your own room with a floating breakfast placed directly into your plunge pool.

One other culinary experience not to be missed is the agave spirit tasting held at Agave Studio, tucked away in the corner of Arbol. With a collection of more than 200 bottles, guests can sample tequila, mezcal, raicilla and sotol in a variety of vessels with miniature appetizers for pairing. Feel your stress melt away as you sip these artisanal beverages and learn about the history of spirit-making in Mexico—just one more way that Conrad Punta de Mita marries wellness and culture. ■