A Boutique Hotel vs. All-Inclusive Resort
In Playa del Carmen Choose a Boutique Hotel

Playa del Carmen is filled with so many restaurants, shops, beach clubs, and many options for tours and excursions. Do not choose an All-Inclusive hotel
Enjoy the special experiences that Playa del Carmen and its Boutique hotels have to offer.

The following is an actual review written by a guest about their experience staying at an All-Inclusive Resort in Playa del Carmen
“Pretty much everything I feared an All-Inclusive might be”

"In the spirit of full disclosure I am not a fan of all inclusive resorts. We prefer small venues for the most part. I would rather pay for my meals and drinks as long as they are of the best possible quality vs sheer, vast quantities of mediocre (at best) food and unlimited bottom shelf watered down drinks. Last year on a whim we tried a local boutique hotel in Playa del Carmen and we loved it. And we vowed to return to the area soon and try another one, only this time we would bring the kids. Without much research we ended up at an All Inclusive the mega-resort. It was everything we feared it could be.

Let me sum a few things. Food is barely ..."edible" it is not "all inclusive" or at least not for "Elite" folk. Many of the restaurants advertised are not included. At most all-inclusives you are allowed one of the ala carte reservation only meals for every 2 nights stayed and good luck getting a reservation.. so in reality you are stuck with the buffets... its like a bad cruise. Almost everything costs extra!

Drinks are watered down, bottom shelf liquer and waitresses are hard to find so you need to go get the drinks yourself.. as for frozen tropical drinks? they are pre made mixes and sweet beyond belief.

When we checked into the "Lobby" we were shown how large the resort is and they were putting us in a section so far from the beach and main pool area we would have to use a shuttle back and forth.. ridiculous!
I asked for and received a lesser, non suite room closer to the action but was not offered a price reduction even though it was a lesser room. Once we checked in, our room wasn’t ready, so we changed in a rest room and took a shuttle to the beach.

The shuttle takes you to another lobby for the main section of the hotel, only they go to great lengths to call it anything but a lobby.. it is referred to as " The Meeting Place". There is a Taxi price list posted, but you cannot get a taxi or be dropped off by one there. You need to shuttle to the main lobby to get a taxi if you want to go into town at very costly prices. Taxis are not allowed to drop you at your part of the hotel, they must drop you off at the main lobby and you have to wait shuttle back to your room or you can walk what seemed like a mile...with a pregnant wife and 2 children this is a ridiculous and unnecessary hardship placed on guests.

During my entire stay I was woken at 8:30 am by the maid, other guests were talking loudly in the hallways and unless we went to the beach or pool very early in the morning we couldn’t get seats.

There were people running around in traditional Mayan costumes it was really cute and the kids loved it but if you want to take a picture they can only be photographed by the hotels' own photographer and they offer expensive packages if you want to buy the pictures.

In the end this so called All Inclusive hotel cost more than if we stayed in a Boutique hotel in Playa del Carmen.

We were stuck at the resort and had very few meal and drink options, the room was basic and small and we missed out in all the options in town.
I will return to the area but will definitely stay in a smaller hotel and take advantage of the many beaches, shops and restaurants that Playa has to offer. I will avoid All-Inclusive Resorts at any cost"