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YOUR NEXT DREAM YOGA RETREAT LOCATION PALMAÏA – THE HOUSE OF AÏA

Words: Ingrid Yang

Photo Credit: Palamaïa and Ingrid Yang

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For many avid travellers, their wanderlust was left unappeased in 2020 due to travel restrictions and concerns of catching and spreading COVID-19. As vaccinated travellers begin to safely take flight again, they are often left with an important question: where on this amazing planet can I go to heal from this harrowing year? To melt away the stress and disconnection of this past year, look no further than Palmaïa- The House of AïA. This newly constructed beachfront wellness retreat is located in Mexico's stunning Riviera Maya, a stretch of Caribbean coastline on the Yucatán Peninsula. This retreat centre offers guests a unique immersive jungle and beach experience, with every room overlooking the shimmering Caribbean Sea.



Palmaïa- House of AïA is distinctively COVID-safe, because its very existence and open architecture lends itself to natural social distancing. Guided by the philosophy that connecting with nature is the path to personal growth, Palmaïa was conceptualised and built without disturbing the original landscape of nature. The property was moulded around the native jungle and ocean rather than destroying or replacing them. Thanks to this sustainable approach to construction, there are ample outdoor locations to spread out and socially distance throughout the resort. From a vast array of outdoor dining options, access to a pristine beach, and numerous healing spaces, you will find yourself effortlessly settling into the calming rhythms of this natural setting.

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When taking respite at Palmaïa, the days can be slow and easy, or packed with fun activities. Every morning a diversity of yoga practices from hatha to vinyasa are offered on the beautiful Rituals Deck. This elegantly constructed circular wooden platform is nestled in the mangroves and is an oasis of grounded energy. It was hand-constructed around the trees, so you are immersed in the vitality of the jungle as you practice. It truly holds to Palmaïa's philosophy of "reconnecting with nature, the sanctity of life, and the true human spirit."



After a rejuvenating yoga practice, take your breakfast outdoors on the gorgeous dining deck built on the beach. World-renowned head chef, Eugenio Villafaña focuses on sustainability and freshness as he creates a mostly vegan menu with dishes that meld the most delectable flavours onto your plate. Sparked by his imaginative culinary brilliance, all meals are served to order (no buffets at this resort, both for sanitation purposes, as well as first-class, detailed service), with the highest quality ingredients including, same-day caught seafood for non-vegans. Served when and how you order, your meals allow for COVID-safety as well as a relaxing dining experience.

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After filling your belly with delicious handcrafted food, consider a bike ride through the Palmaia community and be sure to seek out the sculpture AiA, the namesake of the resort. This magnificent sculpture was built to remind us of hope. She represents our connection to nature, and our interconnection on this planet both physically and energetically. For the Mayans, AiA represents the source of life, with her arms reaching out and embracing an island of life, and in her centre lies a stupendous Lemurian Quartz crystal - the keeper of the knowledge. AiA holds on to life, reminding us to treasure and protect our verdant Earth. In keeping with this holistic ideal, the AiA sculpture was conceptualised by Palmaia's founder, and built with local materials and left-over pieces from the construction of Palmaia. The monument is meant to serve as a reminder to all of the preciousness of life in our delicate ecosystem. It is truly a vision and celebration of life itself, something we all need right now.



Enjoying some time exploring on the beach cruiser may prepare you for a refreshing dip in the warm, soothing waters of the Caribbean. Palmaia's beach is located on the southernmost end of Playa del Carmen, which offers a long, flawless stretch of beach with no other resorts to the south. The beach is a perfect spot for relaxing, enjoying quiet time soaking up the sun, and listening to the gentle ocean waves as they slide onto the sand.

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Palmaia also offers a magical healing space, the Atlantis Spa, which is located on property within the jungle. This one-of-a-kind spa consists of nine "energy centres", which are private buildings built with floor to ceiling windows to help you connect with nature during your therapeutic massage, facial or energetic healing journey. The buildings are scattered along Palmaia's jungle path and are shaded by magnificent palm trees, offering the ultimate in privacy and luxury. From detoxifying mezcál body treatments to Ayurvedic treatments that incorporate reflexology and acupressure, the spa menu is organised based on chakra centres. The combination of this relaxed environment and specialised treatments truly creates an experience like no other.



After your spa experience, you may want to top off an afternoon by floating in the Palmaia cenote, located right on property. Unique to Mexico, cenotes (pronounced “say-NOH-tays”) are natural freshwater pools created by the collapse of limestone bedrock, which exposes the groundwater below. The ancient Mayans considered the cenotes to be sacred places protected by a Mayan sprite named Alux. These natural wonders are beautiful to see and refreshing to swim in. While relaxing in the cenotes, you will undoubtedly feel the spirituality intrinsic to the water, worthy of worship and inspiration.

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Before enjoying an exquisite dinner at any of Palmaia’s five magnificently designed restaurants, consider a return to the Rituals Deck for a sound healing ceremony. Palmaia has a number of spiritually-based rituals, all curated by their on-site healers. For your sound bath, the healer will use a variety of rare instruments, bowls of different materials, and bells to create a meditative immersion in a symphony of relaxing musical resonance. The intention is to re-balance your energy and take you on a therapeutic sound journey based on the natural rhythms of the surrounding environment. The vibrations of the instruments blended with those of nature will help to restore your internal harmony. You will leave feeling re-balanced, rejuvenated, and indeed, restored.



After this stressful year, if you are seeking overall wellness, you will find no shortage of yoga and karmic-centred activities at Palmaia, all contained within the sanctuary of this stunning beach and jungle resort. Whether your healing sojourn draws you towards a walking meditation along the jungle path (also named the “Health Trail”), Vipassana meditations, mandalas, or simply some quiet time on the beach, you will find what your heart desires for rest and respite at Palmaia, The House of AïA.

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