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HOLIDAY

Fun in Acapulco

A lover of luxury spends an enchanted weekend at the legendary Mexican resort

A few weeks ago, I received an invitation to attend a dear friend's wedding in Acapulco, and of course I accepted. Who would not want to experience this glamorous vacation spot? Frequented in its heyday by Elizabeth Taylor, Brigitte Bardot and Frank Sinatra—whose song “Come Fly With Me” pays tribute to this haven—Acapulco retains its allure as a romantic destination. When deciding where to rest my head (and wardrobe), I always seek an elevated experience, and the resort's Banyan Tree Cabo Marqués hotel was on-brand.

Aside from the wedding events, my trip was dedicated to rest, luxury and the potential hope of finding a husband (I accomplished two of my wishes). After a magical illusion of landing on the sea, I entered the brand-new Alberto Kalach-designed airport and was soon picked up in a large white SUV sent by the hotel.

Along the road to Banyan Tree, there are multiple checkpoints providing privacy and security for a VIP clientele including the likes of Alejandro Sanz. A concierge welcomed me by draping a traditional Mexican lei over my neck, while the Balinese-style reception area transported me to Asia through its design. The building sits on a cliff in a region called Punta Diamante, where the bay meets the Pacific Ocean and waves crash against the rocks.

I headed to my villa via bogey (a golf cart that shuttles guests along the winding roads). There are 45 villas, each with a private pool,



COURTESY OF BANYAN TREE CABO MARQUÉS (4)



Clockwise from top: Villas at Banyan Tree Cabo Marqués; guest room; Saffron restaurant; open-air lobby



I DISCOVERED ACAPULCO IN ALL OF HER GLORY.

and no matter your view, whether the bay or the ocean, there is no bad option. And then there is the superb service. Every morning I was served an off-the-menu *café de olla*, a sweet Mexican cinnamon coffee prepared solely for me. In an Eres swimsuit and panama hat, I would sip the *café* overlooking the sea. I spent a lot of time in this area, which boasts a massive Slim Aarons-style infinity pool. Later in the day, it was where my server Caesar would create a perfect spicy margarita. Cocktails and coffee aside, foodies can expect a treat. The

breakfast at La Nao is delightful, with Mexican classics such as *chilaquiles* alongside healthier options. For wildly delicious curry dishes, guests head to Saffron; for fresh fish and tacos, there's Las Rocas Grill and Bar. Located at the base of the property, it is as close to the bay as one can get, and has its own pool.

I did not need to leave the hotel, but I did want to discover Acapulco in all of her glory. So, deciding to maximize the opportunity and live like a local, I explored. To enjoy the most tranquil sunrise of my life, I went paddleboarding at 7 a.m. My



driver dropped me at the beach next to CiCi Water Park, where I rented a board at Subete al Mar. And because I never miss a meal, I had lunch among politicians, businessmen and locals at Beto Godoy, a no-frills restaurant that's a bit out of the way but is definitely worth the trip. Diners enjoy the famous grilled fish called *dorado a la talla*, as well as the ceviche Acapulqueño, a fresh white fish paired with a base of ketchup and Fanta soda (yep, you heard me) that melts in your mouth and leaves you dreaming of more. Because I wanted to experience another perfect sunset, I visited Las Brisas, a pink hotel built in 1957 that was a favorite of John and Jacqueline Kennedy. Sitting on the rooftop, I sipped their signature margarita *rosa* and felt as if I were in a classic Doris Day/Rock Hudson film. And just like Sylvester Stallone, Luis Miguel and Julio Iglesias, I danced the night away at the iconic 1970s disco Baby'O. The following day, I boarded a yacht at Pichilingue beach and cruised toward Playa Caletilla, the historic neighborhood that contains the Boca Chica hotel, featured in Elvis Presley's 1963 movie *Fun in Acapulco*. I enjoyed their renowned *nigiri* and chilled in a hammock with margarita in hand before heading to my last stop, where I witnessed the internationally acclaimed cliff divers plunging off the high ledges at La Quebrada. It was hard to say adios to a town that remains an ideal spot for luxury lovers, epicurean fanatics and nightlife aficionados. —ERIN MICHELLE NEWBERG