

LODGING

JW MARRIOTT CANCUN RESORT & SPA

MEXICO



JW MARRIOTT CANCUN



THIS PHOTO The infinity pool and beach.

AJAUNT TO tried-and-true Cancun is a fine antidote to the many months of uncertainty, turmoil and cabin fever this past year. Although face masks and hand sanitizer will accompany swimwear, tee shirts and sunscreen in our beach totes, 2021 is the ideal time to re-discover Mexico's home-grown Caribbean resort town in a more relaxed, "grown up" context removed from the destination's rollicking reputation of old. While night clubs, American chain restaurants and souvenir emporiums still dominate Cancun's downtown, JW Marriott Cancun Resort & Spa (a mile up main drag Avenida Kukulkan) offers a surprisingly satisfying and sophisticated place to dip one's toes back into international resort travel.

The JW Marriott Cancun is ready for its close-up, thanks to a \$40 million 2019 renovation executed by Mexico City-headquartered G+G Interiorismo's Martha Gaos and Claudia Gonzalez. Even with 447 generously sized ocean-facing rooms and suites (including the heavenly Presidential Suite), the designers' approach to colour, texture and subtle use of Mayan and Yucatecan folkloric motifs, hummingbirds, *quetzales* (a local bird species), four-petal flowers and snail fossils juxtaposed with clean-lined furnishings to create an ambiance that's airy and modern, yet never stark. Shapes inspired by undersea vegetation and water rendered in pops of blue, from pale cerulean to navy, are offset with warm gray and sand tones in public and private areas.

Should one choose to stay within the quiet sanctuary of the resort area, there are several upscale international dining options as well as casual eateries with street-food inspired dishes you can enjoy at the pool or on your private terrace overlooking the beach. The JW's restaurants include BeachWalk (serving sandwiches, salads and freshly grilled tacos stuffed with octopus or shrimp), Sedona Grill (Mexican breakfast offerings) and fine dining venue Gustino Italian Grill (a la carte and tasting menus elegantly converging regional Italian culinary techniques with Mexican ingredients). A separate open-concept pasta kitchen just inside the entrance previews Gustino's menu as well as its pasta-making classes. The adjoining four-star Marriott Cancun Resort's restaurants include Kasai, a Japanese Izakaya, and Sasi Thai, specializing in Southeast Asian cuisine.

Along with the décor, the JW's mixology program has also received a major upgrade. While the fine dining and ethnic restaurants all abound with classic margaritas and tropical drinks, the recently introduced '150 Margaritas' menu at the JW Lobby Bar is a full-on mixology showcase. All 150 cocktails are »

RESORT & SPA

by ELYSE GLICKMAN



SERVES 2

Tuna Pōke Salad

THIS IS A SIMPLIFIED version of the elegant tuna salad served at HANA, the JW Marriott Cancun Resort & Spa's Polynesian fine dining restaurant.

Sushi Grade Tuna 240 g

Ponzu¹ ½ cup, divided

Vegetable Oil 1 Tbs

Red Onion finely chopped, 2 Tbs

White Wine Vinegar 1 Tbs

Edamame ¼ cup, blanched and cooled

Cucumber peeled, seeded and chopped, ½ cup

Carrot 1, julienned

Cocktail Tomato 2, chopped

Mayonnaise ¼ cup

Dijon Mustard 1 tsp

Fresh Lemon Juice 1 Tbs

Jalapeño Pepper ½, de-seeded and very finely chopped

Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper to taste

Micro Greens for garnish

Cilantro leaves for garnish

¹ As a substitute for ponzu, combine 2 parts light soy sauce with 1 part fresh lemon juice.

1 MARINATE the tuna in half the ponzu while you prep the remaining ingredients.

2 IN a small bowl combine the chopped red onion and white wine vinegar and allow to stand for at least 5 minutes.

3 HEAT the oil in a skillet until shimmering.

4 REMOVE the tuna from the ponzu and pat dry with paper towel. Discard the marinade.

5 SEAR the tuna briefly on both sides, until the surface just starts to brown and the centre remains raw. Remove from the skillet and cut into 1 x 1 cm cubes.

6 PLACE the tuna, edamame, cucumber, carrot and tomatoes in a mixing bowl. Drain the red onion and add to the bowl. Add the remaining ponzu and toss gently to combine.

7 WHISK together the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice and jalapeno. Season with salt and pepper.

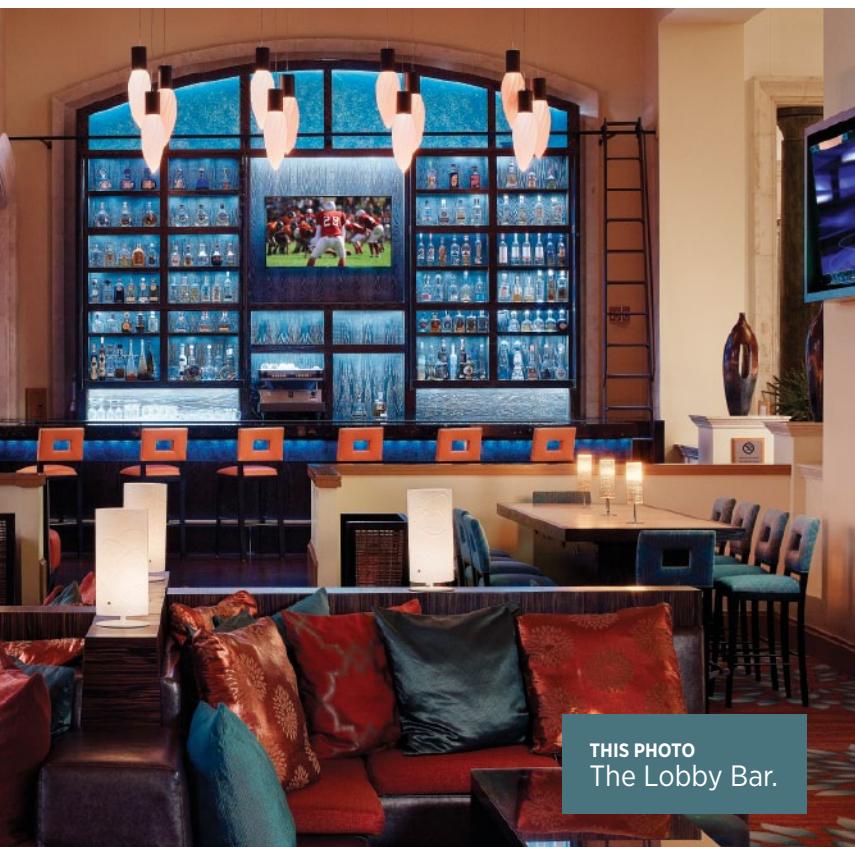
8 DIVIDE the salad between two serving plates and drizzle with the spicy mayo dressing. Garnish with micro greens and cilantro. Serve immediately.



built on a foundation of top-shelf tequilas and mezcal, either neat or infused with black tea, beetroot and serrano chile. Although the cocktails are being promoted as Instagrammable, imbibers simply after a great drink made with quality ingredients and techniques will not be disappointed.

HANA, Cancun's first-ever Polynesian white-tablecloth restaurant, is set to open in fall 2021 next door inside the Marriott Cancun Resort. Under the direction of Executive Chef Pedro Maldonado, the kitchen delivers a fresh spin on Polynesian and Pan-Asian dishes using Quintana Roo region's rich variety of produce, fish and seafood. Those coming later in 2021 can look forward to such dishes as spice- and smoke-forward sweet-and-sour pork ribs; luscious sushi-grade tuna pōke; grilled and smoked octopus with squid-ink rice, and lobster cakes with fruity accoutrements.

"Polynesia is made up of 1000 little islands with recipes that vary from island to island, just as Mexico has recipes varying from state to state," says Chef Maldonado. "That said, there are several common flavour profiles our two countries share as well as common ingredients — especially with produce and spices. Our research involved eight of our chefs traveling



MEXICO

SERVES 1

Strawberry Lime Margarita

A GORGEOUS TIPPLE FROM the new 150 Margaritas Menu at the JW Lobby Bar.

Reposado Tequila 45 ml

Grand Marnier 20 ml

Lime Juice
15 ml

Simple Syrup
15 ml

Strawberries
4

Sparkling Water $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Sugar
to rim glass

1 MACERATE three strawberries in the tequila for at least 30 minutes.

2 POUR the strawberries and tequila into a cocktail shaker with the Grand Marnier, lime juice and simple syrup. Shake.

3 RIM a glass with sugar and pour in the contents of the shaker through a strainer.

4 ADD sparkling water and ice and mix with spoon.

5 GARNISH with the reserved strawberry.



JW Marriott Cancun Resort & Spa
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cunjw-jw-marriott-cancun-resort-and-spa

Harry's Prime Steakhouse & Raw Bar
www.harrys.com.mx

Mercado de Tortas
www.mercadodetortas.com.mx/es

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