

Bill Boggs Corner Table: Playa Del Carmen's Fairmont Mayakob

Boggs visits a hot Mexican travel destination



Bill Boggs

He enjoyed the charming receptionists at Fairmont Mayakob.

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By **Bill Boggs**

Special

Contributor

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I've been trying to satisfy a hunger for travel that started during a spring break to Fort Lauderdale in college, and I am still very hungry.

I've crossed the ocean seven times, sailed from Cape Town to London, returned again and again to Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain in St Lucia, enjoyed the Ritz in Paris, The Adlon in Berlin, and the Dorchester in London all in one year. I long for another drive down The Big Sur and need an encore in Paris, Rome, and Positano. I crave return visits to Amsterdam, Copenhagen and the Fjords of Norway. However, be assured that I am in no way jaded, but I do have high standards for resorts and restaurants - I like them to be in concert or harmony with the environment around them. So I am happy to relate that the **Fairmont Mayakoba Resort** on Mexico's Riviera Maya joins the long list of exceptional resorts and food destinations that I have been privileged to experience.

To get to there, you fly into Cancun and travel about 40 minutes. The Mayakoba is a dream development which has been evolving since it began in 1993.

It has employed a huge team of biologists, engineers and architects with the objective of making Mayakoba an example of sustainability within the tourism industry. It is still growing, there are now three resorts among thousands of acres of mangroves, dunes and coral reefs, and miles of pristine waterways you can explore by electric boat. The other hotels are a Rosewood and The Banyan Tree. The Fairmont was the first to open in 2006.

I chose the Fairmont primarily because of its many swimming pools. There are travelers who golf, travelers who gamble, and travelers who play tennis. I am a traveler who swims and eats. The Fairmont offers plenty of great eating and swimming in several large pools (but not at the same time), including a giant infinity pool on the bank of one of the waterways, twenty feet from **La Laguna Restaurant**. Was I happy, or what? I was able to leave my room and two minutes later be in a pool by myself swimming laps. No distracted tourists water walking while checking their mobile devices ever bothered me. Just me.

There other restaurant at the hotel is **El Puerto**, but my favorite, which was the slightly more casual, was La Laguna. It has a relaxed ambiance and dining options inside or outside, and overlooks mangroves and the canal. The atmosphere is wonderful, but the thing that pulled me into La Laguna were the cute and charming receptionists at the front desk. "Directors of First Impressions" I call these kinds of hostesses. They just set a wonderful tone.

There is a brilliant full-scale breakfast buffet (and a la carte) that impressively included ten different kinds of cheese, along with smoked salmon and herring even though we are a long way from Amsterdam.

The menu for lunch and dinner was outstanding. Let's focus on lunch, where you'll want to get on the deck and enjoy some bird watching with your chicken mole. My favorite dishes during several meals were the seared sashimi tuna, the tulum, which is chunky seedless watermelon with crumbled goat cheese, and a grain mustard flaked salmon salad. The fried fish taco has just the right crunch and a zing, and do sample all of the ceviches because they are about as perfect as you would want on a warm day. Remember this is Mexico, so try excellent quesadillas with either chicken, steak, or sautéed mushrooms. (Sadly, the quesadilla has become so ubiquitous and generic - like Caesar salad - that the coffee shop in my NYC West Side neighborhood serves them with ketchup in place of salsa!) You won't need any ketchup at La Laguna.

The Fairmont Mayakoba is truly a world away and it also offers golf, tennis, boating, and pristine white sand beaches with glorious turquoise-colored water. Tell those girls at the desk that Mr. Boggs sent you. Or maybe I'll see you there.

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