



## Mexico

*CANCÚN'S RECENT RISE INTO LUXURY TOURISM MAKES FOR A PERFECT HONEYMOON LANDSCAPE, FROM THE BEACHES AND EXCURSIONS TO THE NIGHTLIFE AND RESTAURANT SCENE.*

**BY JESSICA REMO**

**F**orget the spring-breakers; Cancún is for lovers! Don't let this Yucatán destination's party rep confuse you: With a mere four-hour flight from Philly, honeymooners can find their own quiet paradise among 14 miles of white sand beaches, all while taking in the glorious weather and keeping busy with plenty of daytime excursions and nighttime diversions. Cancún's history as a tourism destination means it's well suited to meet any visitor's whim, and these days, the region's profile has been raised even higher in the luxury world with the addition of Nizuc Resort & Spa, a brand-new first-class resort designed by renowned Mexican architect and interior designer Alejandro Escudero and located on a tranquil peninsula at the southern tip of Cancún's hotel zone.

**BY DAY:** Because Nizuc is located on a lagoon, the water is calm and clear, perfect for snorkeling, kayaking and paddle-boarding, and equipment is provided. Time flies, too, at the resort's infinity pool overlooking the ocean, complete with

a swim-up bar. For the restless, day trips are easy, whether you hop the ferry to Isla Mujeres and Cozumel for snorkeling and diving (Cancún is home to the second-largest coral reef in the world), explore the Mayan ruins at Tulum, or peruse the high-end shops at downtown mecca La Isla. Golfers won't want to miss the 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature course, Riviera Cancún. And for a really fun adventure, head out to swim with the whale sharks on Holbox Island. (Don't worry: They mostly eat plankton.)

**BY NIGHT:** For nighttime fun at Nizuc, visit Havana lounge on Fridays and Saturdays for live Cuban jazz, an assortment of rums, and a fresh smoke from the in-house cigar roller, if you dare. If that rum gets you feeling bold and dance-y, a \$25 taxi fare will take you to Cancún's famous nightlife spots, including clubs like CoCo Bongo, the City and Dady'O. Or you can do the very opposite and simply enjoy how romantic Nizuc becomes at night: The resort aims to include the four elements in nearly every sight line, with candles and torches, reflecting ponds, and the ever-present sand and ocean breeze. Cuddling up with your

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# HONEYMOONS

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Nizuc's dinner pier



NIZUC RESORT AND SPA

love and some fruity drinks in a cabana under the stars here is the sure cure to any lingering wedding stress.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Open since September 2013, Nizuc is the flagship for a luxury brand launched by Mexico City-based hotel chain Las Brisas, and was previously a presidential retreat. With a modern Mexican-meets-Asian design scheme and service that is both impeccable and warm, the vibe here is sexy and Zen. There are 10 different categories of suites on the 29-acre resort, including 29 honeymoon-perfect garden villas, each of which includes a plunge pool completely enclosed by high walls, creating a totally private escape. Even room service is delivered through a “magic box” in the wall, meaning you don’t ever have to open the door if you don’t want to. (Translation: Clothing optional!)

**WHAT TO EAT:** Don’t miss the vast assortment of Mexican pastries at the breakfast buffet, then go back for round two: made-to-order tostadas, crepes and omelets. Nizuc’s four dinner restaurants are manned by hotshot chefs de cuisine who are natives of the country that each spot’s cuisine represents. At Mexican restaurant Ramona, talk to the staff about having a chef’s-table dinner (you’ll chat with the chef, who will create a customized menu) or a wine-pairing with vintages from Mexico’s well-known Santo Tomás vineyard. For the most romantic of the bunch, dine on the patio next to the reflecting pond at Indian-Asian-fusion restaurant Indochine. For

Mediterranean-Italian, visit Terra Nostra, or get away to the adults-only section of the resort at beachside spot La Punta for grilled steaks and fish. For lunch, order beach-bar fare from your lounge chair or dine in for fresh ceviche at Peruvian restaurant Ni.

**WHAT TO PACK:** Don’t forget your passport, sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, light clothes, sundresses, and bug spray for nighttime mosquitoes. If you plan to scuba or snorkel, take an underwater camera (or waterproof phone case). Most businesses that deal with tourists accept the dollar, so no need to change currency, but make sure you have a variety of bills, as they sometimes have trouble making change.

**BEST TIMES TO GO:** Peak hurricane season spans from September through October. To soak in the best weather—not too hot and not too rainy—visit during the high season between December and May; Cinco de Mayo and the Cancún Jazz Festival make for fun festivities in May.

**NEWLYWED NEWS:** Nizuc is happy to make extra-special arrangements for couples, including a sunset dinner on the beach or at the end of its pier. And don’t miss out on the private oceanfront spa suites for two, where you can enjoy your complimentary spa lunch on the deck beside your private pool following your treatment. (We recommend the Mayan-inspired Nizuc Renewal for two.)

**GETTING THERE:** Nizuc partners with Ultimate Jet Vacations, a boutique luxury travel company that extensively researches and handpicks high-end resorts, mostly in the Caribbean and Mexico, and can arrange your entire trip, from your flights and transfers to the hotel. They’ll also check in on you while you’re honeymooning, to make sure everything is to your satisfaction, and act as a liaison between you and the resort to arrange special dinners, upgrades and other VIP touches. Book early to catch one of the few direct four-hour flights offered from Philly. PW