



At the Waldorf Astoria Cancun, Fine Dining in Four Venues

Description

During a recent stay as a guest of the Waldorf Astoria Cancun, I managed to experience each of the resort's four restaurant offerings. I watched a sunrise from an oceanfront suite, over breakfast and coffee from in-room service. I saw the moonrise over dinner on the terrace at JA'O. I was the sole participant in a cooking lesson at Chaya. And I spent a number of afternoons at the poolside restaurant, lingering over my laptop while working through a plate of tempura shrimp and a glass of white wine. So I thought an email interview with the Waldorf's executive chef, Stuart Roger, was in order:

Your background?

I bring over 20 years of culinary experience in the restaurant and luxury industry to the resort. After earning his degree from Ecole Hoteliere Savoie Leman in France, Stuart began his career with Rocco Forte Hotels and quickly transitioned to various properties and collaborated with many prestigious Chefs, such as Joel Robuchon in Monaco, Roger Verge at Mougins in the French riviera and Jean-George Vongerichten overseeing his culinary operations in Mexico.

How does the Mayan culture influence your menus?

Mayan culture is mostly present in JA'O Restaurant, where we serve local delicacies such as Sikil pak which is a roasted pumpkin seed pure used to dip tortilla chips. We also provide a Mayan cooking class at Chaya, which is given in Mayan language and translated into Spanish or English.

How many of your staff are of Mayan descent?

About three-quarters.

How many chefs on staff?

We have Armando Briseño, our executive pastry chef, winner of international pastry and bakery competitions and alumni of many prestigious French pastry chefs. Elionai Calderon is Chef de Cuisine for Chaya and JA'O, and a highly skilled culinary technician with many years of experience working for Chef Charlie Trotter and Jean-George Vongerichten. Mauricio Lazcano, Chef de Cuisine for Malpeque,

has extensive experience in luxury properties in Mexico and an expert in seafood and combining local flavors

How many restaurants on site, and their specialties?

We have a total of 4 outlets, plus in room dining: Malpeque is our upscale seafood grill. Chaya is our international brasserie with a Mediterranean twist. JA'O is our Mexican cantina. Our Pool Restaurant offers Mexican dishes and poolside classic finger food

What about outdoor dining: How many opportunities and where?

We offer a variety of outdoor dinners, like romantic dinners on the beach, and beach barbecues.

Your commitment to local ingredients?

We intend to source locally as much as possible. For example we serve a Yucatan suckling pig, a breed that the Conquistadors brought to Mexico and whose bloodline was preserved through time by passionate local farmers.

For more, go [here](#).

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Aerial view of the Waldorf Astoria Cancun. Photo by Victor Elias Photography