



# La Zebra

BEACH CANTINA Y CABANAS

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## **La Zebra hotel taps into “real Tulum” with jungle-chic vibe**

Creators of Mezzanine launch another winning concept along the Mayan Riviera

TULUM, Mayan Riviera (July 4, 2007) – With pristine white sand beaches, overgrown jungle cloaking mysterious ancient ruins, and a special, laidback uniqueness all its own, it's no surprise that Tulum has tipped the radar of trend-watchers on the lookout for the next “tropical hot spot”.

But with this fame, comes a disintegration of what has made this magical place a jewel in the crown of Caribbean destinations. As record growth along Mexico's Mayan Riviera creeps south, traditional fishing pueblos such as the once-tiny village of Playa del Carmen have become overpriced, overbuilt and overdone.

Luckily, this is not the case with **La Zebra Beach Cantina & Cabanas**, a nine-cabana beach escape with a retro-jungle vibe that takes visitors back in time to a laidback Tulum of old.

“While a lot of smaller places are remodeling themselves into trendy boutique hotels, guests don't really feel they are having a Mexican beach experience,” explains owner John Kendall, an Australian who also owns Tulum's wildly successful Mezzanine hotel and Thai restaurant, which brought a distinctly hip, European stylishness to the quiet town. But when Kendall found the spacious beachfront property of La Zebra, he decided to recapture area's relaxed essence he fell in love with 15 years ago. “At La Zebra you feel that you're actually experiencing Tulum before all the development, with a simplistic, rustic and slightly whimsical flavor,” says Kendall. “La Zebra is a place where guests live an authentic, Mexican beach lifestyle.”

The first order of the day was renovating all nine rooms to reflect the property's jungle-chic, organic vibe. The result is an eclectic contrast of tongue-in-cheek humor and home-grown natural comfort: Amenities include overhead fans, king size beds featuring soft linens draped with extra roomy mosquito nets, complimentary bottle of tequila, and wireless internet. Interiors are hand-crafted from the elements: cantera stone, local hardwoods, thatched palm and real tree root towel rails. And paintings of sensual Mother Earth are works commissioned by local artist Enrique Diaz. Meanwhile, versatile sleeping quarters mean that couples, friends and families find a welcome home in the laidback cabanas, which offer a real sense of closeness to nature without sacrificing comfort.

At the heart of the property is Lena and her sisters, who infuse La Zebra with a feminine energy and create home-cooked, traditional cuisine such as hearty soups and savory empanadas at the Mexican-style cantina. A huge outdoor charcoal grill is the inspiration behind the all-day pit roasts every Sunday that serve up the delectable smoky flavors straight from the grill with salsa dancing to live fusion Latin music. From Thursdays to Sundays, La Zebra's round hardwood deck on the beach plays host to sizzling salsa lessons. And on tap at the cantina's bar are dozens of the finest tequila, fresh juices and the house specialty, fruity, tropical margaritas. “We want guests to feel that they are in real Mexico when they set foot in La Zebra,” says Kendall. “We're not creating a new concept that doesn't fit into the natural energy of Tulum. La Zebra gets back to the basics and lets Tulum's true dynamic shine through.”

### **ABOUT LA ZEBRA**

*La Zebra Beach Cantina & Cabanas has nine renovated rooms that capture the rustic, jungle chic charm and true energy of Tulum. A Mexican-style cantina dishes up traditional home cooking and an outdoor charcoal grill sets the scene for all-day pit roasts every Sunday. The tequila bar features dozens of spirits and fresh fruit margaritas that are the talk of the town.*

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