



Splendor In Mexico City



Deluxe room at The St. Regis Mexico City.

*Recommend Editor Rick Shively visited Mexico and Starwood's most elegant properties in the country—**The St. Regis Mexico City** and **The St. Regis Punta Mita** in Riviera Nayarit. In this article, he covers **The St. Regis Mexico City** where he had anchor stays coming into Mexico City the first day before spending two nights in Riviera Nayarit and then still another day stay on his return to Mexico City before returning home.*

We started off aboard Mexico's newest airline, **Interjet**, which was promoted early on as a discount airline, although few Mexican travelers we spoke with would agree with that assessment. Still, both going and coming from Mexico City from Miami International Airport, the flights were full with families coming and going on vacation or shopping trips.

Inflight service does not include meals, just complimentary drinks and minimal snacks, but service is fast, efficient and friendly. Passenger loading and unloading is also very efficient and generally hassle-free—more than a bit of a surprise considering the number of families traveling. But for that same reason, baggage claim was a lengthy and frustrating process.

Upon arrival in Mexico City, a St. Regis driver met us for the ride back to the hotel. You certainly get a bird's-eye idea of the enormity of this historical city as your plane goes over the city and into its landing pattern, but once you leave the airport on the ground, you get an even more jarring idea of how 22 million people move around this sprawling metropolis—very, very slowly. It's Friday, the driver explained, "It seems like every Friday, every Mexican in the city is in their car going or coming from somewhere."

After arriving at the hotel and dropping off our bags, we got a quick tour of some of the room categories with the *Grand Luxury* junior suites and rooms getting the best views overlooking the famous boulevard, La Reforma. But never mind the views—the rooms and suites themselves are elegant and spacious with huge marble baths, rainshower heads, large tubs, a collection of high-end soaps and amenities. The beds are queen- and king-sized, and there are flat-screen TVs and more.

Indeed, the entire interior of The St. Regis Mexico City just screams understated elegance—subdued lighting and luxurious carpeting in the hallways. In the public areas, it's a minimalist design with marble floors, and subdued accessories that translate into luxury without pretentiousness.

The most important aspect from the guest service factor, however, is the butler service—your own personal butler available 24/7. In the room itself, there's a digital control box that allows you to page or call the butler with your request. They're also there to help with your packing and unpacking. It's truly a high-end experience and the staff knows how to pamper and please.

And speaking of pampering and pleasing, that's where the *Remede Spa* comes in and boy do they pamper. You can start off or end a massage with a steam bath, sauna, relaxation pool or choose from two jacuzzis at different temperatures. But it's the massage program that's the game winner in our book. Each and every massage offers personalized treatments for whatever ails the massage client. Got a crick in the neck—they'll focus on that; lower back problems, not a problem; shoulders wired up with stress, they'll melt that tightness down like butter in a hot pan. And while they're doing all that, you're still getting a regular full-body massage with the addition of a variety of oils, fragrances, herbal potions, and aromatic that adds to the 60 minutes of bliss. When the massage therapist patted me on the back and whispered, "Your massage is over, Mr. Shively," I knew it would be immature and selfish to whine, "No, no no." But I did it anyway. I recovered and lived with the fact that I walked out of there so relaxed, it felt like five martinis without the liver damage.

Still another standout at The St. Regis Mexico City is the recently opened J&G Grill, a restaurant concept developed by Michelin-starred chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. The bottom line is the dishes are creative—avocado pizza, red snapper sushi sitting atop toasted rice, crab cake with avocado, grapefruit and ginger—positively and heavenly delicious, and totally unique. Desserts are no less awesome with a cheesecake that's one of the creamiest pieces of confection we've ever had.

Of course, as one of the most historical and culturally important cities in the western hemisphere, we spent an afternoon trying to squeeze in as much as we could, with our guide pointing out the wealth of historical sites as we drove by countless memorials and museums that begged to be discovered, but little or no time to go inside. We did, however, make a stop in the main square in the heart of the city called the *Zocalo* where two cultures clash with the remains of the *Templo Mayor* (the series of Aztec temples destroyed by the conquering Spaniards), the city's main cathedral, much of it built with stones of the ruined temples, and the Palace of Fine Arts.

But it's the color and the fun of the Zocalo that makes it a worthwhile visit. Dozens, if not hundreds of vendors ply the square and the surrounding streets, food and juice sellers scream out the availability and the quality of their wares and native fortune tellers and shamans charge you 10 pesos to cleanse your soul of impurities, while other native groups perform their dances or music.

For more on Mexico City and the St. Regis properties in Mexico City and Punta Mita, look for our print coverage in our October issue. Next up on our blog coverage is The St. Regis Punta Mita.