

LIFESTYLE **L U X**



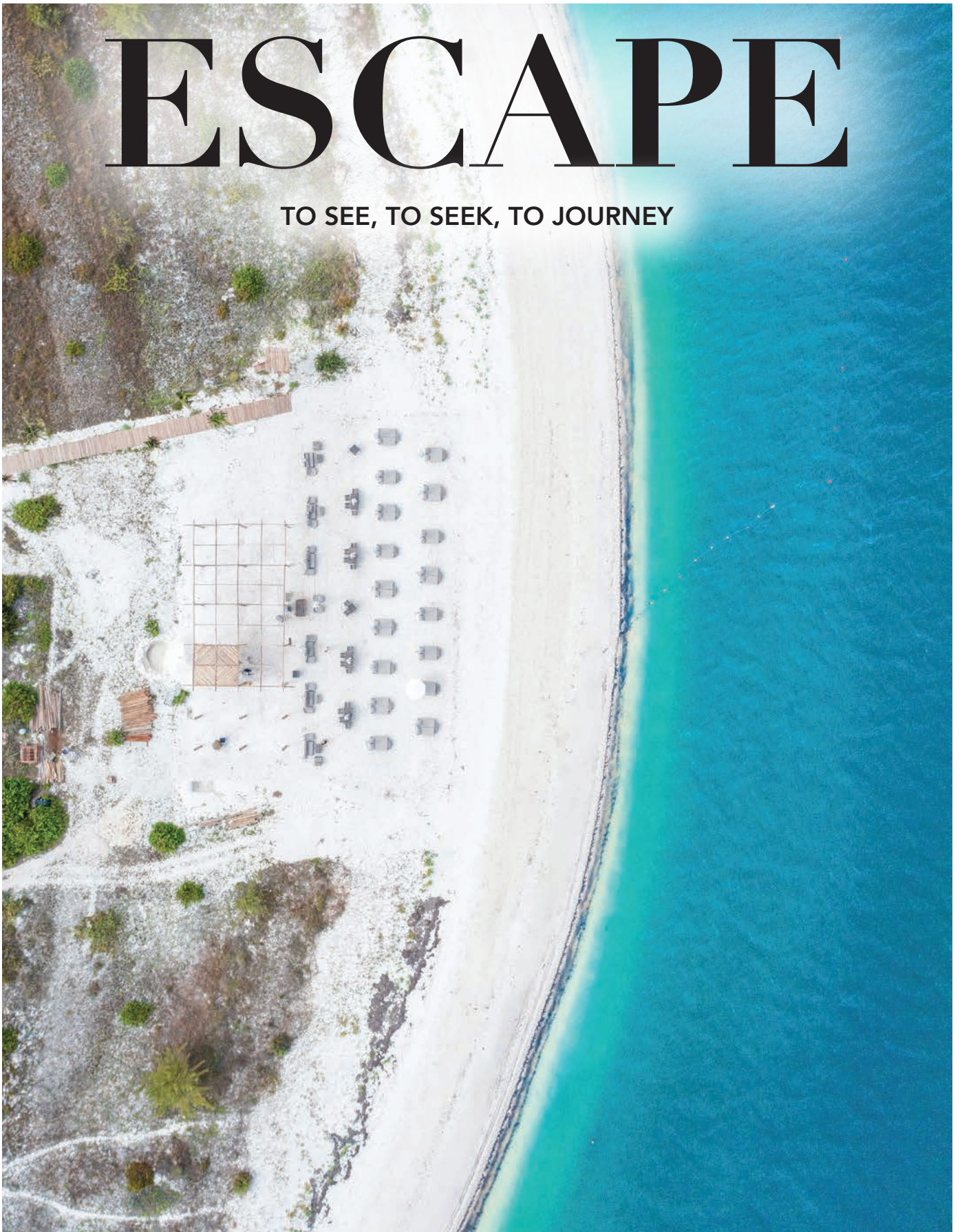
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ESCAPE

TO SEE, TO SEEK, TO JOURNEY



pg. #102 A visit to the new Isla Holbox in Mexico.

Isla Holbox

Mexico's Best Kept Secret

By Lexi Reich

As I approached the bustling port of Chiquilá, the scorching sun began its descent over the Gulf of Mexico. Just a 20-minute ferry ride away sat Isla Holbox, an island I had only recently learned about. It had been described as an untouched paradise – the new Tulum before its development boom. Once I reached the island after a long travel day, I caught a ride in an oversized golf cart that fumbled through muddy streets lined with sand and salty air. My hotel greeted me with cold juice and warm hospitality, sealing the day with a peace I didn't realize I so desperately needed. I walked through the winding wooden bridges to my room, which was nestled above a beautiful mangrove garden. Little did I know what sort of weekend awaited me.









Isla Holbox is somewhat of a hidden gem in Mexico. While it's grown in popularity over the years, the seaside oasis remains free of cars and high-rises, making it the ideal destination to escape city life. St. Somewhere was the perfect property to showcase all this quaint but colorful island had to offer. If you're looking for white-sand beaches, bright blue water, diverse wildlife and a small-town feel, take this as your sign to book a trip to Holbox.

As Margaritaville and Karisma Hotels & Resorts' newest venture, St. Somewhere's distinct boho-chic style and open-air design make it a memorable stay. The unexpected culinary excellence and inspiring service only add to the experience. The boutique hotel offers 39 suites with seven

styles to choose from – including suites with private plunge pools or direct access to the main pool and swim-up bar. The colors and accents are inspired by the sea and greenery that surround the property, creating an intimate atmosphere to unwind in comfort and style.

The two on-site restaurants use seasonal ingredients to craft beach-side eats and choice ancestral dishes. The eclectic menus feature mixologist-inspired cocktails, fresh seafood, ceviche and other locally-inspired cuisine. As a community-first environment, ingredients are sourced directly from Mexican growers and artisans. And just a short taxi or bike ride away, various food stalls downtown are ready to serve.



Besides exploring St. Somewhere's 3,000 feet of beachfront access — whether through kayaks, stand-up paddleboards or swimming — the three-island tour is a must. I was able to see Isla Pasion, Isla Pajaros and the Yalahau Lagoon on a guided boat tour, where resident flamingos, 35 species of nesting birds and a freshwater sinkhole perfect for soaking fought for best in show. At night, I got to witness bioluminescent waters — a bucket list item of mine prior to the trip. Isla Holbox is filled with natural wonders and promises to stay that way, as it's protected by the Yum Balam Nature Reserve.



St. Somewhere is not all-inclusive. The property owners actually encourage guests to explore Holbox in all its glory, involving the island's fishermen to taxi drivers, to help support the community. While its main draw is the bountiful outdoor playground, Holbox is also home to colorful street art, unique shopping nooks and highly-rated spa centers.

After an extended weekend, Isla Holbox's allure became crystal clear. It's a secluded paradise with all the luxuries of renowned beach destinations, but without the fuss. Speaking of, make sure to pack bug spray and shoes you don't mind getting muddy if you're visiting during wet season. To get to Isla Holbox, fly into Cancun International Airport and take a two-hour shuttle to the port of Chiquilá, where a ferry runs every hour. Once you arrive, St. Somewhere is a luxurious base to come home to. The upscale rooms, tasty food and beverage service and personalized care devoted to each guest are truly unmatched.

