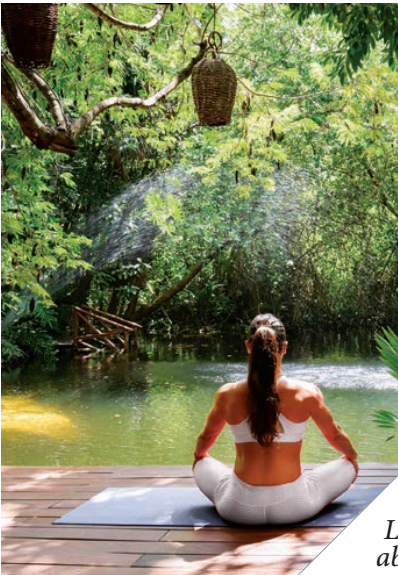




rite of passage

Temazcal rituals in Mexico are more than just sweat lodges. With a history steeped in healing and identity, today they define a luxury take on self-revelation. Jillian Dara investigates.



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Though Temazcal experiences are prolific throughout Mexico, they are limited in the U.S. due to their cultural significance. For local emersion, South Floridians can check out The Yoga Direction (theyogadirection.com) and its fall Temazcal retreat.

Colloquially referred to as a sweat lodge, Temazcal ceremonies are preserved healing rituals that date back to the 1300s. In pre-Hispanic times, the purification practice involved stones heated to a high temperature that, in turn, created sauna-like steam. Nowadays, shamen, aka “healers,” still believe the Temazcal is for “people in need of transformation,” explains Emmanuel Arroyo, regional wellness director at Rosewood Mayakoba. “We recommend the Temazcal for those looking to take on a new challenge in their lives and who are open to a spiritual, life-changing experience. It is for those looking to move into the next chapter and evolve. It’s a much more emotionally involved wellness experience and requires real thought.”

Since the Mayans viewed fire as a conduit of passage, the Temazcal is naturally heated with volcanic stones, which gradually increase in temperature throughout the four-part ceremony. The shaman pours aromatic water over the stones to release steam that begins the physical detoxifying process, and as the stones accumulate in heat, the more challenging it becomes to stay present. This is when the experience deepens, transcending the physical sweat to engage mental strength and spirituality as the shaman’s guided mantras, sensorial rituals, and moments of self-reflection help to keep guests focused on achieving inner transformation.

Rosewood Mayakoba is one of the luxury Mexican resorts offering on-site Temazcal ceremonies. This ritual, offered here since its opening in 2007, is a critical part of the hotel’s programming because it calls for celebrating what is unique about local identity. “The Temazcal is the only healing ceremony from a pre-Hispanic culture that is still preserved in its natural form,” explains Arroyo.

Across the country on the Riviera Nayarit, Conrad SPA at Conrad Punta de Mita also features Temazcal since opening its doors in 2020. “Indigenous cultures worldwide are known for their healing foods, movement methods, wellness, and mind practices,” emphasizes Roselia Flandes, spa and recreation director. “As a spa in Mexico, it is important to offer authentic treatments rooted in the region’s culture to honor the people of this place and their ancient knowledge.”

At Conrad, the ceremony takes place in a dome-shaped stone structure that symbolizes the womb of Mother Earth. “When we introduce Temazcal to guests, we emphasize its role in sparking the process of evolution and a deep-seated internal change,” says Arroyo of the intimate and emotional, hour-long experience led by a shaman. “The idea is that when you leave the Temazcal, you are reborn.”

COURTESY OF ROSEWOOD MAYAKOBA