

First-Time All-Inclusive Resort Guide

Welcome!

Planning your first all-inclusive vacation? This guide will help you understand what to expect, what to pack, and how to make the most of your stay so you can relax from the moment you arrive.

What Is an All-Inclusive Resort?

Most all-inclusive resorts include:

Accommodations
Meals
Snacks
Unlimited beverages (including many alcoholic drinks)
Pools and beaches
Entertainment
Non-motorized water sports (varies by resort)
Fitness center
Kids' clubs (family resorts)

What May Cost Extra?

Some amenities often carry an additional fee, such as:

- Spa treatments
- Premium wines and top-shelf spirits (varies by resort)
- Specialty dining at select restaurants (varies by resort)
- Motorized water sports
- Off-property excursions
- Golf (at some resorts)
- Airport transfers (not always included)
- Laundry services

Tip: Every resort is different. Review your resort's inclusions before you travel.

Before You Leave

Check passport validity
Purchase travel insurance
Download airline and resort apps (if available)
Review airport transfer information
Complete online check-in (if available)
Notify your bank of international travel (if needed)

What to Pack

Suggested essentials:

Swimsuits
Cover-up
Casual daytime clothes
Evening outfits
Comfortable sandals
Walking shoes
Sunscreen
Sunglasses
Hat
Chargers
Prescription medications

Include a note:

For a complete packing guide, download my free Beach and Resort Packing Checklist.

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Dining

Buffet restaurants
À la carte restaurants
Snack bars
Coffee shops

Room service (availability varies by resort)

Some restaurants may require reservations and/or dress codes, such as long pants and closed-toe shoes for men.

Tipping

Tipping policies vary by destination and resort:

Some resorts include gratuities in the price.
Others welcome or encourage additional tips for exceptional service.
Check the resort's policy before you travel.

Resort Activities

Examples include:

Beach volleyball
Yoga
Fitness classes
Kayaking
Paddleboarding
Snorkeling
Live entertainment
Theme nights
Cooking or dance classes
Kids' clubs (family resorts)

Excursions

Popular options:

Catamaran cruises
Snorkeling
Ziplining
ATV tours
Cultural tours
Waterfalls
Sightseeing
Historic sites

Tip: Book popular excursions in advance if you know what you want to do.

Staying Connected

Wi-Fi availability (varies by resort)
International phone plans or eSIMs
Messaging apps (WhatsApp is commonly used in many destinations)

Health & Safety

Stay hydrated.
Apply sunscreen regularly.
Drink responsibly.
Follow local swimming and beach safety flags.
Keep valuables secured.
Check local safety announcements



10 Tips for First-Time Resort Guests

3. Pack at least two swimsuits.
4. Bring plenty of sunscreen.
5. Make restaurant reservations as soon as you're able.
6. Carry small bills if you plan to tip where appropriate.
7. Bring a reusable insulated tumbler if your resort allows it.
8. Don't over-schedule—leave time to relax.
9. Explore more than just the main pool.
10. Book popular excursions early.
11. Drink plenty of water in warm climates.
12. Unplug, slow down, and enjoy your vacation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I eat whenever I want?

Most resorts offer multiple dining options throughout the day, though restaurant hours vary.

Do I need cash?

Usually only for optional tips, shopping, or purchases outside the resort.

Is room service included?

It depends on the resort and room category.

Are drinks included?

Most all-inclusive resorts include a wide selection of beverages, but premium offerings may cost extra depending on the property.

Should I leave the resort?

Many guests enjoy excursions to explore the local culture and attractions, but plenty of travelers are perfectly happy spending their entire vacation at the resort.

Ready to Plan Your Getaway?

Whether you're looking for a romantic adults-only escape, a family-friendly beach vacation, or a luxury tropical retreat, Marissa's Dream Getaways is here to help you find the perfect all-inclusive resort for your travel style and budget.