

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG

Is the all-inclusive resort in Mexico booked through Priceline really all-inclusive?

Help! My all-inclusive hotel in Mexico is only half-inclusive

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I recently booked a room at the Barcelo, an all-inclusive resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. When I made the reservation, it listed breakfast, lunch, and dinner as included in the rate. But when I read the confirmation, it said only breakfast was included.

I booked an all-inclusive hotel stay, and I'm concerned that I might have to pay for lunch and dinner. I've tried to contact Priceline, but it hasn't answered the meal question. Can you help?

MICHAEL O'CONNOR, *Toronto*

A. You booked an all-inclusive resort, so your stay should be all-inclusive — breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

I tried to make a reservation at the Barcelo, too. Priceline lists it as all-inclusive and advertises all three meals as being part of the room rate. But when you look at the booking conditions on the page, only breakfast is included.

Your case is a reminder to always check the terms and conditions before you make a reservation. If you see any problems, you should get an answer before you pay for your hotel. If you'd done that, you might have skipped the Barcelo and headed to another hotel where the terms were clearer.

You booked an all-inclusive resort, so your stay should be all-inclusive — breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

I reviewed the Barcelo site and was also confused. The property describes itself as an "all-inclusive" resort, which means all meals should be included. But your confirmation clearly states only breakfast is included.

This may be a good time to ask: What's the big deal about a resort being all-inclusive? It's not just the money you'll save on meals; in some of these resort areas, there are limited dining options, so you have to eat every meal at the hotel. And that could easily double your hotel bill, depending on the size of your party. So sometimes all-inclusive is the best way to go.

But the point is, Barcelo promised you an all-inclusive experience, which then disappeared. I think you could have reached out to an executive at Priceline for clarification. I list the names, numbers, and e-mail addresses of the Priceline executives on my consumer advocacy site at www.elliott.org/company-contacts/priceline/.

I contacted Priceline on your behalf. The company reached out to your hotel, which verified that your rate was all-inclusive. "Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are free," the representative added.

OK, "free" is probably the wrong word here. But they're certainly included.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Elliott's latest book is "How to Be the World's Smartest Traveler" (National Geographic). Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.

THE VIP LOUNGE

Museums? Boring? Not if he has anything to do with it.

Doug Mund concedes that museums "can be boring." That is why the award-winning museum planner and exhibit designer spent more than four years working on the Samuel Slater Experience, a historic museum in Webster that features state-of-the-art, 4-D digital technology to tell the story of the English-born industrialist known as the "Father of the American Industrial Revolution." The museum, located in a former National Guard armory building and opened in March, features more than 20 unique, immersive experiences that transport visitors to the early 1800s as the seeds of the American Industrial Revolution were sown. A scaled-back replica of the ship on which Slater sailed to America, and authentic artifacts, like a trolley from the 19th century, are on display. "One of the first things [museum founder] Chris Robert said to me was that he wants to get young learners interested in history," Mund, 64, said. "And that's what we've tried to do. I don't think you'll find another museum that [shows] how the Industrial Revolution really started and tells it in such an interesting and entertaining way," Mund, who was born in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., lived in Groveland, for nearly 40 years before moving to Savannah, Ga., in 2016 with his wife, Anneliese Seitz-Mund, a middle school special education teacher, who died three years ago. We caught up with Mund, who has two adult children who live in Savannah, to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? Oberammergau, Germany. It has spectacular landscapes, and is an area my wife and I would go often. Also, it was a wonderful place to travel when our kids were young. One really great experience we had there was when my wife and I decided to skip a planned outing and ended up traveling up to a small church, way out of town. When we got there, we heard organ music coming from the inside. It was the church organist practicing



Doug Mund and Anneliese Seitz-Mund in Germany.

for the Sunday service. We were greeted and we sat for an hour listening to the beautiful music. Another favorite is St. Barths. We went on our honeymoon and every year after for 30 years — sometimes a few times

a year. Great to have "greenies" [Heineken] on the beach!

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? Definitely beer. So many different styles of beer throughout the world — and America as well. Wine is the backup.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? Nowhere right now or in the future. The love of my life has recently passed after she and I were fighting her cancer and I am not interested in travel right now. She and I traveled throughout Europe and the West Indies.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? Cash.

Aisle or window? Definitely aisle, for easy get-in and get-out. Also, so you can stand up as soon as the seat sign goes off after landing.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Pine Beach, N.J. My aunt and uncle had a small cottage near Toms River and our family would go there for a two-week vacation every summer. My father had polio and was paralyzed from the chest down. He never, ever complained and always tried to do everything. I can remember him dragging himself from the beach blanket into the water and floating for hours.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Drinking and eating too much.

Best travel tip? Plan as much as you can for the bigger stuff, but always allow for the unexpected and be able to adjust plans to see and experience the best of each culture.

JULIET PENNINGTON



Upgrade your Bar Harbor camping trip into a glamping trip at by staying in one of 64 two- to five-person tents at Terramor Outdoor Resort.

HERE

OUTDOOR ELEGANCE IN MAINE

Upgrade your Bar Harbor camping trip into a glamping trip at by staying in one of 64 two- to five-person tents at Terramor Outdoor Resort. The indulgent accommodations — all set within the trees of Mount Desert Island — include Frette linens, Pendleton blankets, screened in porches, private bathrooms, private fire rings and more. The resort features an onsite restaurant, bar, store, outdoor pool, and hot tub, wellness tent with yoga classes, Pilates and massage treatments, and special programs such as Maine blueberry pancake breakfasts every Sunday, oyster cocktail hours, live music, naturalist-led night ecology walks, stargazing, birding, as well as adventures in the nearby Acadia National Park such as hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and bicycling. From \$304/night. 207-288-7500, terramoroutdoorresort.com

FUN WITH SHARP OBJECTS

Those looking for a fun way to — ahem — sharpen their axe throwing skills should head to Ryan's in South Yarmouth where a recent 8,000 square-foot expansion features four axe throwing lanes. Long popular in lumberjack culture, the game involves players hurling a hatchet at a wooden target, much like darts. Ryan's new lanes are overseen by an experienced Axe Coach, who monitors for safety and offers instruction for both novices and experienced throwers. Players must be 18 or older. Walk-ins are welcome but reservations are recommended and can be made online (\$25 per person). Also new this year: corn-hole sets that can be rented by the hour, arcade room, portable bar, party area, and new bathrooms. In addition, the center offers candlepin and ten pin bowling, full bar, and food service. 508-394-5644, ryanfamily.com/location/south-yarmouth/



Small group adventure tour company Exodus Travels has launched Exodus Edits, a series of 19 immersive, bite-size adventures for travelers in their 30s and 40s.

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LUXURY UNBOUND IN PANAMA CITY

Hotel La Compañía in Panama, the first Unbound Collection Hotel by Hyatt in Central America, gives new meaning to the concept of a "Grand Hotel." Built upon the foundation of a 17th-century convent, the 88-room hotel spans nearly one city block in the historic Casco Antiguo neighborhood, a popular destination for dining, nightlife, and culture. The seven-year restoration project is centered around three wings that pay tribute to different cultural time periods, and includes the ruins of a 300-year-old church enveloping a spacious courtyard with lush gardens. Guests can stay in the French Colonial wing, built as a Jesuit university in 1739; Spanish Colonial wing, with original stone walls, dark woods and wrought iron accents; or in the American wing, taking inspiration from the early 20th century. Amenities include rooftop



Hotel La Compañía in Panama, the first Unbound Collection Hotel by Hyatt in Central America, gives new meaning to the concept of a "Grand Hotel."

EVERYWHERE

tours, and more. Rates from \$345; suites from \$755. www.cashelpalace-hotel.ie

EXODUS EDITS FOR UNDER 50 TRAVELERS

Small group adventure tour company Exodus Travels has launched Exodus Edits, a series of 19 immersive, bite-size adventures for travelers in their 30s and 40s. Designed to give busy working professionals the opportunity to maximize free time, making travel possible for those juggling families, finances, careers, and vacation days. Adventures include trips to around-the-globe destinations including Vietnam, Morocco, Costa Rica, California, Iceland, and many more. 844-462-0342, www.exodustravels.com/exodus-edits

STYLISH TRAVEL BAG FOR DAY AND NIGHT

You don't have to sacrifice style for practicality with the new Hazo Maximalist cross-body travel clutch by Baobab Roots. Made of soft Italian leather with metallic silver spike and stud hardware, the classic black bag is a crossbody/wristlet/clutch all-in-one, meaning you can use as a cross-body in the day (for sightseeing) and use in the evening as a stylish wristlet or clutch. Built with two large compartments, zip pocket, and leather sleeve that holds up to six cards. It's TSA-approved and easy to carry because of lightweight, full-grain leather. Additionally, you can feel good about your purchase knowing that a portion of the proceeds from each handbag supports organizations protecting the endangered Baobab trees in Africa and Elephants without Borders. Two sizes: maximalist: \$335; minimalist \$295. www.baobab-roots.com/products/hazo-maximalist-w-added-variants
NECEE REGIS

spa with four treatment rooms; rooftop pool with city and Pacific Ocean views; lobby bar; a variety of restaurants; and coffee bar. Rates from \$315. www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/panama/hotel-la-compania/ptyub

GRAND STYLE ON THE EMERALD ISLE

Irish hospitality abounds at the newly opened Cashel Palace Hotel. After meticulous restoration by conservation architects, the grand Palladian country house — once the 18th-century home to the Archbishops of Cashel (which became a hotel in the 1960s) — is now a five-star property boasting 42 unique bedrooms, including nine opulent suites. Gardens offer three tranquil acres of rolling lawns, ancient trees, and modern landscaping in the heart of County Tipperary. A Relais & Chateaux member, the hotel offers formal dining, casual dining, outdoor dining, and afternoon tea. Additional amenities include full-service spa, fully-equipped gym, hair salon, yoga studio, equine adventures, hiking and biking trails, private fishing trips, golf