

## **Management Address on Food & Water**

I understand that food & water safety is something that worries any one, especially if you are going to be in a foreign country. It worried me when I decided to come to Mexico many years ago. I remember I had a look to any web page looking for information; I also spoke to some doctors, friends of me, as I was sure I was going to need any vaccine. I was particularly worried about malaria, dengue and food issues.

My first surprise was when they told me I didn't need anything except for common sense and I have to admit this is absolutely true. Some of you may know I live at the resort, with my wife and sons and all our management team lives also on the premises. We all eat the same food than the guests, except when we cook at home, as we live in apartments with our own kitchen trying to live as a normal family. We normally cook at night, of course

Let's start with the water. Yes, we do have 5 reverse osmosis plants. The water we have in all our rooms, bathrooms, etc., has been through these plants once. The water we bottle has been through another plant again so it is purified twice. As this water is so pure we need to add some minerals to make it absolutely drinkable. This is the water you will drink also in the buffet, the one we use in all our bars, to make our ice, etc. So, exactly as we do everyday, you can clean your teeth with the tap water and drink our bottled water. It's so easy. Why does the Apple rep keeps recommending not to drink from there? Well I guess it's the normal procedure in the area as nobody, in the event of a problem, will ever say that the Apple rep recommended it. We do, with no problem, as is clearly advertised in our Services Directory. In the other hand Apple changes their reps every week or every two weeks and not all of them take the proper time to check the facilities and services available at the resort. We have an excellent relationship with Apple and with all other companies however some of their reps are more interested in selling excursions than in providing proper and real information to their clients. I have to say that most of the reps, of all companies do a great job

Now a few tips about food. Take these following numbers into consideration: 3000 guests a day and that means we have to prepare about 9000 meals a day. This is not enough as we have to consider we have to prepare food for about 1300 staff. So let's add more or less 2300 meals more a day (not all of them live at the resort and we also provide food to the Scuba Caribe, Shops and Spa staff). So we are talking about 12000 - 12500 meals a day. Amazing, right? So, what can cause intestinal, stomach problems? To be honest more than 1000 things. Eating food you are not used to, mixing drinks and meals stronger than usual (you start the day with a coffee by the beach, then you go for breakfast, take one two eggs omelet with everything you want, sausages, bacon, a selection of fruits, cakes, blended juices, etc., etc., etc.; then you have a few margaritas, beers, pina coladas, etc., etc., etc, you are under the sun for hours and hours, etc., etc., etc, lunch, dinner) This is a serious combination

Second possibility. You go out of the resort for an excursion and you drink or eat something there. In the even of a problem 90% of the people will blame the resort not the excursion. Even a bottle you buy in [Tulum](#) can be contaminated because...did you take the time to clean to bottle or your hands once you bought it? This is just a silly and simple example

Third possibility. No matter all we do to prevent any problem, since the moment the commodity arrives to the hotel, when we check conditions, temperatures, etc, during the several processes since then to when you are eating or drinking; no matter how hard we train or staff, all of them even before they start working in the kitchen or in any department. We just need one simple person not cleaning properly his hands to contaminate a simple portion of food. This is, for example, what happens when members of the same party have exactly the same food but only one gets sick. Believe it I tell you that it becomes worse when you know more about food poisoning. Drinking just a little bit of water of a pool, if it's not in good conditions, can cause problems to your stomach. I am sure you will believe me if I tell you that despite we keep the proper levels chemicals in our pools some people keep doing their "things" into the water.

The handle of a door that it's infected, even for another guest, can cause problems; virus that similar to the flu floating in the environment can pass from a person to other causing symptoms such as diarrhea, general discomfort, stomach aches, etc, etc., etc. And then we have the doctors back at home who will, of course, blame the resort.

There are people who came from home already infected. Yes, even from food eaten at home, at the airport, etc. The symptoms of food poisoning not always appear immediately after having eaten the food. If I am not wrong that can happen even after 72 hours

Something that really upset me when I was in [Spain](#) is that the local authorities always paid more attention to control the kitchens, equipments and procedures at the hotels and resorts but bars and restaurants were not so controlled. I honestly have no clue what they do in Mexico with bars and restaurants but I am afraid not all of them have our kitchens, procedures and equipments, this is for sure. If any one wants to visit them we will gladly show them. We have done this so many times already. By the way, we are really proud of what we have, particularly I do not think there anything like our kitchens in the area. Regarding this, and as I mention before, it becomes worse when you learn more about all this issues. Just simply do this exercise. Have a look to the kitchen or the bar where you have lunch, breakfast or where you simply have a quick coffee. Just have a look to how many times the staff wash their hands. Take under consideration that each time the touch something different, touch by someone else (staff or clientele) can be contaminated; have a look to the floors, to the walls, to the taps; how many will wash their hands after having touch their hair or after coughing or sneezing of just after a simple shaking of hands. Curious, isn't it? Trust me, the more you know the worse

Why do we pay so much attention to keep our food with the proper temperatures? Bacteria grows between a range of temperatures. If the food is received in conditions, is kept in conditions, is prepared in conditions, is served in conditions with the right temperature we have won a huge percentage of the battle. The buffets will keep the temperature but the food must come from the kitchen with the right one. This is why we control the temperatures continuously with the thermometers. We have established in our procedures that if the food has not the right temperature it must be changed immediately.

I know this question will appear again in the future but this is part of our job too. Can you imagine how much people would be ill everyday if we were doing things



wrongly? We know that despite all we do we can cause food poisoning, as I mentioned before. But this happens even at home as there are so many things we do not know as we are not experts at home. We do not have to be experts.

I can assure you that most of the resorts in the area follow more or less the same procedures and take very seriously everything regarding food and drinks. It could not be that way. Iberostar, Bahía, Riu, Paradisus, Melia, Barceló, Palace Resorts and so many more do the proper things. My suggestion, as always, try to think positive, use your common sense and be sure that there is always someone willing to help and to assist.

Thanks for your patience.

Felipe (Martinez Verde)