



## Meet Cancun and the Riviera Maya

Located on the southern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula, separating Mexico from Cuba, Cancún is sometimes referred to as the Mexican Caribbean. Once a college vacation destination, Cancún today is more luxurious and mature. This nearby resort destination has quickly become a favorite for all of North America. When Hurricane Wilma damaged hotels and the coastline in 2005, the Mexican government quickly stepped in to support a renewed construction boom, pumping in sand from the sea floor. Hotels and restaurants were rebuilt with modern flair and sophistication, leaving the beaches and accommodations more alluring than ever.



Cancún was originally established as a tourist destination in 1967. Construction began in 1970 when Cancún had only three residents. Today it boasts 150 hotels with over 24,000 rooms for the four million tourists who visit Cancún every year. Accommodations in the Riviera Maya include upscale resorts and properties suitable for modest budgets.

Cancún has a warm tropical climate, and the moderate ocean breeze and onshore trade-winds create an enjoyable temperature on the beaches and in the city. Although Cancún is part of the Caribbean hurricane impact zone, it has only been hit by two major hurricanes.

Beach lovers *love* Cancún. Most activities in Cancún are beach-related. You will find plenty of water sports to try, like sailing, fishing, windsurfing, kayaking, and scuba diving. Cancún offers a range of vacations tailored to families and singles, from budget-oriented to deluxe all-inclusives. The beautiful beaches and coves provide a great place to relax and enjoy the outdoors, while theme parks and archaeological sites provide adventure. One of the major attractions to the area is the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System extending all the way to Guatemala, making it the second largest reef system in the world.



The Mayan Riviera (Riviera Maya) follows the Caribbean coastline south of Cancún in Quintana Roo, Mexico. It is the stretch of coastline between popular areas Playa del Carmen and Tulum. The Riviera was once called the Cancun-Tulum corridor but was renamed in 1999. Cancún and the surrounding area include historic Mayan sites, and popular tours of Ruinas del Rey, Tulum and Chichen Itza familiarize tourists with the remarkable culture and architecture. The ruins are also abundant with bird life in the surrounding jungle. Archeology is a

major attraction in the area, supported by The Instituto Nacional de Archeological, which operates several sites at the Mayan ruins in Tulum, Chichen Itza and Coba. Make sure you visit one of the sites while in the area and discover the mystery of this ancient civilization.

As in Cancún, water sports are abundant in Riviera Maya. You can jet ski, snorkel, scuba dive, and even swim with dolphins. If you're more partial to land activities, try a zip-line or horse-guided jungle tour.

Travel in and around Riviera Maya is easy. Most visitors fly to the Cancun International Airport and take a bus or taxi just 30miles/50km to Riviera Maya. A new international airport is currently being built closer to the area.

Playa del Carmen is a beautiful nearby beach that offers even more activities, including shopping for Cuban cigars, tequila, silver and jewelry. The Paseo del Carmen is a popular shopping district that offers local crafts and leather items made by Xaman-Ha artisans.

Just down Highway 307 from Riviera Maya is Xcaret, an ecological theme park constructed around a lagoon. A bit further down the road is a sparkling lagoon, Xel-Ha, where you can swim with dolphins.

Look for hints of local culture throughout your stay - if you hear a language that is unfamiliar and isn't Spanish, it's probably Mayan. Many of the locals still speak it. The Mayans considered jaguars a sacred animal, and although they are an endangered species, they still roam the nearby jungle in the Sian Kaan Biosphere. Adventure awaits!

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