Riviera Maya

Official GUIDE

QUINTANA ROO TOURISM BOARD
The Mexican Caribbean is like no other place in the world due to its destinations and attractions: turquoise sea, white sandy beaches, tropical jungle, archeological sites, cenotes, underwater rivers, islands, lagoons, Mayan culture and history. Featuring a world-class tourist infrastructure, a variety of lodging options, culinary delights and great air connectivity. It is in fact Mexico’s paradise, where there is always something new for you to discover.
The Riviera Maya is part of the destinations that straddle the Mexican Caribbean. This region captivates its visitors with its unique blend of adventure, nature, culture and relaxation. It also offers a wide variety of experiences for all kinds of budgets and interests: beautiful white sand beaches with turquoise waters, stunning archeological sites, amazing cenotes, wonderful underwater caves, exciting amusement parks, magnificent spas and great culinary options.

**GETTING AROUND**

Buses, vans and taxis are the most common ways to move around the cities of the Riviera Maya. The vans and “colectivos” move around Puerto Morelos, Playa del Carmen and Tulum and also the highway 307. There are also some bus stations located in Playa del Carmen and Tulum. The buses run every 30 minutes from Playa del Carmen to Cancun, Puerto Morelos and Tulum, and from Tulum to Playa del Carmen, Puerto Morelos and Cancun.

**HOW TO GET THERE?**

**BY PLANE**

The Cancun International Airport is the closest one to the Riviera Maya. It handles daily flights to and from different cities in the United States, Canada, Europe and Latin America. It also handles some domestic flights to different cities in Mexico.

- 25.6 km (15.8 miles) from Puerto Morelos
- 55.1 km (34.3 miles) from Playa del Carmen
- 118 km (73.2 miles) from Tulum

**GETTING AROUND**

- Buses, vans and taxis are the most common ways to move around the cities of the Riviera Maya. The vans and “colectivos” move around Puerto Morelos, Playa del Carmen and Tulum and also the highway 307. There are also some bus stations located in Playa del Carmen and Tulum. The buses run every 30 minutes from Playa del Carmen to Cancun, Puerto Morelos and Tulum, and from Tulum to Playa del Carmen, Puerto Morelos and Cancun.
The Riviera Maya offers a wide variety of accommodations, all of which offer excellent quality of service.

- Hotels located all along the coastline, from Puerto Morelos to Tulum, on downtown Playa del Carmen along its famous Fifth Avenue, and eco-boutique hotels located in Tulum “Pueblo” and the hotel zone.
- Luxurious hotels recognized by the American Automobile Association (AAA) with the Four or Five Diamond award and other environmental certifications such as the EarthCheck certification, among others.
- All-inclusive hotels sitting in front of the beach or in the middle of the jungle.
- European plan hotels.
- Family or adults-only hotels.
- Pet-friendly hotels.
- Hotels that feature facilities for meetings and events.
- Wellness retreats.
- Hostels.
- Glamping options.

Nowadays, the Riviera Maya has 583 hotels, which means 62,046 rooms available.

The Riviera Maya has 7 certified Blue Flag beaches, one located in Puerto Morelos and six located within Playa del Carmen:

- **PUERTO MORELOS**
  - Ventana al Mar
  - Rafael E. Melgar Ave. right in front of the Main Square.

- **PLAYA DEL CARMEN**
  - Hotel Iberostar Playa Paraiso
  - Highway 307 Cancun-Chetumal
  - Playa Kukulcan
  - Xcalacoco St.
  - Punta Esmeralda
  - 10 North Ave.
  - Playa 88
  - 88 North St.
  - Hotel Iberostar Tucan & Quetzal
  - Paseo Xaman-Ha, Playacar
  - Bahia Kantunah
  - Highway 307 Cancun-Chetumal
There are 19 archeological sites all along the Mexican Caribbean, where visitors can learn about different aspects of the ancient Mayan civilization.

Dotted along the Riviera Maya, you will find some Mayan vestiges and small archeological sites such as Xaman Há, Xcaret and Calica. The largest archeological sites of the region are Tulum, Cobá and Muyil, this last one is located south of Tulum, in the area known as Maya Ka’an.

**Tulum:** The most visited archeological site in the Mexican Caribbean, considered one of the most beautiful archeological treasures in Mexico. This ancient Mayan city was built on the shores of the Caribbean Sea. It has over 60 structures; the main one being “El Castillo” (The Castle), which is 7.5 meters high.

**Cobá:** Nested in the thick jungle, Cobá is surrounded by two large lakes. Nohoch Mul is the tallest pyramid of the northern part of the Yucatan Peninsula, which is 42 meters high. It is located one hour away from Tulum.

**Muyil:** Located in Maya Ka’an, 20 minutes south of Tulum. This archeological site sits within the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve, which is a natural protected area. Muyil is one of the most ancient Mayan cities in the region, located right next to the Muyil lagoon. Surrounded by lush vegetation, it has three different temples, being “El Castillo” the most impressive one, as it is 17 meters high.
The Riviera Maya is filled with many beautiful natural sceneries that are worth visiting.
Mesoamerican Reef: It is the second largest barrier reef in the world. It stretches over 1,000 kilometers along Quintana Roo (Mexico), Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. It is the habitat of countless marine life species and it boasts several natural protected areas and national parks within the reef system, including the Puerto Morelos National Reef Park.

Sac Actun System: It is the world’s longest underwater cave system, with 347 kilometers and a 101 meters depth. This system connects all the cenotes and underwater rivers of the area through various underwater cave passages.

407 cave systems in addition to more than 2,500 cenotes located along the Mexican Caribbean.

2 Sea turtles Sanctuaries:
- Xcacel-Xcacehito
- Akumal

2 National Parks:
- Tulum
- Puerto Morelos reef

1 Flora and Fauna Protection Area:
- Otoch Ma’ax Yetel Kooh

Wildlife ENCOUNTERS

The perfect combination between adventure and nature can be enjoyed along the different destinations in the Mexican Caribbean by interacting with different animal species which will be a truly unique experience you will treasure forever.

- Scuba diving with bull sharks: Playa del Carmen (November to March).
- Sea turtle nesting season: Akumal (May to September).
- Night diving with crocodiles in a cenote: Tulum.
- Swimming with whale sharks: Holbox and Isla Mujeres (May to September).
- Scuba diving with eagle rays: Cancun and Cozumel (December to March).
- Scuba diving with sailfish: Cancun and Isla Mujeres (January to March).
- Flamingo watching: Holbox (April to October).
- Crocodile watching: Chinchorro Bank, Mahahual.
Jungala: A luxurious boutique water park located inside the Vidanta hotel, 40 minutes away from Cancun. Its main attractions include the Aqua Drop, the Aqua Loop, the Flatline loop and the Whizzard, in addition to a wave pool with natural sand and a lazy river, which is the longest in Latin America, with more than 1 kilometer long.

Xcaret: Located very close to Playa del Carmen, it features more than 50 natural and cultural attractions where you will learn about Mexico’s flora and fauna, its cultural heritage and other aspects which make Mexico a great country.

Xenses: Located right in front of Xcaret, Xenses is an amusement park where wit, fun and amazement have no limits. Some of its highlights include the Xensatorium, a cavern in pitch black darkness that features all the ecosystems of planet Earth, a lazy river, the Sludgerie and the Bird Flight zip-line.

Xel-Há: Located 20 minutes away from Tulum, it is an all-inclusive natural park where you can snorkel, zipline and swim around its cenotes, its cave and its spectacular inlet, as well as enjoy unlimited food and drinks.

Río Secreto: Located outside Playa del Carmen. Live a unique experience like never before by entering to the Earth’s heart swimming in its crystal clear underground rivers, observing the stalactites and stalagmites of its caves, rappelling and mountain biking in the middle of the lush Mayan jungle.

Aktun Chen Park: Located in Akumal, this park is focused on the protection and conservation of the environment and flora and fauna species. The park offers many attractions such as caves, ziplines, underwater rivers and cenotes.

Kantun Chi: Located south of Playa del Carmen. It is an eco-park that features some caves and five different cenotes. Its name in Mayan means “Yellow Stone”.

Xplor: An adventure park where you will fly through the highest ziplines, drive through flooded caverns, make your way through the jungle in amphibious vehicles, swim through a 65-million-year-old stalactite river, splash into a refreshing cenote in an original hammock zip-line and paddle through underground caverns in a unique raft.

Xplor Fuego: At night Xplor comes to life so that you can enjoy the same experiences as in Xplor by day, but illuminated by the fire that will guide your way to all the activities in the park.

Native Park Playa del Carmen: Experience the emotion of driving an ATV through hidden jungle trails. Enjoy pleasant walks immersed in a protected area to explore its caves, zipline, discover some archaeological vestiges, learn about the ancient Mayan culture and swim in a beautiful cenote.

Jungle Night Native Park Playa del Carmen: As the sun goes down, only true adventure lovers are the ones who will dare to immerse in the jungle. The guided ATV tour will allow you to bring out the explorer that’s in you.

Woodward: Located in the Hard Rock Riviera Maya hotel, it is a skateboard park where you will be able to practice extreme sports such as indoor skateboarding, BMX biking, and parkour, among others.
One of the main activities that attract visitors from all over the world to Riviera Maya is golf, as it has 7 professional golf courses, designed by renowned golf course designers. Year after year, some of these golf courses host important national and international tournaments, positioning the Riviera Maya as one of the top golf destinations.

14 GOLF COURSES LOCATED ALONG THE MEXICAN CARIBBEAN
7 in Cancun and 7 in Riviera Maya.

GOLF COURSES IN RIVIERA MAYA

- The Nicklaus Design Course at Vidanta Riviera Maya: 18 Holes, Par 54. Designed by Jack Nicklaus.
- Puerto Aventuras Golf & Raquet Club: 9 Holes, Par 36. Designed by Thomas Lehman.
- PGA Riviera Maya by Bahía Príncipe Golf: 18 Holes, Par 72. Designed by Robert Trent Jones II.
The Riviera Maya is one of the best wedding destinations around the world, due to its wide variety of natural sceneries, where ceremonies can be held.

- Beautiful sunrises and sunsets as the background for a perfect wedding, ceremony or vow renewal.
- Mayan ceremonies in cenotes or the beach.
- Spectacular venues for a dream wedding: the beach, natural parks, onboard a yacht or a catamaran in the middle of the ocean, a dock, a gazebo, a yard, or in a hotel’s luxurious ballroom.
- Certified wedding planners, LGBTQ weddings, Mayan ceremonies, Jewish weddings, symbolic weddings, and underwater weddings.

Meeting

The Riviera Maya has many beautiful hotels providing a great service and outstanding amenities for the Meetings Industry, as well as appealing attractions for incentives and team building, which makes it the perfect destination for hosting major national and international events.

50 hotels and resorts (with more than 21,317 rooms available) featuring modern facilities for all kinds of events, with more than 47,706 m² (513,505 sq. ft.).

HARD ROCK RIVIERA MAYA

It has 1,263 rooms available and 8,557 mts² (87,017.57 sq.ft.). It has a Convention Center with four ballrooms that can turn into 38 breakouts, plus a board room.

BARCELÓ MAYA ARENA

Located in the Barceló Maya Riviera hotel, which has 850 rooms. This Convention Center has 21,000 m² (226,042 sq.ft.), and it can hold up to 8,000 people. Currently, it is the largest and most important Meetings project in the Riviera Maya.
Puerto Morelos is a small fishing village in the Mexican Caribbean, with a unique personality, a relaxing atmosphere, and a bohemian vibe that everybody loves, which allows you to connect with the locals.

It is an adventure destination that stands out due to its natural wonders, such as lush mangroves, an exuberant jungle, and cenotes.

Puerto Morelos is located in the northern part of the Quintana Roo state, between Cancun and Playa del Carmen.

**DISTANCE**

- 34.6 km (21.5 miles) away from Playa del Carmen
- 97.2 km (60.4 miles) away from Tulum

Puerto Morelos has 67 hotels with 7,057 rooms available, including hostels, cabins, small hotels, huge all-inclusive resorts, as well as exclusive boutique hotels.
Whether on the sea, the cenotes, underground rivers or caverns, Puerto Morelos has plenty of water activities to appeal to everyone. The proximity of the reef to the coast is why the swell here is so smooth, perfect for taking a catamaran trip, paddleboarding and kayaking, highlighting scuba diving and snorkeling.

Sitting just 400 meters away from the shore, the Puerto Morelos National Reef Park is part of the “Great Mesoamerican Reef”, the second-largest in the world. It is one of the best places in the Mexican Caribbean to scuba dive and snorkel, thanks to its abundant marine life, gentle waves, shallow depth, and clear waters. Some of the species that you will be able to observe here are turtles, manta rays, lobsters, nurse sharks, and eels.

Remember to be a responsible traveler and just use reef-safe sunscreen and/or a long-sleeved rash guard to protect yourself from the sun.

Beautiful beaches, colorful reefs, exuberant jungle, mystical cenotes, caverns and underwater rivers, are some of the imposing natural wonders that Puerto Morelos holds. It is an adventure destination where you will live thrilling experiences with your family, friends or your partner.

The proximity of the reef to the coast is why the swell here is so smooth, perfect for taking a catamaran trip, paddleboarding and kayaking, highlighting scuba diving and snorkeling.

Sitting just 400 meters away from the shore, the Puerto Morelos National Reef Park is part of the “Great Mesoamerican Reef”, the second-largest in the world. It is one of the best places in the Mexican Caribbean to scuba dive and snorkel, thanks to its abundant marine life, gentle waves, shallow depth, and clear waters. Some of the species that you will be able to observe here are turtles, manta rays, lobsters, nurse sharks, and eels.

Remember to be a responsible traveler and just use reef-safe sunscreen and/or a long-sleeved rash guard to protect yourself from the sun.

The Cenotes Route

One of the most popular attractions of Puerto Morelos, dotted with 57 of these mystical sinkholes, but also several nature and adventure parks where you can perform exciting activities, such as horseback riding, bird watching, trekking, ziplining, rappelling, mountain biking, ATVing, among others.

Within The Cenotes Route you will find the Cenote Zapote, which holds the “Hells Bells”, unique hollowed cone-shaped rock formations that can reach lengths of two meters and an 80-centimeter diameter. This cenote is the only place in the world where these kinds of speleothems have been found.

Some of the best cenotes in the area are: Cenote Zapote, Siete Bocas, Kin-Há, La Noria, Las Mojarras, Chilam Balam, Verde Lucero and Boca del Puma.
Every person that has ever been to Puerto Morelos can say its gastronomy is incomparable! Being a fishing village, the catch of the day and dishes made out of seafood are its highlights, but you can also enjoy a wide variety of Mexican and international cuisine.

There is a wide range of restaurants where you can delight your palate with the gastronomy of this charming town, ranging from the most luxurious to the most casual, turning the spotlight on beach clubs, coffee shops and of course restaurants that are located by the beach. Most of the restaurants are located around the Main Square (Plaza Principal). Another option is to go to some of Puerto Morelos’ hotels to enjoy fine dining experiences, where prestigious international chefs run the kitchens. Some of these restaurants are ranked as “Best Restaurants in Mexico” and “Best 50 Restaurants in Latin America”, delighting foodies who come from all over the world. Be sure to plan your trip in advance, as several restaurants within hotels in Puerto Morelos often host gastronomic festivals throughout the year.

Don’t miss the opportunity of eating in some restaurant that is located by the beach, so you can enjoy the spectacular view.
Playa del Carmen is “the heart of the Riviera Maya”, an ancient fishing village that has evolved into an increasingly cosmopolitan destination, without losing the relaxed and Caribbean essence that characterizes it.

Playa del Carmen is located in the northern part of Quintana Roo, between Puerto Morelos and Tulum.

**DISTANCE**

- 55 km (34.3 miles) away from the Cancun International Airport.
- 34.6 km (21.5 miles) away from Puerto Morelos.
- 64.7 km (40 miles) away from Tulum.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Downtown Playa del Carmen has exclusive boutique hotels, small hotels and even hostels. While the big resorts are mainly located in the surrounding areas.

- Hotels recognized by the American Automobile Association (AAA) with the Four or Five Diamond award.
- All-inclusive or European Plan hotels.
- Family or adults-only hotels.
- Hoteles Business Class.
- Boutique hotels.
- Hotels that have different facilities for hosting events, groups and congresses.
- Hostels.

Nowadays, Playa del Carmen has 287 hotels with 44,121 rooms available.
If you consider yourself to be adventurous enough, we recommend you to book a bull shark diving tour. This majestic creature can be found in Playa del Carmen’s waters from November to March. IMPORTANT: This activity is only available for certified divers.

Get into the depths of the Earth by visiting a cenote or a cavern located a few minutes away from downtown Playa del Carmen. Beautiful natural wonders, where you can paddleboard, kayak, snorkel or scuba dive, besides admiring the impressive stalactites and stalagmites; stunning rock formations which have taken hundreds of thousands of years to form.

You can perform all kinds of fun water activities in spectacular sceneries such as the ocean, cenotes, caverns or underwater rivers, some of which can be found very close to Playa del Carmen.

Some of the activities you can do in the ocean include kitesurfing, windsurfing, parasailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, jet skiing, snorkeling, scuba diving or taking a catamaran or yacht trip around the coast.

If you consider yourself to be adventurous enough, we recommend you to book a bull shark diving tour. This majestic creature can be found in Playa del Carmen’s waters from November to March. IMPORTANT: This activity is only available for certified divers.

Get into the depths of the Earth by visiting a cenote or a cavern located a few minutes away from downtown Playa del Carmen. Beautiful natural wonders, where you can paddleboard, kayak, snorkel or scuba dive, besides admiring the impressive stalactites and stalagmites; stunning rock formations which have taken hundreds of thousands of years to form.
Whether in the ocean, the jungle, cenotes, underwater rivers or caverns, there are a lot of things to do in Playa del Carmen. You can go ziplining across the jungle, rappelling in cenotes, mountain biking, or ATVing through hidden trails and even skydiving. Playa del Carmen is the only place in the Mexican Caribbean where you can perform all these extreme sports.

Playa del Carmen’s nightlife is one of the city’s main attractions, as it offers a wide variety of nightlife options for the whole family, where they will enjoy fantastic shows, full of magic, music and fun. Parallel to Fifth Avenue you’ll find the 12th Street, a place that comes to life between mariachis, live music, hip-hop dancers, and the latest hits of the moment. Along this popular nightlife spot you will find buzzy nightclubs, bars and some restaurants.
The shopping experience in Playa del Carmen is indescribable. Along Fifth Avenue you will find some shopping malls like La Quinta Alegria, Calle Corazón and Paseo del Carmen, which display the best local, national and international brands. The five-mile-long pedestrian walkway is also lined with art galleries, souvenir and handicraft stores.

- Stroll along Fifth Avenue.
- Relax at one of its many popular beach clubs.
- Explore some of the archaeological sites located nearby.
- Scuba dive or snorkel in the ocean or a cenote.
- Have fun at some of its many thrilling nature and amusement parks.
- Enjoy Playa del Carmen’s incomparable nightlife.
- Indulge your palate with its culinary options.
- Visit a Mayan community.
- Experience a wildlife encounter.
- Visit others destinations in the Mexican Caribbean: Isla Mujeres, Holbox, Costa Mujeres, Cancun, Puerto Morelos, Tulum, Cozumel, Maya Ka’an, Mahahual, Bacalar or Chetumal.
Tulum is a so-called “Magic Town” that has a sense of spirituality and relaxation. Its eco-chic ambiance makes it the perfect place to disconnect and pamper yourself in perfect harmony with nature. Tulum has stunning white sandy beaches, spectacular lagoons, imposing archaeological sites, mystical cenotes, beautiful underwater rivers and amazing caverns which show its unique natural beauty, besides offering amazing culinary options in spectacular settings.

Tulum is divided into three zones, each with its own identity and vibe: the archaeological site, downtown Tulum—also known as “El Pueblo”—and the hotel zone.

**DISTANCE**

- 118 km (73.2 miles) from the Cancun International Airport.
- 97 km (60.4 miles) from Puerto Morelos.
- 64.4 km (40 miles) away from Playa del Carmen.
Tulum has beautiful natural wonders where you can do many exciting activities at unique settings, from calm beaches of turquoise waters to impressive cenotes and lagoons. It is also an idyllic place due to the fact that it is home to a great diversity of flora and fauna species.

Nowadays, Tulum has 229 hotels with more than 10,868 rooms available.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Tulum’s hotels are mostly small, but they feature luxurious facilities. Many of its boutique hotels have taken care of the environment by merging perfectly with nature, bringing real art pieces to life.

- Boutique hotels.
- Bungalows.
- Wellness hotels.
- All-inclusive resorts (located on Cancun-Tulum highway).
- Family or adults-only hotels.
- Hostels.
- Glamping options.

There are many things to do for nature and adventure lovers, including zipline circuits, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, off-road biking and even ATVing through the Mayan jungle.
Famous for its wellness offers, Tulum boasts some of the best wellness centers and spas that have been recognized worldwide as true sanctuaries designed to pamper mind, body and soul, using Mayan healing techniques and indigenous ingredients.

Most of Tulum’s wellness centers and healing sanctuaries are facing the ocean or located in the middle of the jungle, involving all senses for a unique wellness experience. In Tulum, you will find several wellness hotels, most of which offer complimentary activities, like sunrise yoga and meditation, and other programs and retreats, such as bootcamps.

Tulum has exquisite international, national and regional cuisine. It offers a wide variety of dining options to satisfy every visitor. In recent years, renowned national and international chefs have made Tulum their new home resulting in new and interesting culinary proposals that mix regional ingredients and recipes with contemporary techniques, which has placed Tulum on the world’s gastronomic scene.

Here, travelers will find a wide range of restaurants to choose from and can opt between a farm-to-table eatery downtown, or more upscale fine dining restaurants located in the middle of the jungle or in the top of the trees.
Akumal

Akumal is a small village that sits between Playa del Carmen and Tulum, whose Mayan name translates to ‘Place of Turtles’. Declared as a Sea Turtles Sanctuary due to the fact that every year, hundreds of sea turtles arrive on its coast to lay their eggs on the beach during the summer months, giving travelers the opportunity to admire them up close, by snorkeling or scuba diving near them, taking into account to keep a safe distance of at least two meters to not disturb them, not to touch them nor feed them.

Top Things TO DO IN TULUM

- Do a day excursion to the archaeological sites of Tulum, Cobá or Muyil.
- Spend the day on one of its idyllic beaches.
- Immerse yourself in the pristine waters of its cenotes and lagoons.
- Visit the beautiful lagoons Kaan Luum and Yal-Kú.
- Explore the town by bike.
- Delight yourself with its incomparable gastronomy.
- Pamper body, mind and soul at some wellness center.
- Visit a Mayan community to learn about their traditions and customs.
- Experiment Tulum’s nightlife in some of its restaurants, beach clubs or bars.
- Visit others destinations in the Mexican Caribbean: Isla Mujeres, Holbox, Costa Mujeres, Cancun, Puerto Morelos, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Maya Ka’an, Mahahual, Bacalar or Chetumal.