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# Travel Guide Cancún

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© HNW878 Diver exploring shipwreck, underwater view, Cancun, Mexico





## Quick view

### Cancún – a brief overview

Even into the 1970s, Cancún was still a sleepy fishing village on a quiet Caribbean beach. Then the Mexican government decided to transform it into a resort – and did so with overwhelming success. Today, Cancún is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the world, attracting six million visitors a year. The village became downtown Cancún, the city center on the mainland, which is home today to the Mexicans working over in the “vacation factory.”

Tourists stay in the Zona Hotelera (hotel zone) on the narrow, but roughly 20-kilometer-long peninsula separating Laguna de Nichupté lagoon from the Caribbean Sea. Many travelers use Cancún as a starting point for their journey into the highlands or continue on from there to places like Tulum and Xcaret on the Riviera Maya. A great way to escape the bustle of Cancún for a day is to take a boat out to nearby Isla Mujeres (the Island of Women)



## Mexico

### General Information

#### Country overview

Mexico is one of the most popular travel destinations in Latin America. Nowhere will you find a more diverse range of natural spectacles and fascinating structures dating from several centuries. More than 12,000 kilometers (7,500 miles) of Pacific and Caribbean coastline beckon with the promise of relaxing bathing vacations amid dream surroundings; Acapulco and Cancún are among the biggest magnets for beach lovers and divers. The architectural legacies of the Olmecs, Toltecs, Maya and Aztecs hold a fascination for all visitors. The best-known archeological sites are Chichén Itza and Uxmal on Yucatán and the pyramid city of Teotihuacán in the Central Highlands. Mexican culture has been shaped by Indigenous and colonial influences have shaped Mexican culture, which is extraordinarily colorful.

Festivals are held throughout the year, and if you can, arrange to celebrate the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (November 1 and 2) with Mexicans. The spectacle commemorating the dead involves weird skull and skeleton jewelry and morbid baked goods.

#### Geography

Mexico is at the southern extremity of North America and is bordered to the north by the USA, northwest by the Gulf of California, west by the Pacific, south by Guatemala and Belize, and east by the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

Mexico's geographical features range from swamp to desert, and from tropical lowland jungle to high alpine vegetation.

Over half the country is at an altitude greater than 1,000m (3,300ft). The central land mass is a plateau flanked by ranges of mountains to the east and west that lie roughly parallel to the coast. The northern area of this plateau is arid and thinly populated.

#### General knowledge

##### Key facts

Population: 124,7 Million (estimate 2018)

Capital: Mexico City (Ciudad de México)

#### Language

Spanish is the official language.

#### Currency

Mexican Peso (MXN; symbol M\$) = 100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of M\$1,000, 500, 200, 100, 50 and 20. Coins are in denominations of M\$10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50 and 20 centavos.

**Note:** The M\$1,000 and M\$500 notes can be difficult to change and are sometimes not accepted.

#### Electricity

110 volts AC, 60Hz. American two-pin (flat) plugs are usual, but most sockets cannot accept a US-style three-pin plug.

### Public holidays

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

#### 2020

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2020  
Día de la Constitución (Constitution Day): 3 and 4 February 2020  
Natalicio de Benito Juárez (Birthday Benito Juárez): 15 and 16 March 2020  
Domingo de Ramos (Palm Sunday): 5 April 2020  
Jueves Santo (Maundy Thursday): 9 April 2020  
Viernes Santo (Good Friday): 10 April 2020  
Domingo de Pascua (Easter Sunday): 12 April 2020  
Primero de Mayo (May Day): 1 May 2020  
Batalla de Puebla (Anniversary of the Battle of Puebla): 5 May 2020  
Día de la Independencia (Independence Day): 16 September 2020  
Día de la Raza (Columbus Day): 12 October 2020  
Día de los Muertos (All Souls' Day): 2 November 2020  
Aniversario de la Revolución (Revolution Day): 15 and 16 November 2020  
Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe (Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe): 12 December 2020  
Día de Navidad (Christmas Day): 25 December 2020

#### 2021

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2021  
Día de la Constitución (Constitution Day): 1 and 5 February 2021  
Natalicio de Benito Juárez (Birthday Benito Juárez): 15 March 2021  
Domingo de Ramos (Palm Sunday): 28 March 2021  
Jueves Santo (Maundy Thursday): 1 April 2021  
Viernes Santo (Good Friday): 2 April 2021  
Domingo de Pascua (Easter Sunday): 4 April 2021  
Primero de Mayo (May Day): 1 May 2021  
Batalla de Puebla (Anniversary of the Battle of Puebla): 5 May 2021  
Día de la Independencia (Independence Day): 16 September 2021  
Día de la Raza (Columbus Day): 12 October 2021  
Día de los Muertos (All Souls' Day): 2 November 2021  
Aniversario de la Revolución (Revolution Day): 15 and 20 November 2021  
Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe (Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe): 12 December 2021  
Día de Navidad (Christmas Day): 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.



## Travel etiquette

### How to fit in

#### Social Conventions

Despite its pre-Columbian traditions, Mexico is a largely Christian country. Travelers should behave with sensitivity in religious matters and respect Catholic customs. Children are welcome everywhere. Even an attempt to make yourself understood in Spanish will generally be warmly appreciated. If you are invited to dinner in a Mexican home, it's better not to arrive bang on time. It's also a good idea to allow extra time for bus and train journeys, as well as appointments. A handshake is the usual form of greeting.

#### Clothing

Smart leisurewear is acceptable on the street. Formal attire is only suitable for official occasions. Jeans, shorts, sneakers and sandals are only appropriate in bathing resorts. Restaurants in Mexico City generally expect a more elegant standard of clothing. Your travel baggage should also include long-sleeved clothes and long trousers to protect you from insect stings and bites.

#### Taking photographs

Always ask permission before you take a Mexican's photograph.

#### Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on public transportation, in schools, taxis, at airports or bus stations, or most restaurants.

#### Tipping

Some hotels and restaurants include a service charge in their bills. In restaurants, it is usual to tip roughly 10 to 15 percent of your bill. Porters and chambermaids are happy to receive roughly one U.S. dollar per item of baggage or day of your stay.



## Health

### Health

**Main emergency number:** 065

#### Food & Drink

Water in bottles or marked 'drinking/sterilised water' can be drunk without precautions. All other water should be boiled or sterilised before consuming. Milk in major cities, hotels and resorts is pasteurised, otherwise it will probably be unpasteurised. Travellers concerned about drinking unpasteurised milk will find powdered or tinned milk readily available. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, cooked vegetables and peeled fruit.

#### Other Risks

Diarrhoea and sunburn affect some travellers.

Outbreaks of malaria, filariasis and dengue fever have occurred, chiefly in the southeast states of Chiapas and Veracruz and the northern border states of Chihuahua and Tamaulipas. So, taking precautions against mosquito bites by using DEET and covering arms and legs in the evenings is wise.

Rabies is present. If bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

Take care when going from sea level to high altitude – if you're sensitive to it, don't go on any major hikes the first day you arrive. Allow several days to acclimatise to altitudes over 2,500m (8,200ft). Initial symptoms include headaches, breathlessness (especially when walking up hills), dizziness and nausea. This should pass within 72 hours.

Vaccination against hepatitis B is sometimes recommended, especially for those spending long periods of time in Mexico. Hepatitis C occurs. All normal precautions should be exercised to avoid exposure to sexually-transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.



## Phone calls & Internet

### Phone calls & Internet

#### Telephone/Mobile Telephone

**Dialing code:** +52

##### Telephone

Public telephones are found in *casetas de teléfono* – normally in restaurants, snack bars and small stores. You will also find public card telephones on the street. These are operated by various telephone companies, and telephone cards can be purchased in supermarkets and kiosks, for example. Making international calls from your hotel can be horrendously expensive, so make sure to inquire about prices before making a call.

##### Mobile Telephone

A cell phone is called a *teléfono celular* in Mexico. A regional cellular network using TDMA and GXM 1900 operates in Cancún, for which a tri-band device is required. It usually costs far less to buy a cheap cell phone with a Mexican SIM card locally, from Telcel ([telcel.com](http://telcel.com)) or Movistar ([movistar.com](http://movistar.com)), say. Network coverage is good in Mexican cities, but there may be gaps in rural areas.

#### Internet

Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using public Wi-Fi networks, it is a wise precaution to ensure encryption of all passwords, credit card details and banking credentials entered. Use of a VPN app or security software to check the safety of a hotspot is recommended.



## Top 10 sights

### Top 10 sights in Cancún

#### Tulum

Tulum, some 130 kilometers south of Cancún, is a unique Maya site – unique because it's the only Maya ruin located right on the coast. A day trip to Tulum is well worth making if only for the view of the ruined city framed against the gleaming white Caribbean sands and turquoise waves. But exploring the place that was once an important trading center, back in the days of the Maya, and discovering something of its history is also rewarding.

Tulum  
Mexico

## Cancún Aquarium

This aquarium inside the La Isla Shopping Mall Cancún offers a hands-on experience of marine lore. For instance, it has touch tanks with starfish and sea cucumbers inside for visitors to stroke as well as several viewing tanks containing fish and marine mammals, such as dolphins and sea lions. The aquarium's Sea Trek tours – 20-minute diving expeditions (for an additional fee) – are particularly attractive

Plaza La Isla	Opening times:
Boulevard Kukulcan Km 12.5	Daily 0900-2000
Zona Hotelera	
Cancún	<a href="http://www.aquariumcancun.com.mx/">www.aquariumcancun.com.mx/</a>
Mexico	
Tel.: +52-998/20 63 311	

## Museo Maya de Cancún

One of the most recent additions to Cancún's line-up of galleries and museums, the Museo Maya de Cancún is home to approximately 350 Mayan artefacts housed in three separate galleries. The admission price also includes access to the San Miguelito ruins.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 16.5	Opening times:
Zona Hotelera	Tue-Sun 0900-1800
Cancún	
Mexico	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Museo-Maya-de-Cancun/">www.facebook.com/pages/Museo-Maya-de-Cancun/...</a>
Tel.: +52-998/88 53 842	

## Torre Escénica de Cancún

At 100 meters, the scenic tower is Cancún's tallest structure. As it climbs slowly to a height of 85 meters, the tower's observation platform for up to 60 people revolves around its own axis, affording an unbeatable panoramic view of the ocean, the lagoon and the entire Zona Hotelera.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 4.5  
Zona Hotelera  
Cancún  
Mexico

## Xcaret

A huge theme park celebrating Mexican culture, Xcaret boasts a large stretch of jungle and a pristine chunk of Caribbean coastline. Snorkelling is a popular activity and when night falls, the park puts on flamboyant local dance displays.

Puerto Juarez Federal Highway Km 282	Opening times:
77710 Playa del Carmen	Daily 0830-2230
Mexico	<a href="http://www.xcaret.com.mx/">www.xcaret.com.mx/</a>

## Playa Delfines

One of Cancún's loveliest public beaches, Playa Delfines offers creamy white sand and beautifully clean turquoise water. Several of the shops lining the sand

rent out sunbeds, while others specialise in watersports – among them parasailing.

Boulevard Kukulcan Kilometer 19.5  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Museo Subacuático de Arte (MUSA)

One of the world's most unusual art museums, MUSA is a collection of about 500 modern sculptures – all of which are located underwater close to the Manchones Reef. Although a dry visitor centre exists, most visits are done in a glass-bottom boat or as part of a scuba dive.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 15.3	Opening times:
Zona Hotelera	Various
77500 Cancún	
Mexico	<a href="http://musamexico.org/">musamexico.org/</a>

### Sian Ka'an

A three-hour drive from Cancún, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve is one of Mexico's most important wild areas thanks to its enormously diverse flora and fauna. UNESCO listed since 1987, activities include boat tours, snorkelling on its pristine reef and exploring the site's Mayan ruins.

Quintana Roo	<a href="http://www.visitsiankaan.com/">www.visitsiankaan.com/</a>
Mexico	

### Isla Mujeres

True, the days when the island off Cancún was a sleepy paradise are past and gone. But it is still worth a visit. As well as some lovely bathing spots on the Playa Norte, the island has some interesting attractions, including the Capitán Dulché Museum and the Tortugranja marine turtle conservation station and hatchery. Tip: There are plenty of catamaran services to the island, but quaint, old-fashioned ferries also make the crossing and depart from Puerto Juarez.

Isla Mujeres  
77400 Isla Mujeres  
Mexico

### Swimming with dolphins

The Caribbean coast is home to dolphins. These friendly, inquisitive creatures accept and interact with human visitors, and several tour operators run trips from Cancún, Cozumel and Isla de Mujeres. Various aquariums also offer dolphin visits. Also available are tours to the habitats of whale sharks, the world's largest fish.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 25	<a href="http://www.dolphinaris.com/">www.dolphinaris.com/</a>
Zona Hotelera	
77500 Cancún	
Mexico	



## Shopping in Cancún

### Shopping in Cancún

#### Key Areas

Stores of every kind, from Mexican general stores to U.S.-style luxury malls line the central Boulevard Kukulcán in Cancún's Zona Hotelera. The goods generally cost less in downtown Cancún, where Avenida Tulum is the best address for shopping.

#### Markets

There are groups of foods stalls in the style of mini-farmers' markets on almost every street corner in Cancún, usually along with second-hand, T-shirt and sunglasses stalls. If you're looking for unusual souvenirs, try Market 28 (Calle Xel Ha in Downtown Cancún), which sells clothes, ceramics and decorations.

#### Shopping Centres

For many guests, shopping is an integral part of the vacation program and the Zona Hotelera (hotel zone) caters to their needs. Well-known addresses there include Plaza Caracol ([plazacaracol.mx](http://plazacaracol.mx)) on Boulevard Kukulcán and Forum by the Sea ([forumcancun.mx](http://forumcancun.mx)).



## Restaurants

### Restaurants in Cancún

Cancún's restaurant scene is as diverse as you would expect of an internationally popular resort, with Mediterranean and Asian cuisine on offer, as well as Mexican and U.S. To eat like a local, leave the Zona Hotelera behind and head for downtown Cancún on the mainland, where the fare is traditional Mexican and prices are far lower than in the resort.

#### Tempo by Martin Berasategui

Contemporary cuisine and a respectable wine list make the Tempo one of the top addresses in Cancún. Reservations recommended.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 16.5                      Price: Luxurious  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

#### Bandoneon

An Argentinean restaurant, Bandoneon has a menu that carnivores' dreams are made of.

Plaza Vivendi, Bonampak                      Price: Luxurious  
Zona Centro  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

#### La Palapa Belga

An open-air thatched restaurant in the heart of the Hotel Zone, it specialises in Belgian and French cuisine.

Quetzal 13    Price: Moderate

Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### La Destileria

Tequila is the beverage they serve up here with Mexican specialties. Tip: If you're fond of mariachi bands, you'll like it here.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 12.65      Price: Moderate  
Zona Hotelera, La Isla  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### El Galeon del Caribe

This snack bar is tucked away down near the lagoon, but if you have the patience to seek it out, you will be rewarded because fish tacos, the house specialty, are reputedly the best in all of Cancún.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 19.4      Price: Budget  
Zona Hotelera  
Cancún  
Mexico



## Nightlife Nightlife in Cancún

Cancún is famous for its nightlife, with everything from huge nightclubs to beach shacks, tavernas and quiet bars on offer. The entertainment on offer caters mainly to U.S. tastes.

### The City

This three-storey club claims to be the largest in Latin America and is famous for live acts.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 9  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Carlos'n Charlie's

A popular bar that stays open into the small hours, drinks are cheap and the atmosphere friendly.

Forum by the Sea  
Boulevard Kukulcan Km 8  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Coco Bongo

A Cancún institution, Coco Bongo is a vast nightclub with good music and acrobatic performances.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 9.5  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### HAN Social Room

A slickly decorated drinking spot that has proved a hit with stylish locals and well-heeled tourists.

Puerto Cancun Edificio  
Diomedea Local 16 y 17  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Columbus Dinner Cruises

The *Columbus*, a sailboat resembling a pirate galleon, offers moonlight cruises on Nichupté Lagoon. Sultry saxophone in the background combined with lobster and seafood on the menu make for a truly romantic experience.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 6.5  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico



## Calendar of events Calendar of events

### Carnaval (Carnival)

Attendants to this annual festival celebrate the coming of Ash Wednesday in full flair with plenty of art shows, fireworks and nightly street celebrations. Watch shimmying dancers in brilliantly coloured costumes and impressive street parade floats while feasting on enough local food and drink to last through the fasting of Lent.

**February 21 - 23, 2020**

Venue: Cancún

### Spring Break

Every spring, when U.S. universities and colleges have a few lecture-free days, hordes of young people head for Cancún. Spring break is like a force of nature urging everyone wishing to join in the pretty wild revelry to travel to Cancún.

**March 2 - 24, 2020**

Venue: Cancún

### Cancún Day

Cancún throws one of its biggest parties for its anniversary on 20 April. The festivities begin a few days early when locals serenade their city happy birthday

backed by a mariachi band. The following days bring a traditional street parade and plenty of fairs, music and dancing.

**April 20, 2020**

Venue: Boulevard Kukulcan

**Cancún Jazz Festival**

This jazz festival is held every year on Memorial Day weekend. Visitors are – no big surprise – mainly from the USA, but the musicians come from all over the world. The venue is a wonderful beach resort just south of Cancún.

**October 29 - 31, 2020**

Venue: Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya

**Día de los Muertos**

Families build extravagant altars decorated with candles, flowers and skull-shaped candy and bread to honour their dead relatives with a feast of their favourite food and drink.

**November 1, 2020**

Venue: Cancún and all of Mexico

**Hotels**  
**Hotels in Cancún**

The Hotel Zone is dominated by big resorts but downtown and the nearby islands are home to a smattering of quieter, more stylish places to stay.

**Le Blanc Spa Resort**

This all-inclusive hotel complex is one of the top addresses in Cancún. Spacious, luxuriously appointed rooms, a spa and several restaurants are all part of the package. Please note: The Le Blanc is an “adults only” hotel.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 10  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

Category: Luxurious

**Hyatt Ziva Cancún**

One of the most popular luxury hotels in Cancún offering every conceivable comfort and convenience, from an infinity pool with an amazing view over the Caribbean to a butler service. Its first-class location on the Punta Cancún perfects the luxury.

Boulevard Kukulcan  
Manzana 51, Lote 7  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

Category: Luxurious

**GR Solaris Cancún**

A sprawling resort with comfortable rooms, this hotel is usually peaceful but can

get noisy in peak season.

Boulevard Kukulcan Km 20.5      Category: Moderate  
Mz 55 Lote 59-2 Seccion A 2da Etapa  
Zona Hotelera  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Hotel Antillano

This hotel is situated close to the bus station in the center of downtown Cancún. It has ensuite rooms with air conditioning and an outdoor pool.

Avenida Tulum y Claveles, 1 Lote 20      Category: Budget  
37 y 39  
Ciudad de Cancún  
77500 Cancún  
Mexico

### Mansion Giahn

This bed and breakfast is located on the Tulum road, between the airport and downtown Cancún. When you book here, you get a decent place to sleep at a fair price.

Calle Salinas de Gortari No 30      Category: Budget  
77560 Cancún  
Mexico

### GEO tip Yucatán's glittering caves

powered by **GEO**

#### Samulá – amazing cave in Yucatán

The Mexican peninsula of Yucatán has more than 1000 cenotes, limestone sinkholes filled with freshwater. Many of them are connected to each other in an extensive system of caves. Samulá, a magnificent, subterranean cenote, is located some 160 kilometers west of Cancún. As the day progresses, the sunlight entering through a small chink in the cavern roof moves across the surface of the water far below the ground, so that it glitters a brilliant turquoise, making bathing, snorkeling and simply observing an unforgettable experience. A flight of steps is the only access to the cenote. Daily tours to the cave are available from Cancún.

#### Mehr auf GEO.de

<https://www.geo.de/reisen/16162-rtkl-cenote-samula-mexiko-tauchen-sie-ein-unterwasser-paradies-der-maya-ein>



## Best of ... ... Yucatán



Pete Oxford/Minden Pictures/Getty Images

Extending between the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, Yucatán has everything visitors could want for. For the more energetic vacationers, there are Maya temples deep in the jungle to climb and some of the most beautiful coral reefs in the world to dive down to, while visitors who prefer to take things easy on holiday will enjoy strolling through some splendid colonial towns, taking a dip in one of the magical waterholes (*cenotes*) or chilling on one of the gleaming white beaches hereabouts. Read on to discover some of the peninsula's highlights.

### Dive near Banco Chinchorro

The Banco Chinchorro reef is a divers' paradise. The largest atoll in the northern hemisphere, it is separated from the east coast of Yucatán by an underwater valley 1000 meters deep and 30 kilometers wide. Diving here, you can spot wooden shipwrecks with heavy cannons as well as an amazing number of diverse species. Huge barrel and Venus' flower basket sponges sway with the ocean swell, while crocodiles, turtles, spotted eagle rays and in some places reef and hammerhead sharks swim to and fro among the bright violets and oranges of elephant ear corals. A colorful underwater scene.

Mahahual Dive Centre [www.mahahualdive.com/](http://www.mahahualdive.com/)  
Malecón s/n, Col. Mahahual  
77940 Mahahual  
Quintana Roo  
Mexico

### Swim in the X'Kekén cenote

Yucatán is famous for its *cenotes* – subterranean limestone caves with freshwater-filled sinkholes – like X'Kekén near the village of Dzitnup, a roughly 15-minute car ride southwest of Valladolid. Stalactites several meters long hang from the roof here, and a hole allows a ray dim daylight to shine on the water, inviting swimmers and divers to take a dip. Outside, just a few meters away, there's the entrance to the Samulá *cenote*, another cave temple, in which the roots of the cottonwood trees reach right down to the water. Information about these and other *cenotes* is available from the local tourism office.

Cenotes X'Kekén y Samulá [yucatan.travel/de/home-4/](http://yucatan.travel/de/home-4/)  
Camino a Dzitnup  
97780 Valladolid  
Quintana Roo

Mexico

## Watch flamingos in Celestún

Celestún, in the far west of the Yucatán Peninsula, is a sun-scorched fishing village where the word “hectic” is unknown. The beaches have beautiful fine, white sand, but most visitors come for the Reserva de la Biosfera Ría Celestún, a 590-square-kilometer nature reserve with dense jungle and vast mangroves that are home to over 350 species of birds. To really get close to the animals, take one of the boat trips that can be booked all over town – as well as through the Xixim Unique Mayan Hotel right next door to the nature reserve.

Hotel Xixim [www.hotelxixim.com/](http://www.hotelxixim.com/)  
Calle 12 antigua Carretera Sisal s/n  
Rancho Santa Cruz de Xixim  
97367 Celestún  
Quintana Roo  
Mexico

## Visit the ruins of Becán

To avoid the crowds that descend on the famous pyramids of Chichén Itzá, take a trip further south, to the ruins of Becán near Campeche. The Maya inhabited this place for some 1500 years and erected a mighty ceremonial center here. Visitors will be impressed not only by the ancient plaza, stone ball courts, dwellings and large defensive ditch, but also by the pyramids towering up to 32 meters high with their monumental flights of steps, twin towers and cylindrical pillars. And unlike so many other Maya sites, people are welcome to walk and climb wherever they like.

Hotel Casa Maya en Calakmul [casamaya.calakmul.mx/](http://casamaya.calakmul.mx/)  
Carretera Federal 186, Kilometer 146  
Becán, Chetumal  
Quintana Roo  
Mexico

## Go kayaking in Laguna Bacalar

Close to Chetumal, deep in the jungle on the east coast of Yucatán, there's a lagoon that really isn't a lagoon at all. Over 60 kilometers long, Laguna Bacalar is a stretch of water made up of seven connected *cenotes*, where people come to camp, bathe and relax. A tour in a kayak rented from a local tour operator or rental company is a particularly pleasant way to spend a few hours on the shimmering blue and turquoise waters of the lake. Along the way, levies, wooden pavilions and water swings make good places to take a break. From a boat, you also have a fantastic view of the Spanish fort near Bacalar town that once protected the settlers from pirate raids.

Active Nature [www.activenaturebacalar.com/](http://www.activenaturebacalar.com/)  
Carretera Federal 307, Kilometer 27  
77930 Bacalar  
Quintana Roo  
Mexico

## Stroll down Paseo de Montejo

Merida is the peninsula's cultural center. The downtown area with its narrow, cobble streets, sunny plazas, museums, galleries and some of the best restaurants in the region is absolutely charming, but to see the town from its most impressive side, you really need to stroll down Paseo de Montejo, the boulevard running between Calles 56 and 58. The urban planners who designed it back in colonial times were aiming to create something to compare with Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma or the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Especially in the evening hours, in the romantic light of the street lamps, the boulevard with its fountains, green areas, heroic monuments and opulently decorated 19th century mansions, is at its most splendid.

Paseo de Montejo [yucatan.travel/de/home-4/](http://yucatan.travel/de/home-4/)  
Paseo de Montejo, Calle 56A  
97000 Mérida  
Quintana Roo  
Mexico