



Yucatán Peninsula

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Best Places to Eat

- Kinich (p321)
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Best Swimming Spots

- Playa Norte (p268)
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Why Go?

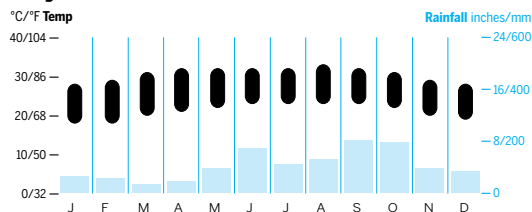
With charming colonial cities (both heavily toured and virtually unheard of), world-famous Maya ruins, thumping nightlife centers, sleepy country villages, talcum-powder beaches facing crystal turquoise waters, and more dive sites than you could ever cram into a single vacation, the Yucatán is one sweet destination.

Despite patches of overzealous development, the natural beauty of the Yucatán abides. The coo of the motmot still reverberates overhead, while below the creepy-crawlies continue to writhe. Further down, subterranean rivers gurgle through massive limestone caverns.

Around here, the past is the present and the present is the past: the two intertwine like brawling brothers. You'll witness it in the towering temples of the Maya, Toltecs and Itzáes, in the cobblestone streets of colonial centers, and in the culture of the Maya themselves, quietly maintaining their traditions as the centuries tick by.

When to Go

Playa del Carmen



Jun–Aug The summer is hot – the ocean heats up and occasional afternoon rains are very welcome.

Sep & Oct Hurricane season means frequent rain, although temperatures are still warm.

Nov–May It's cooler and rains less. The ocean gets warmer and clearer around February.



Yucatán Peninsula Highlights

- 1 Start in **Xcalak** (p296), for a morning of bird-watching, then head out for a dive at **Banco Chinchorro** (p295)
- 2 Haul yourself up the massive pyramid of **Calakmul** (p341), watching as toucans soar past toward their jungle hideaways
- 3 Marvel at the colonial architecture or attend a free concert in **Mérida** (p301)
- 4 Find out why they named **Chichén Itzá** (p321) the 'seventh modern wonder of the world,' or why **Ek' Balam** (p331) should have made the list