



# Riviera Maya

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## Best Beaches

- ➔ Tulum (p113)
- ➔ Puerto Morelos (p99)
- ➔ Playa del Carmen (p102)
- ➔ Punta Allen (p124)
- ➔ Xcachel (p111)

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ El Merkadito (p101)
- ➔ La Cueva del Cambio (p107)
- ➔ Cetli (p118)
- ➔ John Gray's Kitchen (p101)
- ➔ Los Aguachiles (p107)

## Why Go?

If you like to get out and about, you'll love road-tripping in the Riviera Maya, a tourist corridor of postcard-perfect beaches, scenic ruins and fun-filled cenotes (limestone sinkholes). Yes, the Riviera Maya is growing fast, too fast some might say, but in spite of all the development, you can still find that small fishing town or head inland to catch a glimpse of the Mexico that tourism forgot.

If it's action you're after, you'll find it in boomtowns Playa del Carmen and Tulum. Ultrachic Playa del Carmen still trumps Tulum as the hippest city on the coast, but Playa has nothing on Tulum's spectacular Maya ruins perched high above the beach.

Whether traveling by car or bus, getting from one town to the next is a breeze – after all, the Riviera Maya is basically 135km of coastline that stretches south from Puerto Morelos to Tulum. Everything is so close by that you can easily go diving in Puerto Morelos by day and still have more than enough time to have dinner by candlelight in Tulum.

## When to Go

- ➔ The Riviera Maya Film Festival in April screens films on beaches and at various venues up and down the coast. Weatherwise, it usually stays dry throughout the month.
- ➔ Playa del Carmen hosts a wild Halloween street bash at the end of October, then you can stick around for the first few days of November for colorful Day of the Dead festivities.
- ➔ The Riviera Maya Jazz Festival in Playa del Carmen features renowned performers from Mexico and abroad. The annual event is held during low season in November, so good hotel deals can be found.



## Riviera Maya Highlights

- 1** Marvel at Maya ruins dramatically situated on a rugged cliff in **Tulum** (p113), then go for a swim down below

**2** Hang out at chic sidewalk restaurants and beachside bars in **Playa del Carmen** (p102), or if you feel inspired, take a Spanish course
- 3** Dive into the waters of **Puerto Morelos** (p99) and explore a colorful barrier reef

**4** Splash around or do some serious diving at impressive **cenotes** (limestone sinkholes; p115) in Tulum's surrounding areas
- 5** Rent a bike at **Cobá** (p120) and follow trails that lead to amazing Maya ruins, then go for a dip in nearby swimming holes