



Cancún & Around

📍 998 / POP 630,000

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Kiosco Verde (p63)
- ➔ Los Peleones (p73)
- ➔ El Tigre y El Toro (p64)
- ➔ El Chapulím (p73)
- ➔ Checándole (p63)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel El Rey del Caribe (p59)
- ➔ Mezcal Hostel (p59)
- ➔ Casa Takywara (p73)
- ➔ Casa Lupita (p72)

Why Go?

Cancún is a tale of two cities. There's the glitzy hotel zone with its famous white-sand beaches, unabashed party scene and sophisticated seafood restaurants. Then there's the actual city itself, which gives you a taste of local flavor at, say, a neighborhood taco joint or a nearby, undeveloped beach.

That's what keeps Cancún interesting. Had your fill of raucous discos in the hotel zone? Escape to a downtown salsa club. Tired of lounging around the pool in Ciudad Cancún? Simply hop on a bus and head for the sapphire waters of the hotel zone.

Or even better, venture out and explore more of Quintana Roo state. Just a day trip away from Cancún, the pristine national park of Isla Contoy beckons with a fascinating variety of bird and plant species. And up north awaits low-key Isla Holbox, where swimming with massive whale sharks has become all the rage.

When to Go

➔ A visit to Cancún in late April or early May, following spring break madness, shows you a relatively quiet side of the resort city and many accommodations offer great online deals at that time of year.

➔ Don't miss the thrilling opportunity to snorkel with whale sharks off the coast of Isla Holbox; the gentle giants congregate around the island from May through September, but the best time to go is from mid-June to late August.

➔ Three species of sea turtles flock to the shores of Parque Nacional Isla Contoy for nesting season from April to October; the uninhabited island is also home to more than 170 bird species.



Cancún & Around Highlights

1 Dive among the fish and life-size sculptures at the **Museo Subacuático de Arte** (p57), a one-of-a-kind underwater museum.

2 Swim with massive whale sharks, kayak through wildlife-rich mangroves and enjoy laid-back island living on **Isla Holbox** (p71).

3 Snorkel and get in some birdwatching on the uninhabited **Isla Contoy** (p70), a wildlife refuge that receives only 200 visitors a day.

4 Visit the quiet beaches of undeveloped **Isla Blanca** (p68), near Ciudad Cancún, then shake your booty

to live salsa music at a downtown club.

5 Chill on the soft sands of the **Zona Hotelera** (p66), take a dip in the Caribbean blue, then check out the city's new Maya museum (p56) and adjoining ruins.