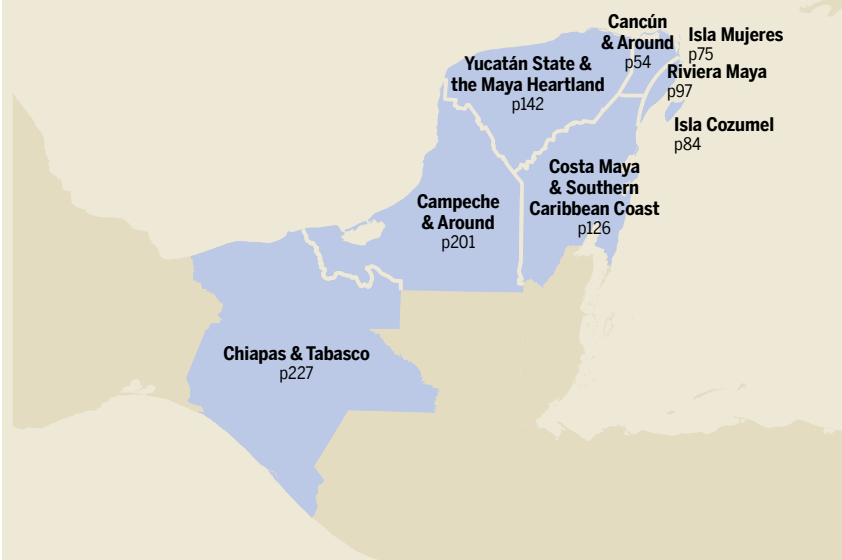




Cancún, Cozumel & the Yucatán



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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Plan Your Trip

Itineraries



1
WEEK

Cancún & the Riviera Maya

The road from Cancún to Cobá is chock full of surprises. Along the way you'll find fun-filled cenotes (limestone sinkholes), astonishing Maya ruins and sweet little beach towns with sugar-white sands.

Get things started with a dip in the sapphire waters along the Zona Hotelera (hotel zone) of **Cancún** (p56) or hit the secluded beaches north of downtown on Isla Blanca, then return to town for dinner, drinks and perhaps some salsa dancing.

After a day or two in Cancún, make your way south about 30km and stop in **Puerto Morelos** (p99) to duck out to the beach, browse for handmade crafts and get in some snorkeling or diving.

Next, spend a little time beach-bumming and partying in uberchic **Playa del Carmen** (p103), a large city with a dizzying array of restaurants, bars and discos.

Playa, as it's called, is a good jumping-off point for **Isla Cozumel** (p84), where you can enjoy some of the best diving in the world, quiet beaches on the island's windswept side and a pleasant town plaza.





Tulum ruins (p114)

Frequent ferries run between Playa and Cozumel.

Back on the mainland, you'll definitely want to make time for **Tulum** (p113), where Maya ruins are perched atop a spectacular cliff overlooking the Mexican Caribbean. While at the site, take the stairs down to the beach and have a refreshing swim to cool off. Stay the night in Tulum's town, where the main drag is lined with happening bars and restaurants, or head 3km south to the coast and get a quiet bungalow in Tulum's Zona Hotelera.

With an early start, take off for the Maya ruins of **Cobá** (p121; find the road to Cobá at Tulum's north end). Once inside this archaeological site, rent a bicycle and marvel at jungle ruins connected by ancient paths. Stop for lunch at a lakeside restaurant in Cobá, then on the way back to Tulum, drop by the **Gran Cenote** (p120) for a swim or snorkel in a large sinkhole with small fish.

This easy 170km trip stays close to Cancún and there's frequent transport to all of these destinations, or you can just rent a car.



10
DAYS

Maya Country



JIZOUHQPHOTO / GETTY IMAGES ©

The architectural and artistic achievements of the Maya are prominently displayed across the peninsula. Though the ancient cities are long abandoned, the Maya people and their traditions are still very much present.

For background, visit the shiny new Museo Maya de Cancún in the heart of Zona Hotelera in **Cancún** (p56), where the price of admission includes access to adjoining Maya ruins.

Hit the road the next day and spend a day or two in the colonial town of **Valladolid** (p191), a former Maya ceremonial center with a climbable pyramid near the center of town. For some respite from your Maya itinerary, drop by **Cenote X'Kekén** (p192) on your way out of town and take a plunge into a spectacular limestone cavern pool.

Next up you'll want to set aside a day for **Chichén Itzá** (p183), a Maya archaeological site that was named none other than one of the 'new seven wonders of the world.'

A route then leads to **Oxkutzcab** (p171) and **Tekax** (p172), offering glimpses of traditional Maya life. While in Oxkutzcab, check out the nearby **Grutas de Loltún** (p168), the peninsula's largest cave system.

The following day move on to **Santa Elena** (p163), which makes a fine base for exploring the impressive ruins of **Uxmal** (p160), Kabah and several other archaeological sites tucked away in the rolling Puuc hills.

After crossing the Yucatán-Campeche border, stop at **Hopelchén** (p214), where you can witness the ancient arts of beekeeping and herbal medicine.

Then make your way to the walled city of **Campeche** (p203), a good base for visiting **Edzná** (p216), a formidable Maya site with a five-story temple. The peninsula's south harbors numerous fascinating remnants of classic Maya civilization ensconced in the vast **Reserva de la Biosfera Calakmul** (p222).

Extend your explorations for several days to the ruins of **Palenque** (p241) and the contemporary Maya domain of **San Cristóbal de las Casas** (p230), both in Chiapas.

Most destinations on this route are reachable by bus or shared transport vehicles, but for some you'll need to hire a car or taxi, or go with a tour operator.



JEREMIA SOWNER / GETTY IMAGES ©

Top: Grutas de Loltún (p168)
Bottom: Edzná (p216)

DZILAM DE BRAVO & SANTA CLARA

The white-sand beaches are so quiet here and the pace so slow that you wonder if *mañana* will ever come – the ultimate escapist's retreat. (p180)

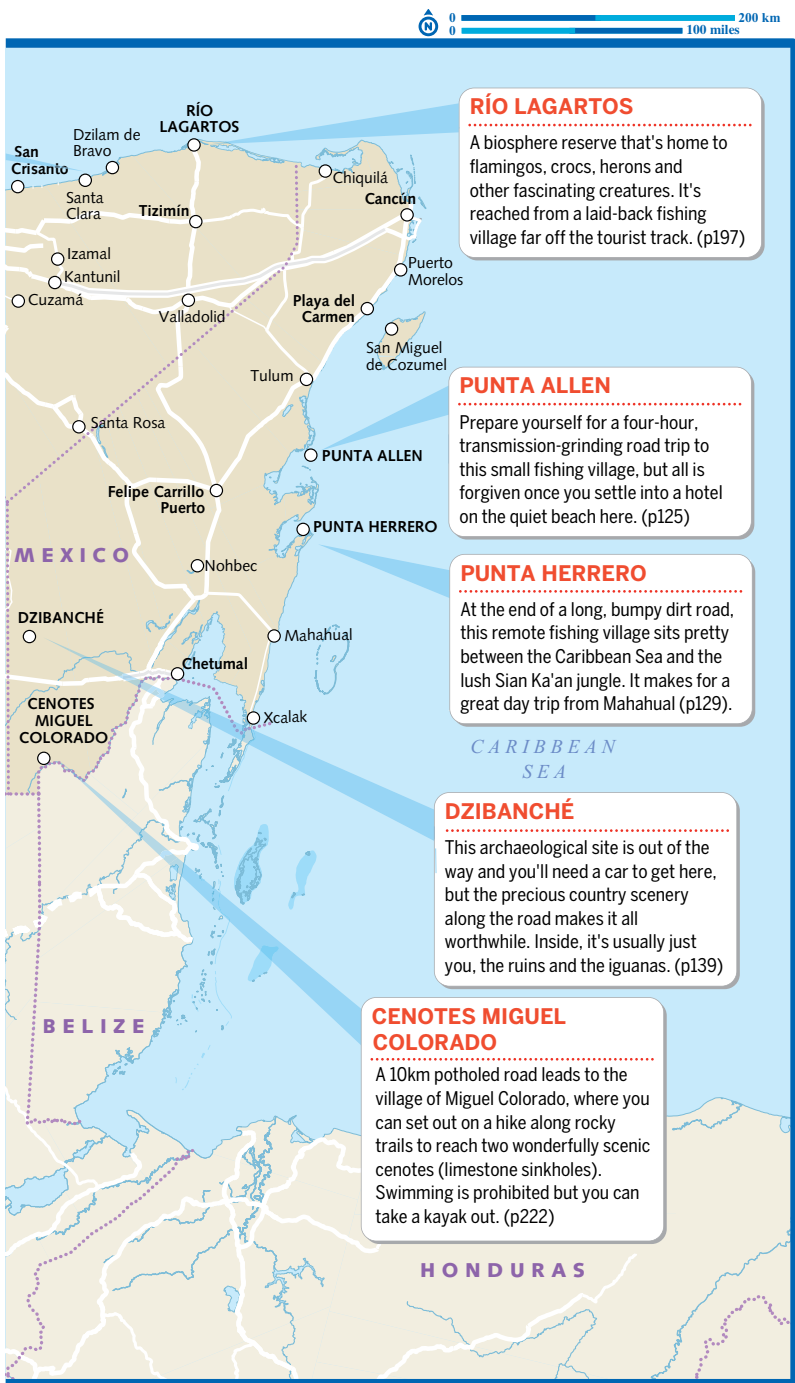
OXKUTZCAB

Most people are usually just passing through here before visiting the Grutas de Ioltún, a sprawling nearby cave system. But checking out the town's sights and regional cooking certainly has its rewards if you're craving local flavor. (p171)

EL TIGRE

These recently uncovered Maya ruins set in wetlands see few visitors. It's believed to be none other than the place where conquistador Hernan Cortés executed Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec ruler of Tenochtitlán. (p222)





RÍO LAGARTOS

A biosphere reserve that's home to flamingos, crocs, herons and other fascinating creatures. It's reached from a laid-back fishing village far off the tourist track. (p197)

PUNTA ALLEN

Prepare yourself for a four-hour, transmission-grinding road trip to this small fishing village, but all is forgiven once you settle into a hotel on the quiet beach here. (p125)

PUNTA HERRERO

At the end of a long, bumpy dirt road, this remote fishing village sits pretty between the Caribbean Sea and the lush Sian Ka'an jungle. It makes for a great day trip from Mahahual (p129).

DZIBANCHÉ

This archaeological site is out of the way and you'll need a car to get here, but the precious country scenery along the road makes it all worthwhile. Inside, it's usually just you, the ruins and the iguanas. (p139)

CENOTES MIGUEL COLORADO

A 10km potholed road leads to the village of Miguel Colorado, where you can set out on a hike along rocky trails to reach two wonderfully scenic cenotes (limestone sinkholes). Swimming is prohibited but you can take a kayak out. (p222)

CARIBBEAN
SEA

HONDURAS

MEXICO

BELIZE

RÍO
LAGARTOS

San
Crisanto

Dzilam de
Bravo

Santa
Clara

Tizimín

Chichilá

Cancún

Izamal

Kantunil

Cuzamá

Valladolid

Playa del
Carmen

Puerto
Morelos

San Miguel
de Cozumel

Tulum

Santa Rosa

PUNTA ALLEN

PUNTA HERRERO

Nohbec

Felipe Carrillo
Puerto

Chetumal

Xcalak

Mahahual

DZIBANCHÉ

CENOTES
MIGUEL
COLORADO

HONDURAS

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/Subte station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Dublin, Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



John Hecht

Cancún & Around, Isla Mujeres, Isla Cozumel, Riviera Maya, Costa Maya & the Southern Caribbean, Yucatán State & the Maya Heartland John has spent more than 20 years living in Mexico, during which time he has contributed to numerous editions of the Lonely Planet *Mexico* book. He was coordinating author on the previous edition of LP's *Cancún, Cozumel & the Yucatán* and he produced a series of short videos shot in the Yucatán region for Lonely Planet TV. He lives in

Mexico City with his Mexican wife. Mom's still waiting for him to return to the good ole' USA. John also wrote the Plan Your Trip, Understand (except Yucatecan Cuisine), and Survival Guide chapters.



Lucas Vidgen

Campeche, Chiapas Lucas first visited Mexico back in 2002, breezing through the Yucatán long enough to be captivated by the lush scenery and irresistible food. Later he moved to Guatemala, which served as a good base for exploring Chiapas and the rest of the Mundo Maya. Lucas has contributed to a variety of Lonely Planet titles, mostly in Central and South America. Back home he publishes – and very occasionally works on – Quetzaltenango's leading nightlife

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