



Originally named Xaman-Ha (waters of the north) Playa del Carmen is part of the Mayan World. Located on the crystal blue waters of the Mexican Caribbean, Playa del Carmen is just 40 miles (60 kms.) south of Cancun. Playa, as it is known as to locals, is the perfect spot from which to explore the fascinating sites of The Mayan Riviera. Playa del Carmen is known for its miles of white sandy beaches, phosphorescent Caribbean waters, and its laid back attitude. Playa del Carmen is a place for those in search of a unique visit, vibrant people, amazing Mayan culture, and an overall travel experience that you will never forget. So come and enjoy everything Playa del Carmen and The Riviera Maya has to offer; you will not be disappointed!

The once quiet seaside village of Playa del Carmen has doubled in population over the past few years, mainly due to foreigners such as Europeans, South Americans, Americans and Canadians who have discovered this little slice of paradise. Playa del Carmen is a place to enjoy amazing beaches, and the famous [cenotes](#) by day and trendy eateries, bars, and restaurants by night. The eclectic mix of backpackers, archaeological experts,

dive

junkies, and young hipsters makes Playa del Carmen an incredibly unique and interesting place. Due to its location, Playa del Carmen, is a veritable hub to outer lying

ruins

, dive spots, and the concept of "La Ruta Maya". You will not find La Ruta Maya on your travel map, or even in your travel guide, because it is not a set route but a concept. Originally the Ruta Maya was to be a new idea in traveling: a specific mapped out area connecting major Mayan archaeological sites and nature preserves throughout southern Mexico and some Central American countries. In reality La Ruta Maya has begun to include the Mexican states of Chiapas, Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo, all of Belize and Guatemala and parts of Honduras. Now travelers who are hoping to experience these amazing parts of Mexico and Central America flock to Playa del Carmen as their window into the Mayan World. Because of where Playa is located there are

bus routes

through out Mexico and Central America that originate in the area. So, many people come to the area and use Playa del Carmen as their "home base" while they travel onto Palenque, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, or some other far reaching destination. The amazing archaeological sites sprinkled through out the region such as; Tulum, Coba, Ek Balam, and Chichen Itza are major attractions to people coming to visit the area, bringing archaeologists, graduate students, and self proclaimed archaeological buffs from all over the world. Visiting one, or several, of the ruin sites is a MUST DO when visiting the area. The area is so rich in history and culture it would be a real shame to miss out on learning a bit about where you are.



In addition to amazing archeological sites, there are multiple natural wonders scattered through out the Riviera Maya. For example the **Sian Kaan Biosphere Reserve** near Tulum. Sian Kaan is an ecotourism and educational center, and it serves as a model for sustainable development in sensitive tropical ecosystems. They offer tours and accommodations which in turn fund their research. So if you want to check it out, it is worth looking into, and it is an incredible project to support. There is also Xel-Ha and Xcaret

, ecotourism theme parks both of which are located between Playa del Carmen, and Tulum. They offer both fun in the sun, and wildlife conservation which in turn is a great combination.

Crococun

is a Park and Regional Zoo located north of Playa del Carmen. Originally designed to farm crocodiles to create a sustainable resource it is now a conservationist park. The kids are sure to love it with its crazy monkeys, beautiful parrots, rare Mayan dogs, local deer, and of course tons of crocodiles! Another must see while in the area is

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where you will have a chance to learn about local flora and fauna, and our famous cenote system, with a specialized guide. There are countless attractions both large and small through out the area that will appeal to all levels of travelers and visitors. If you can't find what you are looking for please

[contact us](#)

and we can make some suggestions! We are your local liaison, a virtual concierge, and are more than happy to help.



Long before Playa del Carmen became a hotspot vacation destination the area was known around the world to dive aficionados as a truly top notch location for under water exploration. They discovered years ago that under the watchful eyes of the ancient Maya, in the warm Caribbean waters off the Yucatan Peninsula, exists a truly amazing underwater world: where divers can explore the reefs of the Riviera Maya swimming with turtles and schools of Tarpon. They drift along the coral covered walls of famous Cozumel Island named by Jacques Cousteau as one of the best dive spots in the world. And they discover the incredible serenity of daylight cavern diving in the famous Mexican Cenotes - the worlds largest fresh water system formed over tens of thousands of years ago. So if you are certified dive "junkie" or if you want to join the onslaught of underwater explorers we suggest you contact some of the best divers in the area. For experienced professional instructors, as well as great guys, check out **Fantasea Dive**

for open water dives, and

[Pro Tec Dive](#)

[Shop](#)

for training and information on Cave Diving.

If diving isn't your thing, and you would prefer to float on top of the water looking down, there are countless snorkel spots that are truly exceptional. Akumal is a great snorkel spot with the amazing **Yal Kul Lagoon** , and **Half Moon Bay** , both of which have had countless sea turtle sightings. Yal Kul Lagoon is a mixed water lagoon, with sweet water from the

underground river system, and an inlet from the Caribbean allowing the sea water to mix with the sweet water. This creates a kind of shimmery oil effect that is rare to see, and in turn creates an eclectic variety of underwater creatures, and coral to check out. Half Moon Bay is located off of La Buena Vida, a perfect place to grab a bite, enjoy a happy hour libation, or lounge on the beach as you intermittently snorkel the reef in search of the famous Akumal turtles. In addition to these two amazing snorkel locations any dive shop, hotel, or tour company offers snorkeling excursions to more remote areas. One worth checking out is the [Ocean Adventure Tour](#)

, which offers high speed F1 ocean transport, cenote exploration, snorkeling, local fare, and cocktails. It is a great way to enjoy an afternoon enabling you to experience a multitude of activities in a cool laid back way.

[Fat Cat Catamaran Tour](#)

is another great way to check out the area, based out of Puerto Aventuras, Fat Cat offers a fun version of a “booze cruise”. With the tunes blasting, the beer flowing, and a brand new 50 foot luxury catamaran how can you go wrong? You can lounge on deck, kick back under the shaded area, take a turn on the boom net, and snorkel in hard to reach destinations. Not to mention the unbelievable beaches you will get to visit! For those of you who like to go motorized, one of the longest running tours in the area,

[ATV Explorer](#)

, is a total blast. Located in the jungle just West of the beach a few minutes south of Playa del Carmen, ATV Explorer offers a great introduction to the area. Blasting through the jungle on your own ATV you will see an ancient Mayan cave, experience local fauna and flora (keep your eyes peeled for the crazy monkeys on Monkey Loop), and dive into one of the freshest, deepest cenotes in the area. Tell Eric we sent you, and you are sure to have the time of your life.

As you can see there are countless things to do and see while visiting Playa del Carmen and The Riviera Maya. From remote cave dives, to amazing archaeological sights, not to mention the bright blue Caribbean and white sandy beaches, you are sure to take home memories that will last you a life time!