

## Cancun and Isla Mujeres, Mexico



Cancun's history is rich-it has been the hunting and fishing grounds to the ancient civilization of the Maya, a haven for pirates, and most recently a small fishing village. Today, Cancun has become the ideal vacation spot.

In Cancun you'll find an abundance of shopping, dazzling nightlife, beautiful weather, and international flavor that create an exciting retreat. Bask in the sun or enjoy the turquoise waters. Shop at many of the outdoor markets. Fish or snorkel in the waters off the coast. Visit the ancient Mayan ruins of Chichen-Itza and Tulum, and top off your stay with a Mexican fiesta or dancing at one of the many nightclubs. In addition, the beaches of Cancun are a soothing place to sink your toes in the sand, but remember, they can also change throughout the year due to natural conditions.

On the tiny island of Isla Mujeres, eight miles off the coast of Cancun, time passes slowly, attitudes are relaxed, and the sun radiates brilliantly. The island is home to colorfully painted buildings, warm hospitality, and a charming, tranquil ambiance. Aquatic lovers will relish swimming with the flipper-friendly dolphins at Dolphin Discovery, on the island's northwest side. The Manchones Reef begins just off the shore and is the dream of scuba divers and snorkelers, where the waters are calm and crystal clear, perfect for beginners as well as advanced divers.

### Package Includes:

- Choice of accommodations
- Hotel taxes and maid gratuities
- Roundtrip transportation between airport and hotel, including the ferry to and from Isla Mujeres
- Assistance of a local destination representative

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who should go?

#### Honeymooners

Many resorts offer special honeymoon and wedding packages.

#### Families

There's something for everyone; many hotels have kids' clubs and there are many activities and dining and entertainment choices that the entire family can enjoy.

#### Active Travelers

With endless fun, including watersports, shopping, nightlife, and more, you'll never run out of things to do.

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### What's the climate like?

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
<b>Average High</b>	81° F	84° F	89° F	87° F
<b>Average Low</b>	67° F	71° F	78° F	74° F
<b>Average Rainfall</b>	3.5"	1.5"	7.0"	8.5"

Cancun's weather is pleasant year-round.

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## How do I get around town?

### Transfers

Roundtrip transfers between the airport and hotels are included with your air and hotel vacation package.

### Car

Car rentals are available as an optional add-on. However, if staying in the resort area, a rental car is not needed.

### Taxi

Taxi fares from the airport to most Cancún hotels is approximately \$40 one way. Throughout Cancún, taxis are plentiful, but even the shortest distances cost a minimum of \$5-6.

### Bus

Service between Cancún's resort area and downtown Cancún is economical and convenient. Buses run about every 10 minutes and are generally inexpensive (approximately \$1 per ride). Drivers anxious for business will stop literally anywhere to pick up riders. Buses also run between Cancún and Playa del Carmen.

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## What kinds of dining and nightlife are available?

The restaurant scene is mainly made up of familiar U.S.-based chains. Here are some favorites, both international and local:

- **100% Natural**  
Just what the name implies in a beautiful, open-air setting surrounded by plants and modern Mayan sculptures.
- **La Destileria**  
A traditional Mexican menu focusing on fresh fish and seafood. Try one of the more than 100 varieties of tequila and save room for the caramel crepes.
- **Maria Bonita**  
One of the best places in the Hotel Zone to get authentic Mexican cuisine. There's also a great glass-enclosed patio with views of the water.
- **La Madonna**  
Swiss and Italian cuisine served in a refined and romantic atmosphere.
- **Porterhouse Grill**  
A superb wine list and great martinis, as well as succulent steaks at this Hotel Zone steakhouse, where you choose your steak and watch as it's prepared in the open-grill kitchen.
- **Rio Churrascaria Steak House**  
A Brazilian restaurant where waiters slice up skewered beef, pork, chicken, and sausages onto your plate. One of the best steak restaurants in the Hotel Zone and definitely for meat lovers.

Dance clubs include BullDog Café, Coco Bongo, Dady Rock, and Dady'O. More sedate entertainment can be found on dinner cruises. Sabor Latino and Azucar are two popular Latin clubs.

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## Where should I go shopping?

Resort wear and locally made crafts are the most popular items. In markets, bargaining is expected; in stores, however, the prices are usually fixed.

- **Ki Huic**  
Oldest market in Cancún and Mexico's largest, housing nearly 100 vendors.
- **Coral Negro**  
Open-air market found in the Hotel Zone with about 50 vendors.
- **Mercado Veintiocho**  
Popular market that sells souvenir items for less than those found in the hotel zone.
- **Plaza Caracol**  
Cancún's largest market with nearly 200 specialty shops.
- **El Zócalo**  
Bazaar offering handicrafts made by artisans from all over Mexico and located in the hotel zone across from the Convention Center.

- **Plaza Las Americas**  
Cancún's newest downtown mall. Comprised of 10 movie theaters, two department stores, restaurants, and fine shops.
- **La Isla**  
Super modern and well-designed, this mall features three movie theaters, restaurants, discos, aquarium, strolling entertainers, and upscale shopping.
- **Luxury Avenue**  
The only boutique mall in Mexico with the latest fashions, trends, and styles.

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## When are the local events?

### Carnaval

February/March. A weeklong celebration before Lent with outlandish parades, floats, dance contests, fireworks, and outdoor dances. Known for its flamboyant parades in which the whole city participates by dancing through the street for days on end.

### Vernal Equinox

March. At the Mayan archaeological site of Chichén-Itzá, a phenomenon of light and shadow displays the pattern of a serpent, symbolizing the great plumed serpent deity Kukulcán, slithering down the steps of the Pyramid of Kukulcán. Thousands attend this remarkable display of Mayan astrology and mathematics.

### Autumnal Equinox

September. Visitors gather at the Mayan Pyramid of Kukulcán at Chichén-Itzá to see the descent of the serpent deity, Kukulcán. History has it that the Maya constructed the temple in such a way that during the equinox, a beam of sunlight creates a shadow moving down toward the earth resembling a snake.

### Day of the Dead

November. A festive celebration honoring deceased relatives and friends.

### International Caribbean Cultural Festival

November. Performers come from all over the Caribbean to participate in this annual event of poetry, dance, and song. The main attraction is the variety of salsa music.

### Cancún Film Festival

November 14-18. The first of what promises to be an annual event, consisting largely of international and Latin American premieres and programs, and supporting and awarding aspiring and world-renowned filmmakers, screenwriters, and actors from Mexico and the Americas.

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## What are my golf and recreation options?

### Golf

Customize your vacation with discounted greens fees and gain access to hotel-affiliated golf courses with a stay at select hotels.

#### *Hotel-Affiliated Courses*

- **The Moon Palace Spa & Golf Club**  
Takes you through native Mayan vegetation, as well as numerous wetlands and strategically placed bunkers. Designed by Jack Nicklaus — Signature Design. A total of 27 holes.
- **The Playacar Spa & Golf Club**  
Carved through dense Mayan jungles. Requires an accurate tee shot to reach the greens in regulation. Designed by Robert von Hagge.

One round of golf per day is included at these courses when the Golf Option is purchased at the following hotels:

- Aventura Spa Palace
- Le Blanc Spa Resort
- Beach Palace
- Cancún Palace
- Moon Palace Golf & Spa Resort
- Playacar Palace
- Sun Palace
- Xpu-Há Palace

#### *Independent Course*

- **Cancún Club de Golf**

This course offers forgiving fairways and beautiful views of the surrounding waters. Designed by Robert Trent Jones.

### Sportfishing

Cancún and the surrounding area offer excellent sport fishing opportunities. Deep-sea fishing in the outer Caribbean can be incredible. From March through August the waters are filled with sailfish, marlin, wahoo, bonito, Spanish mackerel, mahi-mahi, and barracuda. Amberjack, grouper, and rubie bass can be found year-round. Nearby inlets, flats, and lagoons give anglers a chance to try their luck at catching tarpon, snook, permit, jack, and bonefish. Charters can be arranged through a Destination Services representative or at one of the marinas on Nichupté Lagoon.

### Snorkeling

Favorite spots for snorkeling in the area include Isla Mujeres, Puerto Morelos, Cozumel, Xel-há, and Akumal. On the mainland, Paamul's reef is near shore and easy to swim to. Xpu-há has a wonderful reef with a wide variety of fish, but watch out for the boats. Beginners might want to go to Xel-há or try a calm, freshwater cenote, a natural limestone sinkhole, first. Remember, if snorkeling in a cenote, don't wear sunscreen or bug spray as the ecology of the cenote is very fragile. You'll find plenty of places to snorkel from the shore, but snorkeling trips by boat will bring you out to the better reefs.

### Scuba Diving

Divers come to the Mexican Caribbean coast for its clear, turquoise waters, colorful tropical fish, and exquisite coral reef. Currents allow for drift dives, deep dives, night dives, wall dives, and shore dives. The abundance of offshore wrecks offer safe exploration dives. Cenotes and caverns provide an unusual dive experience. Many dive schools offer beginner to advanced PADI courses.

### Beach Activities

Parasailing and jet skis are offered to anyone walking on the beach and volleyball nets are also found throughout the area.

## Travel tidbits

### Bike Path

There is a bicycle and walking path that starts downtown at the beginning of the Hotel Zone and continues to Punta Nizuc.

### Dining Bargains

Great values can be found at the many restaurants in El Centro and the Parque de las Palapas. Market 28 (Mercado Veintiocho) also has many small, reasonably priced restaurants.

### Hotel Restaurants

Some of Cancún's best restaurants are within the hotels and, as long as the hotel isn't an all-inclusive, anyone can dine there. Some of the best restaurants to try are the Club Grill at the Ritz-Carlton, Le Basilic at the Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach, Da Vinci Italian at the Omni Cancún, the Blue Bayou at the Hyatt Cancún Caribe, and Gustino Italian Grill at the JW Marriott Resort.

### Sam's Club and Costco

Both mega-retailers have outlets in Cancún, so if you are a member in the U.S., you can shop there for bargains on groceries and souvenirs.

### Half-Price Souvenirs

Market 28 (Mercado Veintiocho) is a popular souvenir market filled with shops and where you can find many of the same items found in the Hotel Zone but at half the price.

### Good to Know:

Airport Name:	Cancún International Airport
3-letter Code:	CUN
Best Weather:	December – April
Best Values:	May – November
Currency:	Mexican Peso
Language:	Spanish; English is understood by most employed in the tourism industry
Time Zone:	Cancún is on Central Standard Time Zone and adjusts for Daylight Saving Time
Proof of Citizenship:	Government legislation requires all people traveling via air to and from the United States and Canada to have a valid passport. For details on passports, visas, and health requirements, see <a href="#">Entry Requirements</a> .
Tipping:	Leave 10% - 15%, but make sure the tip hasn't already been added to the bill.
Dress:	Cancún is very casual. Shorts are allowed at most restaurants, except fine dining establishments. Bring a sweater, as some of the air-conditioned places can be quite cool.