

Playa del Carmen

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 become 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 Nitza 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 Aktun Chen 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.

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.

Info courtesy of Playa Maya News.