

MEXICO · BEACHES · DIVING · HISTORY · ISLANDS · NIGHTLIFE



Cancún & the Riviera Maya

The Mexican Caribbean combines white-sand beaches and a warm turquoise sea with Maya ruins, swimmable cenotes and some of the Caribbean's best diving. UK visitors come mostly for winter sun between December and April, when it's dry and around 29–32°C; summer and autumn are hotter, wetter and fall within hurricane season, and seaweed can foul beaches from spring.



The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to parts of Mexico.

Check whether Cancún & the Riviera Maya is affected in the latest FCDO travel advice.

🇬🇧 COUNTRY Mexico	📅 BEST TIME Dec–Apr	✈️ FLIGHT FROM LONDON 11h direct ~£550–£1,150 return	💰 DAILY BUDGET £55–£300 ££ Moderate
☀️ WARMEST MONTH June (34°C)	🌡️ SEA TEMPERATURE 26–29°C coolest–warmest	🕒 TIME ZONE Cancun -6h vs UK now	💱 CURRENCY Mexican peso £1 ≈ MX\$24.66

Flights land at Cancún, and most UK holidaymakers then stay in an all-inclusive along the Hotel Zone or the 130-odd kilometres of coast south to Tulum. Cancún suits families and those after nightlife; Playa del Carmen is a walkable town with ferries to Cozumel; Puerto Morelos is quieter; Tulum mixes Maya ruins with boutique beach hotels and cenotes. A day trip to Chichén Itzá, two and a half hours inland, is close to obligatory. December to April is the dry season, though prices peak at Christmas and Easter; September and October are the wettest months and carry the highest hurricane risk.

Highlights

- 1

HISTORY

Chichén Itzá

The great Maya city's stepped pyramid of Kukulcán is one of the New Seven Wonders. Coach tours leave Cancún early, but driving yourself and arriving at the 8am opening beats the heat and crowds; add a swim in nearby Ik Kil cenote.
- 2

HISTORY

Tulum ruins

A small walled Maya port on a limestone cliff above a Caribbean beach, still occupied when the Spanish first sailed past. Go at opening time, as the site is compact and fills with tour groups by late morning.
- 3

NATURE

Gran Cenote

Freshwater sinkholes are the Yucatán's signature swim, and Gran Cenote near Tulum has shallow, gin-clear water, stalactites and small turtles. Arrive early, shower before entering and skip the sunscreen to protect the water.
- 4

NATURE

Cozumel's reefs

Drift dives along Palancar and Columbia reefs, part of the Mesoamerican Reef, are among the Caribbean's finest, with visibility often beyond 30 metres. The ferry from Playa del Carmen takes about 45 minutes, and snorkellers have good shore spots too.

5

BEACH

Isla Mujeres

A small island a short ferry ride from Cancún, with the calm, shallow water of Playa Norte and golf-buggy lanes to explore. From roughly June to September, boat trips leave here to swim with whale sharks.

Where to stay

WHERE TO STAY

Cancún Hotel Zone

A 22-kilometre sandbar of big resorts, shopping and nightlife about 20 minutes from the airport; easiest for families and first-timers wanting everything on site.

WHERE TO STAY

Playa del Carmen

A walkable town built around the Quinta Avenida strip, with restaurants, beach clubs and Cozumel ferries; good for couples who want to leave the resort.

WHERE TO STAY

Puerto Morelos

Low-key fishing village between Cancún and Playa, with a protected reef just offshore and calmer beaches; suits families and couples after quiet.

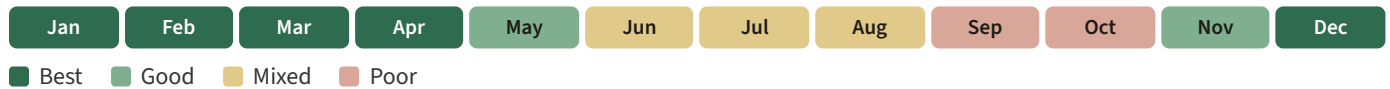
WHERE TO STAY

Tulum

Boutique beach hotels, yoga retreats and cenotes on the doorstep; stylish but pricey and spread out, so better for couples than for families.

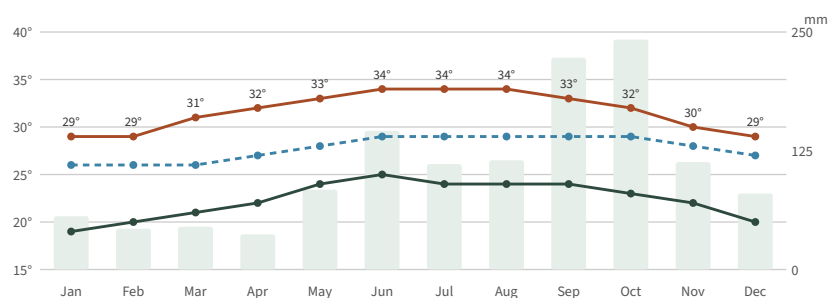
When to go to Cancún & the Riviera Maya

Best time: **Dec–Apr**.



Average climate in Cancún

— High °C
 — Low °C
 — Sea °C
 ■ Rain (mm)



How much does Cancún & the Riviera Maya cost?

SHOESTRING

£55

per person / day
≈ MX\$1,356

MID-RANGE

£130

per person / day
≈ MX\$3,205

COMFORTABLE

£300

per person / day
≈ MX\$7,397

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £550 off-peak and £1,150 in school holidays.

Visas & entry for Cancún & the Riviera Maya

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

If you're visiting Mexico as a tourist, you do not need a visa. You'll get a stamp in your passport with the number of days you are allowed to stay.

British nationals entering Mexico by land must fill in an immigration form online.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

 See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

- Hepatitis A
- Tetanus
- Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

- Chikungunya
- Dengue
- Measles
- Rabies

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

Very low risk of malaria

- There is a very low risk of malaria in Mexico: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Mexico

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Mon 16 Nov 2026	Revolution Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Mon 1 Feb 2027	Constitution Day
Mon 15 Mar 2027	Benito Juárez's birthday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Thu 16 Sep 2027	Independence Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Sargassum seaweed can blanket east-facing beaches between roughly April and October, varying hugely by year. Check recent reports; Isla Mujeres's Playa Norte and Cancún's bay-side beaches are usually less affected.

ADO buses run from Cancún airport to Playa del Carmen and Tulum for a fraction of the taxi fare. Walk past the timeshare and transfer touts in arrivals; pre-book if you're not on a package.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our Mexico guide.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.