

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Using This Guide	2
The Three Main Travel Routes	2
Contact Information	2
Pricing	3
We Love to Get Mail!	3
The Yucatán Peninsula At A Glance	4
20 Things Not to be Missed	5
Maya Ruins	5
Colonial Cities	6
Nature & Ecology	6
Fun	7
Travel with Kids	8

THE LAND

Geography	8
At A Glance	8
Cenotes & The Underworld	9
Climate	10
Weather	10
Environment	12
Flora	12
Forests	12
Conservation	13
Fruits, Flowers & Trees	14
Henequen	14
Orchids	15
Fauna	15
Big Cats	15
Deer	16
Crocodiles	16
Birds	16
Marine Life	17
Reefs	17
Underwater Residents	18

THE PEOPLE, THEIR HISTORY

The Maya	20
In The Beginning	20
Classic Splendor	20
Division of Troops	22
The Spanish	22
Conquest	22

New Spain	22
Colonial Days	23
Independence	23
Exploitation, Revolutions & War	23
Sisal	25
Modern Times	25

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Essentials	26
Tourist Information	26
The Metric System	27
Customs Rules & Regulations	27
Documents	28
Passports	28
Tourist Cards	28
What to Pack	29
Finding a Travel Deal	30
Outfitters	30
Getting Here & Getting Around	31
By Plane	31
By Car	31
Driving Mexico-Style	32
Driving Tips	33
By Bus	34
When in Rome... or Mexico	35
Culture & Customs	35
Siesta!	35
Local Mores	35
Sports	36
Holidays, Festivals & Local Cultural Events	36
Calendar of Events	36
Food & Beverages	40
Regional Specialties	40
Drinks	40
Shopping	41
Bargaining	41
Goods You Won't Find at Home	41
Money	42
Credit Cards	42
Traveler's Checks	42
ATMs (Caja Automatico)	42
Tipping & Begging	43
Safety	43
Female Travelers	44
Bribes & Scams	44
Health	45

Telephones	46
Handy Hints	47
Just in Case	49
Embassies	49
Emergencies	50
Arrivals & Departures	50
Arrivals	50
Departures	51
Hacienda Hotels	51
In the Yucatán	52
In Campeche	54

QUINTANA ROO

At A Glance	57
■ Cancún	58
Orientation	59
Getting Around	59
Practicalities	59
Beaches	61
Events	61
Gay Travel	64
Shopping	64
Downtown	64
Hotel Zone	65
Night Spots	68
Clubs & Discos	68
Traditional Folk Dances & Museums	69
Dinner Cruises	69
Gambling	70
Flicks	70
Adventures	70
Nearby Sights & Attractions	70
Adventures on Water	71
Adventures on Wheels	73
Adventures on Foot	73
Adventures on Horseback	73
Adventures in the Air	74
Accommodations	74
Cancún's Hotel Zone	75
Cancún City	78
Moderate Hotels	78
Budget Hotels	79
Hostels	81
Dining	81
Cancún's Hotel Zone	81
Expensive	81
Budget/Moderate	83

Cancún City	84
Budget	84
Moderate	85
Leaving Town	86
Heading South	86
Heading West	86
Heading North	88
■ Isla Mujeres	88
Orientation	89
Getting Around	89
Practicalities	90
Beaches	92
Shopping	92
Adventures	93
Attractions	93
Adventures on Water	94
Adventures on Wheels	95
Adventures on Foot	95
Accommodations	96
Luxury Hotels	97
Moderate Hotels	98
Budget Hotels	100
Dining	101
■ Isla Holbox	103
Orientation	103
Accommodations & Dining	104
Hotels	104
■ Cozumel	105
Orientation	106
Getting Around	106
Practicalities	108
Beaches	109
Along the Leeward Shore	110
Along the Windward Shore	110
Events	111
Night Spots	112
Adventures & Attractions	113
Attractions	113
Adventures	113
Accommodations	115
Budget Hotels	115
Moderate Hotels	115
Luxury Hotels	117
Dining	118
■ Riviera Maya, Cancún to Playa	120
■ Puerto Morelos	120
Adventures	122

Accommodations	123
Budget Hotels	123
Moderate Hotels	123
Luxury Hotels	125
Dining	125
South from Puerto Morelos	127
Punta Maroma - Km 306	127
Tres Rios Park - Km 301	127
Punta Bete - Km 295.5	127
■ Playa del Carmen	129
Orientation	130
Getting Around	130
Practicalities	130
Adventures	132
Accommodations	133
Budget Hotels & Hostels	133
Moderate Hotels	135
Luxury Hotels	136
Dining	137
■ Riviera Maya, Playa to Tulum	139
Xcaret – Km 282	139
Paa Mul – Km 273	140
Puerto Aventuras	141
Akumal – Km 257	141
Aktun Chen – Km 250	142
Xel-Há – Km 245	142
Playa Soliman – Km 241.5	143
Tankah Cenote – Km 238.5	144
■ Tulum, Punta Allen & Sian Ka'an	144
Tulum Ruins	145
Tulum Pueblo	146
Accommodations	147
Dining	147
Punta Allen Peninsula	148
Accommodations	149
Sian Ka'an Biosphere	152
■ Cobá	154
The Ruins	154
Practicalities	155
Spider Monkey Reserve	155
Accommodations & Dining	156
■ Costa Maya	156
Felipe Carrillo Puerto	156
Sights	157
Accommodations & Dining	158
Xcalak Peninsula	159
Xcalak	160
Chacchoben	161

Bacalar – Km 37	161
Accommodations & Dining	162
■ Chetumal	163
Orientation	164
Getting Around	164
Practicalities	164
Adventures	165
Sights & Attractions	165
Eco-Adventures	165
A Sidetrip To Belize	167
Accommodations	168
Dining	168
■ Belize	169
Orientation	170
Entering Belize	170
Corozal Town	170
Ruins	171
■ Forest of Kings	171
The Road to Ruin	172
Dzibanché & Kinichna	172
Kohunlich	173

YUCATAN

At A Glance	175
■ Mérida	176
Orientation	177
Getting Around	177
Practicalities	178
Festivals & Events	180
Every Day is a Celebration!	180
Sports	181
Shopping	182
Traditional Buys	182
American Outlets	184
Night Spots	184
Adventures	184
Area Adventures	184
Sights	185
Organized City Tours	186
Adventures on Foot	186
Walking Mérida	186
Adventures on Wheels	189
Accommodations	190
Hostel Hotels	191
Budget Hotels	191
Moderate Hotels	193
Haciendas	195
Dining	195

MUNDO MAYA	198
EAST	199
■ Valladolid	200
Getting Around	201
Practicalities	201
Adventures	203
Sights & Attractions	203
Adventures on Foot	205
Adventures in the Water	206
Accommodations	206
Dining	208
■ Chichén Itzá	209
History	211
Exploring the Ruins	211
Trip to Grutas De Balankanche	215
Cenote Ik-Kil	215
Accommodations	216
Hotel Zone	216
Piste	218
Dining	218
Side Trip to Yaxcaba	219
■ The Road to Rio, Rio Lagartos	219
Ek Balam	220
Tizimín	221
Accommodations	222
Dining	222
■ Rio Lagartos	223
Adventures	223
Accommodations & Dining	224
San Felipe & Las Coloradas	225
■ Izamal	226
Orientation	227
Getting Around	227
Practicalities	228
Adventures	228
Sights & Events	228
Adventures on Foot	229
Adventures on Water	229
Accommodations	229
Dining	230
WEST	231
■ Celestún	232
Adventures	232
Accommodations	233
Dining	234
NORTH	235
Dzibilchaltún Ruins	236
■ Progreso	237

Shopping	237
Sights & Adventures	237
Accommodations & Dining	238
■ The Coast Road	239
SOUTH	241
■ Umán & Oxkintoc	241
■ Uxmal & The Ruta Puuc	242
Uxmal	243
Ruta Puuc	248
Kabáh	248
■ The Convent Route	252
Maní	254
CAMPECHE	
At A Glance	259
■ Campeche City	260
Orientation	261
Getting Around	261
Practicalities	262
Night Spots	263
Shopping	263
Adventures	264
Adventures on Foot	264
Sights	268
Adventures on Wheels	269
Maya Ruins	270
Edzná	270
Hochob	272
Accommodations	272
Dining	274
■ Northern Campeche	276
■ The Royal Road	276
■ The Back Road	278
■ Forest of Kings	279
Xpujil	279
Accommodations & Dining	280
Road to Ruin	281
Xpujil	281
Rio Bec	281
Becán	282
Chicanna	282
Calakmul Biosphere & Ruins	282
Balamku	283
■ Escárcega	283
Accommodations & Dining	284
■ Coastal Campeche	284
■ Ciudad del Carmen	286
History	286
Orientation	286

Accommodations	287
Dining	288
■ Palenque (Chiapas)	288
The Ruins	288
Nearby Attractions	289
Accommodations & Dining	290

APPENDIX

Flicks – Picks & Pans	293
Booklist	295
Phonetic Mayan Glossary	296
Spanish Vocabulary	297

INDEX	303
-----------------	-----

◆ Maps

Mexico	4
Yucatán Peninsula	9
Mundo Maya	21
Quintana Roo	56
Downtown Cancún	62-63
Cancún's Hotel Zone	67
Isla Mujeres	91
Downtown San Miguel	107
Isla Cozumel	114
Along the Coast ~ Tulum to Isla Mujeres	121
Tres Rios	128
Playa Del Carmen	131
Xel-Há	143
Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve	153
Chetumal	166
Dzibanché	172
Yucatán	174
Mérida	187
Mundo Maya ~ East	200
Valladolid	202
Chichén Itza	213
Izamal	227
Mundo Maya ~ West	231
Mundo Maya ~ North	235
Mundo Maya ~ South	240
Uxmal	245
Kabáh	249
Convent Route	252
Campeche	258
Campeche City	265
Edzná	271