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lunamarina/Shutterstock.com

Dubbed "the crown jewel of the Caribbean Sea", Cozumel is sought after as a breezy holiday destination away from the everyday. Known for its magnificent coral reefs and white sandy beaches with pristine waters, this sun-kissed Mexican island offers plenty of outdoor activities: snorkelling and scuba diving take on a whole new dimension here.

#### **Featured**



# Top 5 Punta Sur

In the southern point of the island and part of the largest ecological park ...



## El Cielo

Famous for its silky white beaches, El Cielo is a mesmerizing hidden gem abo...



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# Playa Palancar

On the western coast of Cozumel and about 17 km from San Miguel, Playa Palan...



### San Gervasio Ruins

Located on the northern part of the island, the San Gervasio ruins are an ar...



### THE ISLAND



Brian Lasenby/Shutterstock.com

Just south of Cancun and opposite Playa del Carmen, Cozumel is the largest island in the Mexican Caribbean as well as an important cruise ship port. Home to the second-largest barrier reef in the world - the Mesoamerican Reef - Cozumel is a paradise for snorkelling and scuba diving enthusiasts. White, unblemished beaches stretch north to south, east to west, leaving travellers taken with the island's seemingly endless swathes of sand.

The city of San Miguel de Cozumel is the largest city on the island and the right place to get a peek into the mystical Mayan culture and catch a glimpse of Spanish colonial architecture.

### DO & SEE



Susan Schmitz/Shutterstock.com

The fascinating island of Cozumel is a treasure trove for snorkelers and divers who come here to admire the beauty of its underwater world. Boasting 500 different species of fish, 65 different corals, pristine waters, archaeological sites, and white beaches, Cozumel is undoubtedly a must-visit leisure destination in Mexico.

Read on to find out about the best places to snorkel and dive around Cozumel.

### **Punta Sur**



In the southern point of the island and part of the largest ecological park on Cozumel, Punta Sur is a tiny piece of heaven on earth made up of white

beaches, turquoise waters, wild flora, exotic birds, and crocodiles in their natural habitat.

Must-do activities include snorkelling, visiting the "El Caracol" Mayan Vestige, and taking in the stunning view from the Celarian Lighthouse.

The fastest way to get here is by booking a private jeep excursion.

Photo: Ramunas Bruzas/Shutterstock.com



Address: Autopista Km. 30 Sur Matamoros Norte-Centro-Sur,

Guaycura, San Miguel de Cozumel Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-4pm

Phone: +52 987 872 0833

### El Cielo



Famous for its silky white beaches, El Cielo is a mesmerizing hidden gem about 2 miles from the Cozumel coast. It is a popular snorkelling spot

where locals and tourists come to swim among thousands of colourful starfish and stingrays to catch a glimpse of the magical underwater world.

Note that El Cielo is only accessible by boat.

Photo: blue-sea.cz/Shutterstock.com

### **Punta Molas**



One of the most famous sights and one definitely not to be missed is Punta Molas – a picturesque beach in the north of Cozumel. The anchor

point here is the old white-and-red lighthouse surrounded by tropical vegetation and secluded beaches. Punta Molas is where the bright blue of the sky blends with the pristine waters of the Caribbean Sea creating a stunning horizon line.

The fastest way to reach the destination is by jeep (this can be challenging because of the unpaved roads) or tour boat.

Photo: Marik Peter/Shutterstock.com Address: Punta Molas, Cozumel

# Playa Palancar



On the western coast of Cozumel and about 17 km from San Miguel, Playa Palancar boasts flawless white beaches, crystal clear waters, and a

palapa-roofed dining area where you can sample the acclaimed local fish tacos.

Activities such as snorkelling are also pursued here.

Photo: lunamarina/Shutterstock.com Address: Playa Palancar, Cozumel

### San Gervasio Ruins



Located on the northern part of the island, the San Gervasio ruins are an archaeological site of the pre-Columbian Maya civilisation and a must-do

excursion for history buffs. The site was originally dedicated to the deity of midwifery and medicine, Ix Chel, and was an important pilgrimage site for Mayan women. Today, the ruins are Cozumel's only preserved Mayan ruins and a noteworthy location to learn more about the fascinating Mayan civilisation.

Photo: aguinaldo matzenbacher/Shutterstock.com

Address: 77684 San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 9am-5pm Phone: +52 983 837 0796

Internet:

www.inah.gob.mx/zonas/101-zona-arqueologica-san-gervasio



### DINING



Olga Navashkova/Shutterstock.com

While the main attractions are underwater, Cozumel has much to offer on dry land, too. The cuisine here is mainly a mélange of Mayan/Aztec and Spanish influences, but the tourist boom of the last decades has opened up new horizons and many international chefs have made the island their home, making Italian and French cuisines easy to come by.

### Guido's



Guido's brings the authentic taste of Italy to the sun-kissed island of Cozumel. With top-notch Italian food from wood-oven pizza to

lasagna, homemade pasta and fresh seafood, it's easy to understand why the beloved restaurant is an institution to locals and a lovely find to tourists.

Photo: MR. AEKALAK CHIAMCHAROEN/Shutterstock.com Address: Avenida Rafael E. Melgar 23, San Miguel de

Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 2-11pm Phone: +52 987 872 0946

Internet: www.guidoscozumel.com Email: info@quidoscozumel.com

#### La Choza Cozumel



Set a few strides from the main square, La Choza serves typical Yucatecan-Mexican dishes like "poc chuc" (a Mayan/Yucateco version

of barbecued pork) and "mole poblano" (a sauce of chilies, fruits, nuts, spices, and chocolate) in an upbeat and relaxing atmosphere.

Photo: Marcos Castillo/Shutterstock.com

Address: 10 Avenida Nte. # 216, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 8am-9pm Phone: +52 987 872 0958

Email: lachozacozumel@gmail.com

# **Burritos Gorditos**



Burritos Gorditos is a great pit stop for something fast yet delightful. The menu offers around 21 types of burritos, from vegetarian

to meat-based, as well as salad burritos, quesadillas, and tacos. Yucatan-style burritos filled with cochinita (pulled pork shoulder marinated and braised in achiote paste, orange juice, and lime) are also on offer.

Photo: Joshua Resnick/Shutterstock.com

Address: 5a Avenida Nte S/N, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8am-5pm

Phone: +52 987 116 7214

Internet: burritosgorditos.wixsite.com/burritosgorditos

Email: burritosgorditos@gmail.com



### **El Sitio**



No trip to Cozumel would be complete without paying a visit to El Sitio, a hole-in-the-wall eatery with red folding chairs specialising in tacos. Try

out the "puerco torta" (pork sandwich) or the mouth-watering "camarón tacos" (shrimp tacos).

Photo: Jason Rothe/Shutterstock.com

Address: 10a Avenida Nte entre Calle 6 Norte y 8, San

Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 7am-1:30pm

Phone: +52 987 119 2544

#### Kinta Mexican Bistro



Considered the chicest restaurant on the island, Kinta offers traditional Mexican food with a modern twist. From the main course to dessert,

Kinta knows how to pamper guests. The Midnight Pork Ribs accompanied by a refreshing drink is a combo to die for.

Photo: golubovystock/Shutterstock.com

Address: 5ta Avenida 148 X 2 y 4, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 5:30-11:30pm

Phone: +52 987 869 0544

Email: reservaskinta@gmail.com

#### **Buccanos**



Buccanos is both a vibrant beach club where tourists can swim, snorkel, and enjoy the sun as well as a laid-back restaurant serving simple

and modern Mexican food, with an infusion of local seafood and other street-food favourites. Everything here is made with fresh and authentic ingredients and their menu also features vegetarian and vegan options.

Drop by Buccanos to sip some margaritas while watching the sunset or come here for a romantic dinner on their terrace overlooking the ocean and decorated with torches and candlelight.

Photo: Yasmine Duchesne/Unsplash

Address: Carretera San Juan Kilometro 4.5, Zona Hotelera

Nte., San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Wed-Sat 6am-9pm, Sun 10am-5:30pm

Phone: +52 987 114 5607

Internet: www.buccanos.com/en/inicio/night

Email: buccanos@yahoo.com

## Señor Frog's



Restaurant chain with locations in Mexico, the United States, and the Caribbean, Señor Frog's is known for its festive atmosphere, great food,

gigantic drinks, and lots of singing and dancing. So, join the conga line and make the best out of your time here!

Photo: Herson Rodriguez/Unsplash Address: Cruise Ship Terminal, Cozumel Opening hours: Daily 12pm-12am Internet: www.senorfrogs.com



### **CAFES**



Mauricio Avramow/Shutterstock.com

Mexico is the eighth-largest coffee producer in the world, with much of the coffee harvested in the coastal region of Soconusco in Chiapas, near the border with Guatemala. Coffee plays a significant role in daily life on the island too, with major coffee roasters scattered throughout San Miguel.

The list below shows the most noteworthy coffee shops on Cozumel, where one can savour the exquisite taste of the best Mexican coffee.

### Aqui + Ahora Coffee



More than just a coffee shop, Aqui + Ahora Coffee has everything you would want in a hangout spot: amazing coffee, tasty food, super friendly

staff, great WiFi connection, board games as well as a foosball table, a cool urban vibe, and occasional live music. Come by for breakfast, lunch, or a late-night snack as they stay open until midnight.

Photo: Tuva Mathilde Løland/Unsplash

Address: Av. Rafael E. Melgar, entre Calle 2 Nte y 4 Nte, San

Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 7:30am-12am

Phone: +52 987 800 3804 Internet: www.aqui-ahora.co Email: hello@aqui-ahora.co

#### Sucré Salé



Sucré Salé is a small family-run business that brings a dash of romantic France to the tiny tropical island of Cozumel. The menu features either

savoury or sweet, Mexican or French specialities at reasonable prices. Choose between the French-style breakfast (fresh-baked baguette, butter, and jam) or the Mexican desayuno (eggs, beans, chilaquiles, bread, butter, and jam), both accompanied by a rich cup of coffee.

Photo: Dzmitry Ryshchuk/Shutterstock.com Address: Calle 2 Nte 101b, San Miguel de Cozumel Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8am-10pm, Sun 8am-1pm

Phone: +52 987 115 5968

## Maple Bakehouse



For the best pastries in town, look no further. With a great offer of fresh-baked goods (bread, cinnamon rolls, pies, and many more) and strong

organic coffee, it's no wonder that Maple Bakehouse is the perfect setting for a relaxing afternoon break.

Photo: Yulia Grigoryeva/Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle 6 Norte 5A Entre Rafael Melgar y, Calle

Quinta Avenida, San Miguel de Cozumel Opening hours: Daily 7:30am-10pm

Phone: +52 987 146 4053

Email: maplebakehouse@gmail.com



### **El Coffee Cozumel**



Right in the city centre, El Coffee Cozumel fills the neighbourhood with the aroma of freshly-baked goods, from pies to pastries, and

delightful, locally sourced coffee. The quiches come highly recommended.

Photo: Lia Koltyrina/Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle 3 Sur 98, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 7am-11pm Phone: +52 987 869 0456

Email: is abela coffee cozumel@gmail.com

# **COZ Coffee Roasting Company**



At COZ Coffee Roasting Company, you will be served the finest 100% Arabica brews, from beans shade-grown at high altitudes in Vera

Cruz, Chiapas, and Oaxaca, and hand-sorted to create the perfect taste of gourmet coffee.

Pastries and other goods are also on offer.

Photo: NOBUHIRO ASADA/Shutterstock.com Address: 5a Av. Nte 50, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 6:30am-9pm

Phone: +52 987 878 5050

Email: cozcoffeecozumel@gmail.com

## **BARS & NIGHTLIFE**



Marina Tatarenko/Shutterstock.com

Although Cozumel might not be on the bucket list of party animals, there are plenty of venues by the seafront that is worth a try come night. Wet Wendy's and Señor Frog's offer the perfect setting to dance all night long, while Thirsty Cougar and La Internacional Cervecería offer the best selection of cocktails and beers on the island.

### La Internacional Cervecería



Its outstanding selection of local and international beers together with its great location make La Internacional Cervecería a fun evening hot spot.

The charming bar also has a terrace with ocean views for guests to enjoy.

Photo: NaturalBox/Shutterstock.com

Address: Avenida Rafael E. Melgar 590 Segundo Piso, San

Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-2am, Sun 6pm-2am

Phone: +52 987 869 1289



# **Thirsty Cougar**



A never-ending supply of cocktails paired with freshly cooked food and the enchanting waterfront view all amount to the winning

formula of Thirsty Cougar.

Photo: Teri Virbickis/Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle 3 sur entre Rafael E. Melgar y Av. 5, 317,

Local 6, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Mon-Thu 9am-11pm, Fri-Sat 9am-12am

Phone: +52 987 869 0214

Internet: thirsty cougar.restaurant we be xperts.com

Email: algofrescomx@gmail.com

# Freedom in Paradise Reggae Beach Bar & Grill



In the southern part of the island, Freedom in Paradise is a great place to lounge with an ice-cold beer or a tropical cocktail, take in the sea

breeze, and enjoy some fabulous food. If you want to disconnect from the world, this is your place! Just across the street, there's their sibling restaurant - Rastas - offering the same quality, plus a souvenir shop.

Photo: Yonca60/Shutterstock.com Address: San Miguel de Cozumel Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10:30am-6pm

Phone: +52 987 869 8300

Internet: www.bobmarleybar.com

## Wet Wendy's



Dubbed "margarita house", Wet Wendy's is an institution on Cozumel when it comes to quality food, creative cocktails, and entertainment. From rock to jazz to live salsa nights, only positive vibes are accepted in the house.

Photo: Sean Locke Photography/Shutterstock.com Address: 5a. Avenida Norte x Juárez y, Calle 2 Nte, San

Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm Phone: +52 987 872 4970 Internet: www.wetwendys.com Email: jacob@wetwendys.com

#### Señor Frog's



Restaurant chain with locations in Mexico, the United States, and the Caribbean, Señor Frog's is known for its festive atmosphere, great food,

gigantic drinks, and lots of singing and dancing. So, join the conga line and make the best out of your time here!

Photo: Herson Rodriguez/Unsplash Address: Cruise Ship Terminal, Cozumel Opening hours: Daily 12pm-12am Internet: www.senorfrogs.com

### **SHOPPING**



PR Image Factory/Shutterstock.com

Small traditional outlets line up with massive department stores on Cozumel. Handcrafts, customized items, one-of-a-kind silver jewellery, and Mexican vanilla are the main articles that folks seek to bring home.



### Chocolateria Isla Bella



Chocoholics will be pleased to know that there is a chocolate shop - Chocolateria Isla Bella, just a few blocks away from the centre. They

offer samples of handmade chocolate treats made with the finest beans of Criollo, Guayaquil, and Patastillo varieties of cacao. At Chocolateria Isla Bella, there's something for every taste bud: truffles, dark, milk and white chocolate, as well as a great range of fillings.

Photo: Shulevskyy Volodymyr/Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle 4 Nte entre 5 y 10 Avenidas, San Miguel de

Cozumel

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 11am-7pm Internet: www.chocolateriaislabella.com Email: megan@chocolateriaislabella.com

### **Los Cinco Soles**



If you're looking for some serious souvenir shopping, head to Los Cinco Soles. Run by Don Pancho Morales and his wife Doña Sharon, this

colourful shop offers the chance to bring home an authentic taste of Mexico: from silver jewellery to fine art to shirts and dresses, and much more.

And after you're done with your shopping, pay a visit to Pancho's Backyard, a bar & grill attached to the shop serving tasty Mexican food and cold margaritas in a tranquil backyard atmosphere.

Photo: Natali Glado/Shutterstock.com

Address: Av. Rafael E. Melgar x, Calle 8 Nte, San Miguel de

Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 10am-8pm Phone: +52 987 872 9004 Internet: www.loscincosoles.com Email: info@loscincosoles.com

## Mayan Flea Market



Mayan Flea Market displays its heaps of clothing, traditional souvenirs, bottles of pure vanilla (and more), all at reasonable prices in one

of the busiest streets in San Miguel. Look carefully for some true gems.

Photo: Iren Key/Shutterstock.com

Address: Av. Rafael E. Melgar 399, San Miguel de Cozumel

Phone: +52 987 872 0541

### Plaza Punta Langosta



Located just off the cruise ship docks, Plaza Punta Langosta is a good alternative to the small shops scattered around the city, especially if

brand-name items are what you're looking for. The shopping mall encompasses a food court, jewellery shops, and souvenir shops.

Photo: kikovic/Shutterstock.com

Address: Av. Rafael E. Melgar 599, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 8am-12am

# Mercado Municipal de Cozumel



The Mercado Municipal de Cozumel is the beating heart of the city of San Miguel, where locals come to buy their daily groceries. Vendors load

stalls with fresh meat, catch of the day, vegetables, fruit, homeware, and many other items. Stalls also offer ready-to-eat food.



Photo: ZoneFatal/Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle Dr Adolfo Rosado Salas, San Miguel de

Cozumel

Opening hours: Daily 8am-6pm Phone: +52 987 118 4823

### **TOURIST INFORMATION**



Kent Weakley/Shutterstock.com

### **Cozumel International Airport**



The island of Cozumel on the Caribbean coast is served by Cozumel International Airport, which handles both international and

domestic flights. Approximately 2.8 km (1.7 miles) from the centre, taxis and shuttle buses are an easy way to move from the airport to the city centre, and vice versa. While hailing a taxi, make sure to have Mexican pesos or US dollars, as many taxi drivers do not accept credit cards. Taxi fares start at USD 5 for short rides up to USD 60 for an all-island tour.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Boulevard Aeropuerto Cozumel s/n, Mexico

Phone: +52 987 872 2081

### **Tourist Tax**



As of April 1 2021, international travellers that are 15 years or older visiting the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, where Cancún, Tulum, Playa del

Carmen, and Cozumel are situated, are required to pay a tourist tax known as Visitax.

This payment can be made before, during, or after your trip, but it must be paid before boarding your departure flight.

At the time of writing, the Visitax costs \$224 Mexican pesos (USD \$11) per visitor. Once the payment is made, you will receive a QR Code that must be shown at the airport before leaving Mexico.

Below is the official government website of Quintan Roo:

Photo: Jambronk/Shutterstock.com Internet: www.visitax.gob.mx/sitio/

# Ferry from Playa del Carmen to Cozumel



The fastest way to reach Cozumel from the mainland is by ferry from downtown Playa del Carmen. Ferries leave nearly every hour, and

the ride lasts approximately 45 minutes. The company Ultramar has introduced a luxury ferry that takes you to Cozumel in only 20 minutes. The slightly higher prices reflect the service provided on board.

Photo: M-O Vector/Shutterstock.com Internet: www.winjet.mx/eng/

More Info: www.ultramarferry.com/en



## Passport/Visa



Visa exemption applies to citizens of all EU countries, most countries in the Americas,
Australia, New Zealand,
Japan, South Korea, and

more. Both tourists and business visitors from these countries may stay in Mexico for up to 180 days. For Russian, Turkish, and Ukrainian passport holders, electronic authorisation (SAE) is required, which then grants travellers from these countries the right of a single entry followed by a stay of up to 30 days. Please consult an official source/consulate in your home country for the latest information on visa requirements.

When travelling to Mexico, you will need to fill out a Forma Migratoria Múltiple (FMM), which is essentially a visitor's permit for Mexico. All travellers are encouraged to do so online prior to travel and present the printed out document upon entering the country.

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

### **Best Time to Visit**



March to June represents the best period to visit the island of Cozumel and enjoy its pleasant temperatures. Cozumel is also a hit spot during the

winter. Being a snow-free island, it is the perfect place to soak up the sun.

The low season runs from July to November.

During this time, the island is quieter, and accommodation rates are lower, but keep an eye out for hurricane warnings as they are rather

frequent during this time of the year. Every season is characterized by a particular event or festivity. Here are some highlights:

- Fiesta of the Virgin of Guadalupe (December)
- Carnaval (February-March)
- El Cedral Festival (April-May)
- Boat Rodeo and Fishing Tournament (May)
- Cozumel Independence Day (September)
- Ironman Cozumel (November)

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

#### Taxi



Taxis are the easiest way for cruise passengers to get from the port to downtown and vice versa. Taxi fares are relatively cheap (particularly if

compared to other countries) and depend on the different zones you want to reach. Since 2016, all taxi drivers must produce a list of fares before taking on a passenger.

Taxi stands can be found just outside the pier. Also, rideshare companies, such as Uber and Lyft do not operate on the island of Cozumel.

The best option to explore Cozumel for bigger groups or families is by renting a van service. Uniper Cozumel has a fleet of more than 60 vehicles that can accommodate from 20 to 50 passengers.

Photo: ArrivalGuides

Internet: www.unipercozumel.com/en/home/



# **Public Transport**



Travelling around
Cozumel by public
transportation is not very
common among tourists,
who prefer to hail a taxi
or book a minivan. Uniper

Cozumel is a private company that handles public transportation on the island. Download their app to learn about their routes and the location of their units in real time.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Internet: www.unipercozumel.com/en/home/

### Correos de Mexico / Cozumel, Q.R.



The post - Correos de Mexico / Cozumel, Q.R. is located close to the city centre and offers all postal services (e.g. mailing, shipping).

Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Calle José María Morelos, entre 35 y, Gral Felipe

Angeles, San Miguel de Cozumel

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat 8am-12pm

Phone: +52 987 872 0106

#### **Medical Care in Cozumel**



The most reputable hospital in Cozumel is the Cozumel Medical Center (CMC) ready to offer the best service to patients in need of help. Other

clinics to be found throughout the area are Amerimed Cozumel Islamed, International Hospital, Cozumel General Hospital. All visits will require a fee to be paid by cash (US dollars also accepted) or credit cards.

As for pharmacies, check the list below for the

nearest one to the centre.

- Farmacias del Ahorro (Mon-Sat 8 am-10 pm, Sun 8 am-9 pm)
- Farmacias YZA (24/7 service)

Please note that travel insurance is highly recommended while travelling to Cozumel.

Photo: ilicon/Shutterstock.com

## **Electricity**



In Mexico, the standard voltage is 127V, and the standard frequency is 60Hz. If you are travelling from the US, all US appliances and

devices should work without a power converter.

Power plugs and sockets are of type A and B. Plug type A is the plug which has two flat parallel pins - used in North and Central America as well as in Japan. Plug type B is the one that has two flat parallel pins and a round grounding pin.

Photo: Stirling Tschan

#### Telephone



+52 is Mexico's country code that allows calls from abroad; 987 is Cozumel's area code; +52 987 is then followed by a 7-digit number (e.g. +52

987 xxx xxxx).

Note that when calling via cell phone an extra 1 is required (e.g. +52 1 987 xxx xxxx).

Photo: Jardson Almeida/Shutterstock.com

## **Population**

86,215 (2015)

#### Currency

Mexican peso (\$ / Mex\$) 1/100

Mex\$1 = USD0.051

### **Opening hours**

Shops generally operate Monday to Sunday from 8am to 7pm with variations by individual shop. Banks run Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

Cibanco ATM Cajero has a 24-hour ATM just a few strides from the city centre.

### Newspapers

Cozumel 4 You (Newsletters)

### **Emergency numbers**

Emergency Number: 911/066

### **Tourist information**

Cozumel Tourism Office 5a Avenida Sur 51, San Miguel de Cozumel Mon–Fri 8am–3pm

\*This guide was originally researched and written by Brixhilda Dedej