JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

VALUE MEXICO: MAYAN YUCATAN AND COAST

8 days from **£2,050pp**

MEXICO / MÉRIDA, CHICHÉN ITZÁ AND THE YUCATAN / CARIBBEAN COAST: RIVIERA MAYA AND HOLBOX



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This short break delivers the two big attractions of the Yucatán Peninsula in a nutshell: the impossibly grand, Mayan city Chichén Itzá and the white-sand Caribbean beaches of the Mayan Riviera.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Cancún, Mexico, transfer to hotel at the resort.**
DAY 2	**Transfer to Chichén Itzá, ruined Mayan city.**
DAY 3	**Re-visit Chichén Itzá, move on to Mérida.**
DAY 4	**Day trip to visit historic Yucatán haciendas and swim in cenotes.**
DAY 5	**Guided tour of Mérida.**
DAY 6	**Transfer to Playa del Carmen on the Mayan Riviera.**
DAY 7	**At leisure on the Caribbean coast.**
DAY 8	**Transfer to Cancún airport for your international flight.**

ITINERARY

This holiday of just over a week takes you to the relatively flat, tropical Yucatán Peninsula in the sunny south east coast of the country. Inland, among the jungles, scrub and farmland, sitting alongside charming Spanish colonial towns and villages, is Chichén Itzá, the greatest archaeological achievement of the Mayan Empire.

You'll explore the ruins on a guided tour. You'll also discover Mérida, the Yucatán's colonial capital infused with Mayan culture, and visit historic haciendas (country estates) before heading to the beach for a couple of days relaxing or indulging in water sports or the lively nightlife at family-friendly Playa del Carmen, where there's a huge range of excursions on offer from visits to other Mayan sites to scuba-diving.

DAY 1

Arrive in Cancún, Mexico, transfer to hotel at the resort.

Cancún straddles a lagoon on the north-eastern tip of the Yucatán Peninsula. It's a purpose-built resort. Beautiful beaches, good diving and water sports are the main attractions, alongside the facilities that come with five-star hotels, high-class shopping and both fashionable nightclubs and boozy bars.



DAY 2

Transfer to Chichén Itzá, ruined Mayan city.

Chichén Itzá is the best known and most meticulously restored of the Yucatán's vast array of Mayan archaeological sites. It overwhelms the visitor with the vast scale of its temples and pyramids, intricate carvings and evocative ball courts. You'll come across multiple images of the Mayan rain god, and Quetzalcóatl, the plumed serpent. Your guided tour will help make sense of it all.

As a bonus, hidden in the woodland, you'll come across the bright green waters of the steeple-sided cenotes, or limestone sink-holes. You spend the night at a resort close to the ruins.



DAY 3

Re-visit Chichén Itzá, move on to Mérida.



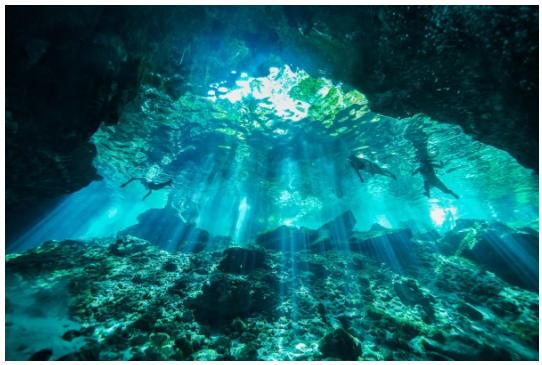
On your second day at Chichén Itzá you may visit the ruins again independently (you'll need pay get in this time). However, if you go early enough, you'll have a chance to see this most impressive and imperial of sites before the crowds arrive, and when the light is best.

Later it's back on the road to Mérida, founded by the Mayan Indians but, once conquered by the Spanish conquistadores, it became immensely wealthy from the production of sisal, cactus fibres used to make rope. The city was culturally and geographically isolated from the rest of the country until transport infrastructure reached it in the 1950s.

Today, Mérida has a lovely colonial centre with a mix of opulent and crumbly buildings, but it is a modern, bustling, thriving city with some excellent places to eat and good shops and markets. The inhabitants love a good fiesta, and you may well find one going on, with live music and street stalls, while you are there. Stroll around the sunny streets, shop for local lace or one of the region's famous hammocks.

DAY 4

Day trip to visit historic Yucatán haciendas and swim in cenotes.



Head out of town for a guided tour of Hacienda Yaxcopoil which dates back to the 17th century. On this lovely estate you will find the vestiges of three periods of Mexican history; pre- Columbian, Spanish colonial and the booming sisal fibre trade of the 19th and early 20th century.

Continue to Peba to peer down into (or take a dip in) a cenote, surrounded by a wide variety of flora still used in traditional Mayan medicine. The shallow and transparent water of this limestone sink-hole entices you in for a lovely swim.

Later, visit another hacienda, Ochil. In the 18th century the boom in the production of sisal fibre created great fortunes in the region; the lucky proprietors showed off their wealth in the building of luxurious residences, many of which have now been restored. The main house displays interesting photographs and drawings from that period, there's museum and a restaurant serving regional dishes.

DAY 5

Guided tour of Mérida.



Your guided excursion takes in the highlights of Mérida. Many of these are within the historical area around the Plaza Mayor such as its baroque cathedral, the oldest in Latin America, and the Municipal and Government Palaces.

Other attractions include the attractive Peon Conteras theatre, Hidalgo Park with its open-air cafes, and the university. Centenario Park, a few blocks away, has a small zoo, and further north, the beautiful Palacio Cantón houses the Museum of Anthropology and History with many Mayan artefacts on show.

DAY 6

Transfer to Playa del Carmen on the Mayan Riviera.



Take a public coach ride back to the Caribbean coast. Public buses in Mexico are very comfortable. Most have air conditioning on very high and occasionally a film will be shown which you may or may not want to watch.

Despite becoming an increasingly popular holiday resort, Playa del Carmen, or 'Playa', still retains much of its ramshackle beach town atmosphere. Crystal-clear turquoise waters make for good swimming, snorkelling and diving. Laid out in a grid system, this hip city has plenty of good restaurants and bars to chose from, with most tourist and nightlife activity taking place on Avenida 5, parallel to the beach.

DAY 7

At leisure on the Caribbean coast.



Aside from its lovely beach Playa has many excursions and activities on offer which you can book locally. Head off to the cliff-top Mayan ruins at Tulum, or inland to the pyramids of jungle-stifled Cobá. Alternatively turn seaward with kayaking, sailing, snorkelling and diving options.

DAY 8

Transfer to Cancún airport for your international flight.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Visit Chichén Itzá ruins – New Seven Wonders of the World
- Full day excursion to historic haciendas and cenotes
- Guided tour of Mérida

ESSENTIALS

4 road journeys by shared transport (longest 5hrs).

Accommodation is in colonial or modern-style mid-range hotels with well-equipped rooms, private bathroom and air-conditioning.

Breakfast daily, dinner days 6 & 7.

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

8 days, 7 nights: Cancún 1; Chichén Itzá 1, Mérida 3; Playa del Carmen 2.

The unit of currency in Mexico is the Mexican peso.

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds. We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US$35 per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income. We recommend approximately $10 per person for a half day and $20 for a full day for guides and half that for drivers.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Generally this holiday is suitable for all able, reasonably fit visitors, including families and solo travellers. If you or anyone in your party has a disability please contact us.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

The Yucatán Peninsula is hot (around 30°C) and humid all year round. October through April are the driest months. The hurricane season runs from July to November.

Bring plenty of light cotton clothing and good, comfortable walking shoes. We suggest that you plan to 'layer' your clothing; it is easier and more efficient to put on a couple of light layers than one thick jumper, and sensible to have long sleeves for areas where mosquitos may be a problem. Sandals are a good informal option for evenings. Protection against the sun (sunblock, sun hat) and mosquito repellent are essential and you should bring swimwear. A daypack is useful for carrying around sunblock, guidebook, water and any extra layers.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment can be hard to come by in Mexico.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

tours@journeylatinamerica.com