

Cozumel Municipality

Quintana Roo · Mexico

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Cozumel is Mexico's largest populated island, off the coast of Quintana Roo. It is known for clear water and the Palancar and Santa Rosa reefs, which draw divers from around the world. The town of San Miguel is the only large settlement. It has a seafront promenade, shops and restaurants, and is also a cruise port.

It suits three to five nights for diving or beach time, or a day trip from Playa del Carmen. The quiet east coast has wild beaches, and the west coast has the dive sites.

When to visit

The dry season from December to April has calm seas and good visibility. Summer is hot and humid, and hurricane season runs from about June to November. The east coast is windy and often too rough to swim.

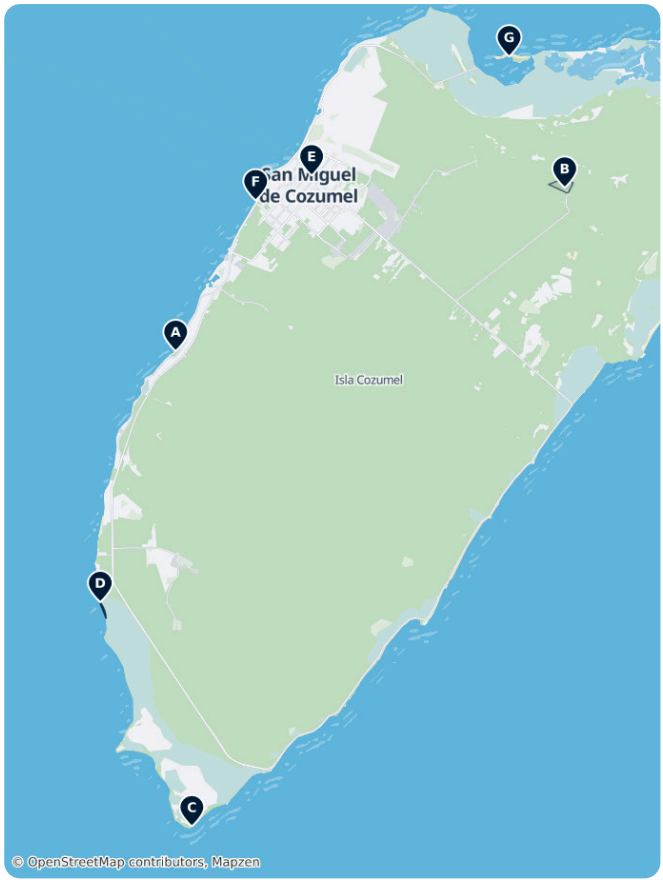
Carnival in February or March fills San Miguel with parades.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for sightseeing	25° / 27°	24° / 20°	14 rainy days · Muggy, humid air
February	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 27°	24° / 21°	Muggy, humid air · UV 8 (Very high)
March	Great Great for watersports	26° / 28°	24° / 21°	23 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 10 (Very high)
April	Great Great for watersports	27° / 29°	25° / 23°	23 sunny days · Oppressive humidity · UV 11 (Extreme)
May	Great Great for watersports	28° / 30°	26° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
June	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	18 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
July	Good Good for watersports	29° / 30°	27° / 26°	Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Fair Fair for watersports	29° / 30°	27° / 26°	Oppressive humidity · UV 11 (Extreme)
September	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	22 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
October	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	28° / 29°	26° / 24°	22 rainy days · Oppressive humidity
November	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 28°	25° / 23°	16 rainy days · Muggy, humid air
December	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 28°	24° / 21°	16 rainy days · Muggy, humid air

Best months: February, March, April

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Chankanaab National Park is a park with a lagoon, snorkelling in a sheltered bay, a botanical garden and a small museum.
- B San Gervasio is the main Maya site on the island, a sanctuary linked to the goddess Ixchel.
- C Celarain lighthouse stands at the southern tip of the island, in a nature park with beaches and lagoons.
- D Playa Palancar is a sandy beach on the west coast, near the Palancar reef.
- E The Plaza is the main square in San Miguel, close to the pier and the seafront.
- F Stingray Beach is a beach where visitors can meet stingrays in shallow water.
- G Isla de Pasion is a small island trip on the north coast, with beach and snorkelling.

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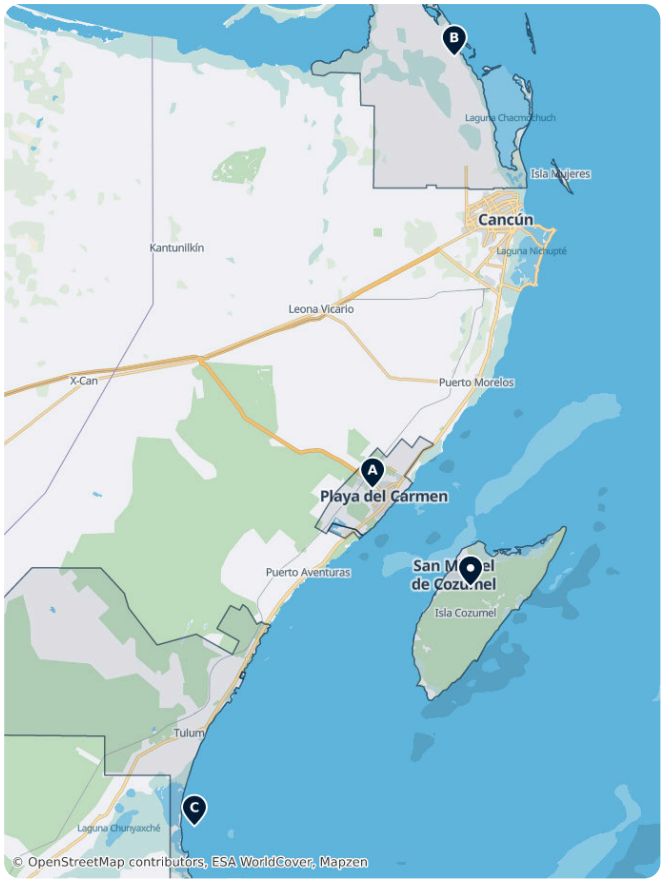
What to experience

- Dive or snorkel on the Palancar reef, one of the best in the Caribbean.
- Take a scooter or jeep around the island and stop at east coast beach bars.
- Snorkel from the beach at Chankanaab.
- Watch the sunset from the seafront in San Miguel.

Day trips

- A Playa del Carmen: the ferry takes about 35 minutes. It is the usual way to reach the island.
- B Isla Mujeres: about 1.5 hours via the mainland. A small, relaxed island.
- C Tulum: about 1.5 hours including the ferry. Ruins on a cliff by the sea.



Where to explore

- Playa del Carmen for the ferry port and a busy resort town.
- Isla Mujeres for another small island with a relaxed mood.
- Tulum for beaches and ruins on the mainland.

Getting there

- **By air**: Cozumel International Airport (CZM) is a few minutes from San Miguel. It has flights from Mexico City and several US cities.
- **By ferry**: Ferries from Playa del Carmen take about 35 minutes and run through the day. Car ferries run from Calica and Puerto Morelos.
- **By cruise ship**: Large ships dock at several piers just south of San Miguel.

Getting around

- **On foot**: San Miguel's centre and seafront are walkable.
- **Taxi**: Taxis have fixed rates, so ask the fare first. They are the main way to reach beaches.
- **Scooter or car**: Many visitors rent a scooter, a jeep or a car to circle the island in a day.
- **Bike**: The island is flat. Take sun protection and water.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

San Miguel's seafront and centre are walkable. The island's beaches and sights are spread out.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The island is flat, but the sun is strong and the east coast road has traffic and wind.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: A rental car or scooter is a good way to see the whole island in a day. Taxis are easier for single trips.
- **Roads**: A ring road circles the south of the island. Most of the east coast has only one road, with few services.
- **Safety**: Wear a helmet on a scooter. Watch for sand on bends and for slow traffic.

Food & drink

Seafood is the main food: ceviche, grilled fish, lobster in season and fish tacos. Yucatecan dishes such as cochinita pibil and lime soup are common in San Miguel.

Local restaurants a few streets back from the seafront are cheaper than those on the waterfront. Cozumel also has a chocolate and coffee shop scene.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Cochinita Pibil
Slow-roasted, citrus- and achiote-marinated pork, a Yucatán specialty traditionally cooked in an underground pit.

DINNER

Mole
A complex sauce, often built from chiles, spices, and sometimes chocolate; mole poblano and Oaxaca's several moles are the best known versions.

Chiles en Nogada
A Puebla dish of stuffed poblano chiles topped with a walnut cream sauce and pomegranate seeds, in the colors of the Mexican flag.

Pozole
A hominy stew with pork or chicken, topped with shredded cabbage, radish, and chile, traditionally eaten on special occasions.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Tacos
Corn or flour tortillas filled with meat, fish, or vegetables, with endless regional and stall-to-stall variation.

Tamales
Corn dough filled with meat, cheese, or vegetables, wrapped in a corn husk or banana leaf and steamed.

Elote/Esquites · Elote / Esquites
Grilled or boiled corn on the cob (elote) or served off the cob in a cup (esquites), topped with mayonnaise, cheese, chile, and lime.

DRINKS

Mezcal
A smoky agave spirit from Oaxaca and several other states, distinct from tequila, traditionally sipped neat.

Tequila
An agave spirit from the region around the town of Tequila in Jalisco, Mexico's best-known export spirit.

Horchata
A sweet, cinnamon-spiced rice-based drink, popular as a non-alcoholic accompaniment to spicy food.

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Safety & health

San Miguel and the tourist areas are generally safe. Take usual care with bags and phones at night.

- Currents are strong on the east coast. Swim only at marked, sheltered beaches.
- Dive with a licensed operator and follow depth and time limits.
- Use reef-safe sunscreen. Do not touch coral or marine life.
- Hurricane season is June to November. Follow weather news and your hotel's advice.
- Drink purified or bottled water.

History

Cozumel was a Maya pilgrimage site, where women came to honour Ixchel, the goddess of fertility and the moon. The Spanish arrived in 1518. The island was nearly empty for much of the colonial period.

Jacques Cousteau's visit in the 1960s brought divers to the reef. Tourism became the main industry after that.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Mexico at a glance:

CURRENCY
MXN $

EMERGENCY
911

ELECTRICITY



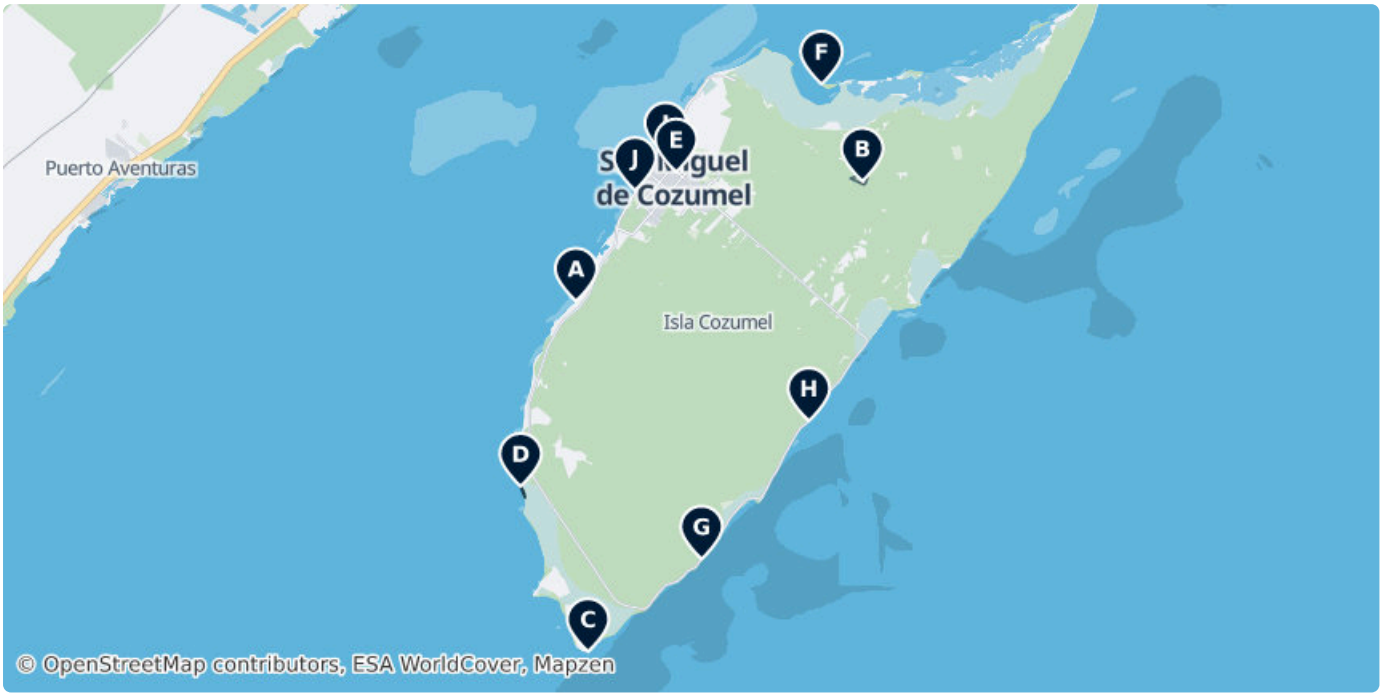
Type A / Type B
127 V · 60 Hz

LANGUAGES
Spanish

TAP WATER
Not safe to drink

Cozumel Essentials

Cozumel offers a diverse blend of natural conservation and Mayan heritage. This list highlights the island's dual nature, from the world-renowned coral formations at Palancar Reef and the stingray encounters at Stingray Beach to the pre-Columbian archaeological site of San Gervasio. Explore the ecological diversity of Chankanaab National Park and the historic Celarain lighthouse at Punta Sur. For a change of pace, visit the secluded eastern shores at Chen Rio and El Mirador, or immerse yourself in the local culture of San Miguel at The Plaza and the island's dedicated museum.





A Chankanaab National Park

This park showcases the amazing variety of Mexican fauna and flora and focuses on preserving it as well as raising awareness.

Mexico (20.44260, -86.99421)

+52 9878724014



B San Gervasio Ruins

San Gervasio is an archaeological site of the pre-Columbian Maya civilization, located in the northern third of the island of Cozumel off...

Mexico (20.50086, -86.84613)



C Celarain lighthouse

Punta Sur marks the southern point of Cozumel and is part of the Parque Punta Sur, a 247-acre ecological park that covers the reefs,...

(Unnamed Road), Mexico (20.27276, -86.98802)

+52 987 872 0914



D Palancar Reef

Palancar Reef is a large coral reef on the southwest side of the island of Cozumel and is part of the Arrecifes de Cozumel National Park.

Mexico (20.35289, -87.02288)



E The Plaza

Downtown San Miguel is the right place to enjoy yourself. It is surrounded by bars, restaurants and clubs.

894 Avenida Benito Juárez, Cozumel 77667, Mexico (20.50525, -86.94244)



F Passion Island

Beautiful and warm Caribbean Sea together with long sandy beaches create the perfect conditions for your holiday here.

Mexico (20.54776, -86.86727)



G El Mirador Lookout

Perfect observation point to view the wild beauty of the Caribbean Sea or Cuba on sunny days. Take a lot of pictures.

Carretera Costera S, Mexico (20.31762, -86.92930)



H Chen Rio Beach

A bit secluded, this beach is considered to be one of the best on the island. Sandy coast and clear water - you'll love it.

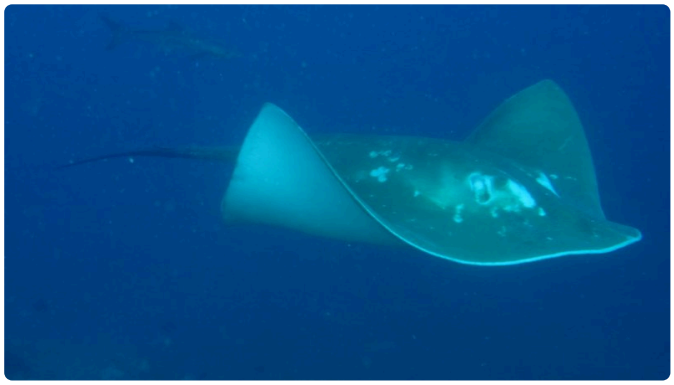
Carretera Costera S, Mexico (20.38462, -86.87375)

I Cozumel Museum

Museum worth visiting not only for its archaeological artifacts and natural exhibits but also for its building itself.

Calle 6 Norte, Centro, San Miguel, Quintana Roo, Mexico (20.51315, -86.94783)

+52 987 872 1434



J Stingray Beach

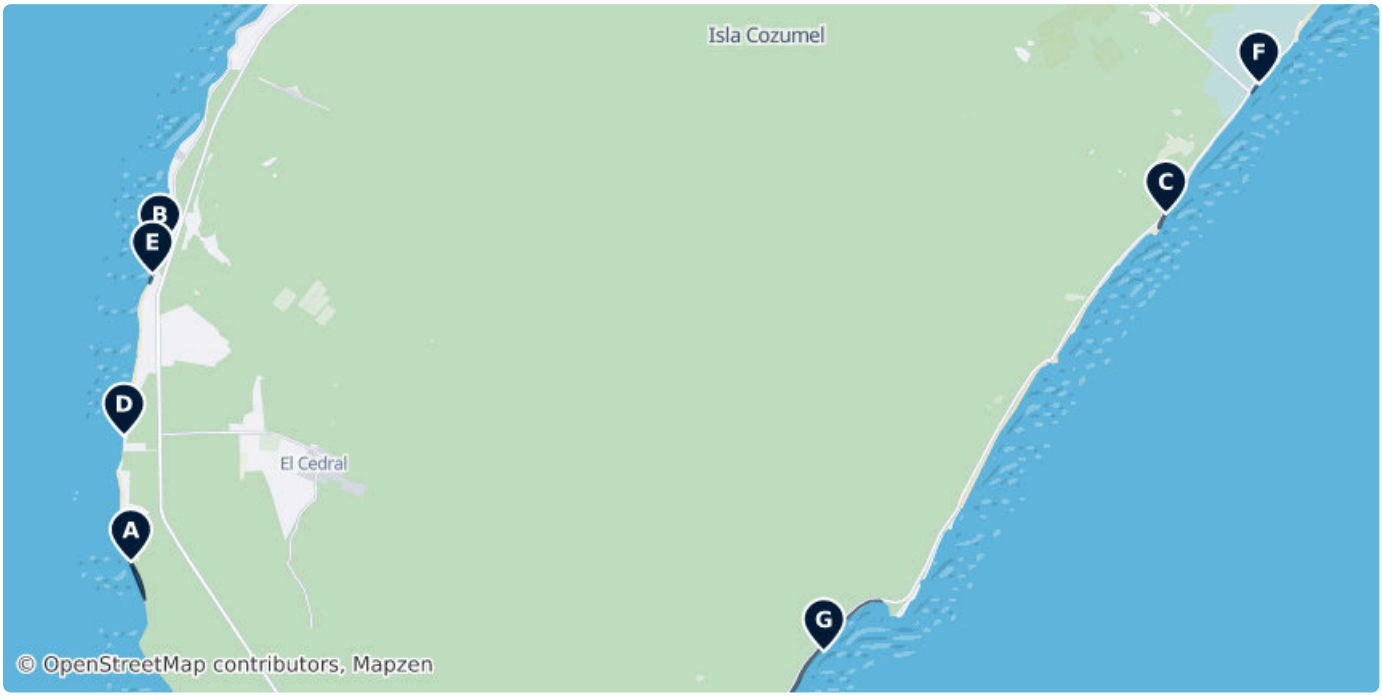
Unique attraction - come here to encounter stingrays and other wildlife at very close distance. Your kids will love it.

Avenida Rafael E. Melgar, Mexico (20.49635, -86.96375)

stingraybeach.com, +52 987 872 49 32

Best Beaches in Cozumel

Cozumel's coastline offers a distinct contrast between the sheltered west side and the rugged east shore. Along the west, Palancar Reef and Alberto's Beach provide access to the Arrecifes de Cozumel National Park's world-renowned coral formations and calm diving waters. Family-oriented spots like Playa Mia and Paradise Beach feature extensive resort amenities and water parks. In contrast, the eastern shore includes Mezcalitos and Punta Morena, where visitors find secluded sandy stretches, quiet nature preserves, and traditional beach bars away from the central tourist hubs.





A Palancar Reef

Palancar Reef is a large coral reef on the southwest side of the island of Cozumel and is part of the Arrecifes de Cozumel National Park.

Mexico (20.35289, -87.02288)



B Paradise Beach

This beach is always busy as it is lined with resorts, pools, restaurants and bars. People just love it here.

Rafael E. Melgar, Quintana Roo, Mexico (20.40033, -87.01824)

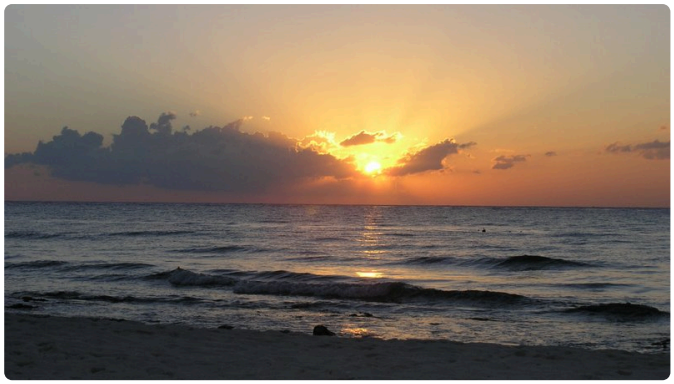
paradise-beach-cozumel.com



C Punta Morena

Relax in quiet nature sceneries, enjoy the Caribbean Sea and great services. Massages, spas and tasty dishes are offered here.

Carretera Costera S, Mexico (20.40532, -86.85654)



D Alberto's Beach

This beach could be called a divers' paradise with its clear water and colorful fish. The local restaurants serves delicious fresh dishes.

Mexico (20.37186, -87.02399)

E Playa Mia Grand Beach Park

Many activities are offered at this beach. Enjoy Mexican food, dive and admire corals or just build a castle from sand.

Mexico (20.39621, -87.01944)

playamiacozumel.com, +52 987 87 29030

F Mezcalitos Beach

Long, sandy beach is an ideal place to swim in the sea or sunbathe. A part of the beach is reserved for nudists.

(Unnamed Road), Mexico (20.42484, -86.84160)

mezcalitos.com, +52 987 876 0914

G Punta Chiqueros Beach

Known as Playa Bonita, this sandy beach features crystal clear water and a bar serving delicious drinks.

Carretera Costera S, Mexico (20.33940, -86.91151)

Ancient Mayan Ruins

Cozumel's archaeological landscape centers on San Gervasio, a major pre-Columbian pilgrimage site dedicated to the goddess Ixchel. The island's ruins include Castillo Real, which served as a coastal watchtower, and the small inland site of El Cedral. In the south, the Punta Sur region features unique structures like El Caracol, designed to whistle as a warning for approaching hurricanes. These sites illustrate the island's historical importance as a strategic maritime hub and religious center for the Maya civilization.





A San Gervasio Ruins

San Gervasio is an archaeological site of the pre-Columbian Maya civilization, located in the northern third of the island of Cozumel off...

Mexico (20.50086, -86.84613)



B Mulchí

Pre-Hispanic Mayan settlement situated on the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, south of Puerto Morelos.

Mexico (20.57926, -87.12390)

C Castillo Real

Translated as 'Royal Castle', this Mayan ruin used to be a temple or a guarding tower. Climb there and watch the Caribbean.

(Unnamed Road), Mexico (20.53484, -86.74969)

D El Cedral

This archaeological site is worth visiting only if you're around or totally devoted to ruins - it is rather small compared to other sites.

(Unnamed Road), Mexico (20.36683, -86.99357)

E Caracol Mayan Vestige

Small coastal structure in Punta Sur Eco Beach Park that functioned as a hurricane warning system, using wind to produce a whistling sound.

(20.28076, -86.97787)

F Tumba del Caracol

Ancient Mayan temple in the Punta Sur region, featuring architectural elements resembling sea shells.

(Unnamed Road), Mexico (20.28013, -86.97923)

DATA SOURCES

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