

# ISLA Cozumel

TRAVEL GUIDE



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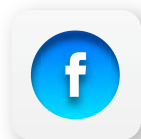
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# ISLA Cozumel

*With a Mexican heart and a Caribbean soul*

With a Mexican heart and a Caribbean soul, Cozumel is a paradise where tradition, flavor and joy come together. You will always find a friendly face and a warm welcome to make your stay an unforgettable one. Cozumel's mostly undeveloped territory at the center of the island is covered by jungle and swampy lagoons, which are home to tiny mammals and endemic birds that have never left

the island. Noteworthy is the Chankanaab National Park, a Cozumel icon, and the Punta Sur Ecological Reserve. This huge protected area at the southern tip of the island includes Punta Celarain and its historical lighthouse, as well as the Colombia Lagoon, a shelter for many of the island's endemic species, as well as other endangered forms of life, such as marine turtles and their nesting areas.

With its beautiful beaches and exotic locale, Cozumel is an ideal destination where honeymooners can enjoy colorful and breathtaking sunsets, moonlit walks on secluded beaches, swim through crystal clear blue waters and romantic candlelight dinners. Explore the beautiful waterfront and charming downtown area of San Miguel in a calm and quite atmosphere,

*Cozumel offers a wide range of accommodations to fit every taste, restaurants for all palates and top-rate bars. If shopping is what you prefer, Cozumel has it all, small shops for souvenirs, colorful crafts and the most elite and luxurious jewelry stores.*



*Famous all over the world for its coral reefs, there are plenty of water sports such as diving, deep-sea fishing, snorkeling, kayaking and more.*

and feel the warmth and hospitality of its people. Cozumel has an international airport with direct flights from major cities from the USA such as Atlanta Dallas, Denver, Charlotte and Houston among others. As well as, domestic flights from Guadalajara, Monterrey and Mexico City; there is also an air shuttle from Cancun. With fast boats, regular schedules and convenient service you can be in

Cozumel in 40 minutes departing from Playa del Carmen starting as early as 7:00 to as late as 23.00 hrs. It is the first island in the world to receive the distinction "Island of Peace" by the NGO-UN International Committee. Beside, Cozumel is a member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the Sustainable Cities Network of UNESCO, as well as being the First Intelligent Island of Mexico.

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This island has a rich history and the people from Cozumel are faithful guardians of their cultural traditions. During the 3rd century D.C. Maya groups came from Petén, region of northern Guatemala. And in some places of the island there are vestiges of this culture, especially in the area known as Santa Rita and part of San Gervasio. In the 7th century AD, during the Late Classic period, the Mayan-putunes migrated from southern Campeche and Tabasco to Cozumel, changing the social organization, the architecture and the religion. There were numerous temples throughout the island, more than 30 archaeological sites have been documented, but there were six main settlements: Muluk Mul (Eleven Hills), it was a commercial port located near the cove; Xamanha (Northland), known today as Cozumel City, was the main port, a commercial center and the place where the pilgrims arrived to the island; Tantun Cuzamil (flat stone of the place of the swallows) religious and administrative center known today as San Gervasio; Oycib (nest or the place of honey) agricultural center, known today as The Cedral;

Colombia and Buena Vista (the Mayan name is unknown), located on the east coast. The first Spanish expedition to visit Cozumel was led by Juan de Grijalva in 1518, and he was amazed at the signs of civilization shown everywhere, especially in the architecture. The Spanish captain named the island "Isla de la Santa Cruz" (Holy Cross Island) and the first Catholic mass

## DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF THE ISLAND

*Cozumel became an important stop on the coastal trade route that extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the Central American Caribbean coastal towns. With this changes came the cult of Ixchel, goddess of the moon, the love, the birth and the fertility. Maya women seeking to ensure a fruitful marriage would travel to the sanctuary of Ixchel on Cozumel, so it became the most important place of pilgrimage throughout the Mayan world, after Chichén Itzá.*



*The Spanish explorers encountered complex cities rivaling or surpassing those in Europe, an extensive knowledge in the medical field, remarkable artistic and scientific achievements, and the Mayan calendar more accurate than the Gregorian calendar.*



in Meso-America was celebrated, on May 6, 1518, at a location currently named Las Casitas (little houses). During colonial times, the island was practically uninhabited and by the early 17th century pirates had discovered Cozumel and used it as a safe harbor. The island was resettled in 1848, when refugees escaping the tumult of the Caste War of Yucatán arrived to Cozumel. The new settlers became fishermen and farmers growing fruits, henequen and gum. In the mid-20th century, the crystal clear waters and the amazing reefs of Cozumel brought the attention

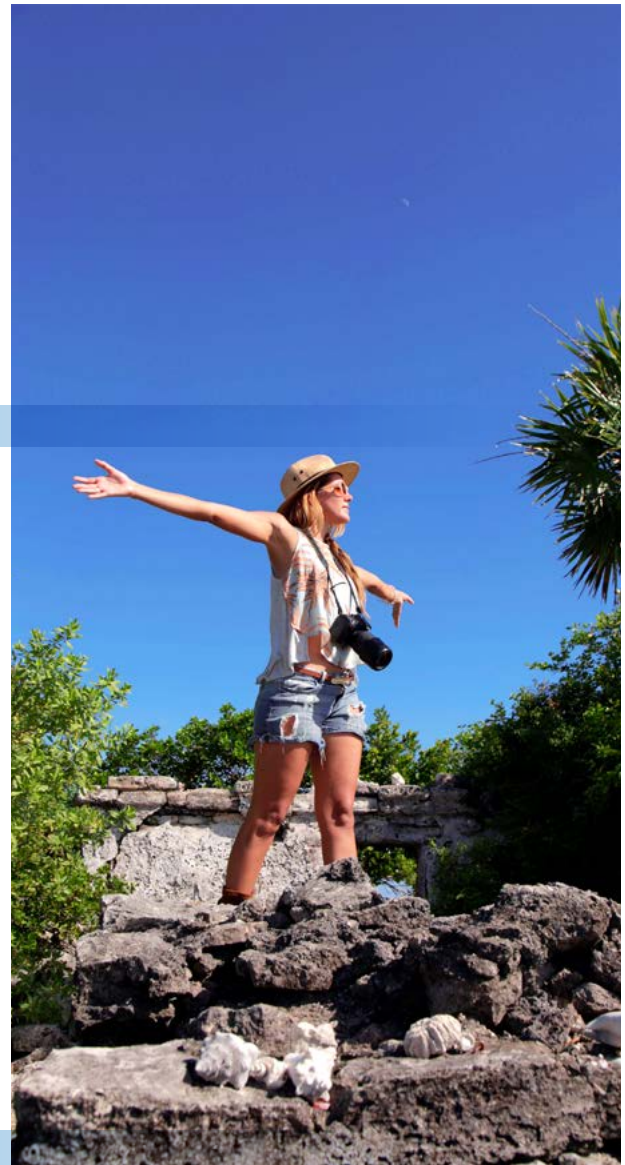
of diving enthusiasts. In the late 1960s the famous oceanographer Jacques Cousteau visit the island and turned Cozumel into an internationally recognized dive destination, now ranked as one of the top five scuba diving areas in the world. In the 1970s the principal cruise lines include Cozumel into their itineraries, and became the most important cruise line destinations in Mexico. Cozumel has been able to preserve an austere simplicity, enveloped in a

tranquil and peaceful atmosphere of a lovely fishing village.

# MAYAN INHERITANCE IN COZUMEL

## EL CEDRAL

It is the oldest archaeological site on the island but only sparse evidence remains of El Cedral's past glory, because much of the site was destroyed by conquistadors, but it is the oldest site on the island. Today is the site of the Festival of El Cedral celebration held each May. Commemorating the Day of the Holy Cross, the 150+ year tradition honors the safe passage of 11 founding families who fled the mainland for Cozumel in 1848 during the "Guerra de Castas" (the Caste War).







## SAN GERVASIO

Marvel at the natural environment and the mysteries of San Gervasio. It is the most important Mayan site in Cozumel's Island. You can become part of Mayan culture and its mysteries. San Gervasio was a sacred Maya site, plus a strategic site for commerce and politics in the area. It was a sanctuary to Goddess Ixchel and an obligatory visit site for Mayas once in their lifetime. The site includes several architectural complexes connected by a network of sacbes (ancient elevated roads). The first group, known as Manitas because of the red-colored handprints on the interior walls, was the residence of the halach unik, or the Mayan ruler of Cozumel. It has an outer room and an inner sanctum. As one goes further, you can see a small temple named Nah Chichán or Small House. The road to the west leads to the "El Álamo" building, that along with "El Palacio" (The Palace), "Los Murales" (The Murals), "El Osario" (The Ossuary) and "Las Pilastras" (The Pilasters) are a group of buildings used as palaces and ceremonial centers. At the northwest corner of the square there is a Maya arch. This corbelled arch is the entrance of the main religious Sacbé. Walking along this pathway you get to Nohoch Nah or Big House, one of the best preserved buildings in the site, the interior walls

still show signs of a red, ochre and blue mural painting, and behind the building there is a cenote. To the west you will find "Los Murciélagos" (The Bats), the older building in San Gervasio, the compound is made up of several rooms and out-buildings. The largest single structure is Ka'na Nah or Tall House, this structure may have been a temple for Ixchel. Open daily from 8:00 to 15:45 hrs.

### EL CARACOL

The site was occupied during the Late Post classic (AD 1200-1500). It's believed to have been a lighthouse where Maya used smoke and flames to lead boats to safety. The site has three

main structures, two temples and an altar. "El Caracol" (The Snail) is a small, conch-shaped structure with openings at the top acting as whistles to alert Maya to approaching tropical storms and hurricanes. It is located inside the Punta Sur Ecological Reserve. Open daily from 9:00 to 16:00 hrs.

### CASTILLO REAL

A 1200-year-old Maya site on the eastern coast of the island. The castillo (castle) comprises a lookout tower, the base of a pyramid, and a temple with two chambers capped by a false arch. The waters here harbor several shipwrecks and it's a fine spot for snorkeling.



# WHAT TO SEE IN COZUMEL



## SAN MIGUEL

This is the largest town in the island; it was named in honor of Archangel Michael, considered the protector of Cozumel. When you walk through the town, the streets come alive with colored buildings and you feel immediately in a Caribbean village. The downtown area along the ocean front street is loaded with boutiques, restaurants, bars, shops with souvenirs and crafts and just about everything you could imagine. At night the

island, offers many options to have fun and spend unforgettable moments.

### MUSEO SUBACUÁTICO DEL BUZO DE ORO (MUSUBO)

The Underwater Museum of the Golden Diver (MUSUBO) was inaugurated by Jean-Michel Cousteau in the Cozumel Scubafest diving festival. This underwater museum seeks to diversify water tourism and reduce the impact of visitors to the Cozumel Reef National Park. This area pays homage to the men and women who love the sea and are part of the history of diving. It is also a way to promote aquatic activities with incredible underwater bronze sculptures of different shapes and sizes submerged between 3 and 5 meters depth that with time have been covered of marine life. In addition, it is the only underwater park illuminated in the world.

### SEA WALLS: "ARTISTS FOR OCEANS"

It is an innovative urban art project created by members of a non-profit organization based in Hawaii, known as PangeaSeed. This is an art program that brings the oceans into streets around the world. With the help of a growing community of 300+ supporting artists, the organization has a continuous work of bringing attention to the global plight of the oceans through ARTivism. In Cozumel world-renowned artists have created large-scale public murals on the island in which educational efforts were joined with the community, focusing attention on the serious environmental situations currently facing the oceans, promoting the importance of long-term sustainability of natural resources.

### ISLAND MUSEUM

A former luxury hotel, features four exhibit rooms. The exhibits on the ground floor focus on Cozumel's ecosystems. The second floor offers a comprehensive

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overview of the island throughout history with a display of ancient Maya artifacts, and an exhibit of Cozumel's cultural and

economic development during the 20th century. Open Monday to Saturday from 9:00 to 16:00 hrs.



### *DISCOVER MEXICO*

It is a cultural theme park about Mexico, where the entire family can truly experience this rich country through its different historical periods and amazing culture: pre-Hispanic, Colonial, and modern. This park is truly spectacular, as you will enjoy an exterior walk of Mexico's most important archeological sites and colonial buildings, on site museum with temporary and permanent exhibits, as well as a state-of-the-art video experience room to view award-winning videos and documentaries, and a pleasant place to enjoy regional food. Open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 to 16:00 hrs.

### *EL PUEBLO DEL MAÍZ (THE PEOPLE OF CORN)*

This has become one of the best attractions in the island. It is a journey back in time where you can live a Mayan experience. Enjoy part of the pre-Hispanic history visiting a chewing gum camp to show you the

process of gum extraction from the great tree of the "chicozapote". The tour continues in the temple of Ixchel to pray for the fertility of the earth. Once the offerings have been delivered the Xaman will purify the visitors to grant them access to the town of the People of the Corn, where you will be received with dances full of mysticism and a welcome ceremony. There are several palapas offering experiences that date back to ancient times of the Maya culture, and each

one will receive you with unique activities dedicated to the hallowed lord of the corn (Hunal-ye), to the deity of the honey bee (Xunan kab), the venerable lord of cocoa (Ek-chuah), to the sisal (Soskil), and to the art of amatecatl or feather art. You will be able to share the inheritance of body painting, making your face or body a perfect canvas, or enjoy the process of preparing the chocolate in a metate, or make a rope with the sisal fiber.

*More about Cozumel*



# SAN MIGUEL MAP



## SYMBOLGY

-  Airport
-  Shopping Mall
-  Church
-  Ferry
-  Cruise Port
-  Museum
-  Point of interest
-  Convenience Store
-  Medical service

# MAP OF COZUMEL

## SYMBOLOLOGY

Airport	Small pyramids
Diving	Museum
Snorkel	Swimming
Lighthouse	Horse ride
Ferry	Fishing
Golf	Windsurf
Jet Ski	Archaeological zones
Kayak	Cruise Port





# FALL IN LOVE IN A PARADISE ISLAND

Cozumel is the country's biggest island destination – big enough to have its own international airport. This makes it a breeze for destination wedding guests to fly into Cozumel from a wide range of cities within Mexico and the U.S. Beside it has the charm of a Caribbean island with the influence of the ancient Mayan culture.

The island is a magic romantic place where incredible sunsets, the white sand beaches, and the gorgeous Caribbean Sea blue colors can be the perfect background to a dream wedding, or just to live unforgettable romantic moments.

Cozumel has amazing places like small secluded beaches surrounded by jungle landscapes, a beautiful lighthouse, natural reserves and more. There are many great hideaways ideal for a romantic evening, a honeymoon escapade, a couple's weekend getaway, and even an intimate anniversary celebration.

In case you want to have your perfect wedding in Cozumel, couples would be well-served to build a relationship with an onsite wedding coordinator, who will help handle the details and decisions that contribute to a successful wedding.

The ancient Mayan traditions can be part of the ceremony with an enchanting backdrop either of jungle or a beach. The shaman, a traditional healer, will bless your union in front of the four elements (fire, water, earth and air), asking for the energy of the Universe to be present, and giving you both a bond of energy and everlasting love.

Cozumel is surrounded by crystal clear waters and spectacular coral formations, beside the visibility is incredible year round, so why not plan your dream event underwater. For the ocean lover's, you will be able to exchange your vows in the second biggest reef formation in the world. There are judges and priests who are certified divers and can officiate these original ceremonies. This idea will ensure lifetime memories and an experience neither you or your guests will forget.

If you want to enjoy the scenery of the reefs of Cozumel but you do not want to get wet, you can have the ceremony inside a submarine.

This idyllic Caribbean island offers plenty of places for a romantic moment and a number of activities to do with your loved one.



# ENJOY THE COZUMEL CUISINE



The island offers a delicious variety of cuisine, and many restaurants offers exceptional views of the turquoise blue waters of the Mexican Caribbean.

The culinary traditions of Cozumel are based mostly in typical Yucatecan cuisine, but also has some other influences derived from the intense cultural exchange occurred in the island for centuries.

Surrounded by deep, blue ocean waters, Cozumel's chefs have access to the freshest bounty of the sea. One of the simplest dishes served on the island's outdoor beach restaurants, is freshly caught grilled fish, snapper or grouper, served on a banana leaf plate with salsa, fresh corn tortillas and lemons. You can also try the "pescado al mojo de ajo" fried with butter and garlic sauce, or the "pescado tikin-xic", a typical island dish, filets or a whole fish covered with thin coating of achiote paste (crushed seeds of the tropical annatto bush combined with other species) and baked in banana leaves.

There are restaurants in Cozumel serving traditional Yucatecan dishes like Cochinita Pibil (pork flavored with achiote and sour orange, then wrapped in banana leaves and baked in a pit dug in the ground), papadzules (tortillas filled with hard boiled egg and a spicy pumpkin seed sauce), sopa de lima (a delicate broth made with lime juice, poached chicken and fried tortilla strips).

The gastronomy of Cozumel has been enriched by a small invader in its waters: the Lionfish. This fish has no natural predators in the Caribbean, and in addition, this exotic glutton eats everything it can stuff in its mouth, and the fish are destroying life on the coral reef. The island inhabitants decided to eat this fish enhancing to restore the balance of the area. The Lionfish is a delicacy that is prepared in ceviche, grilled or breaded with coconut.

In the Cozumel restaurants, there is something for everyone. You can satisfy your craving for Italian, Chinese or Continental food, as well as traditional American favorites. Those who enjoy the finest cuisine won't be disappointment, since restaurant choices include an eclectic combination of local and international cuisine. Many of these restaurants are located along the boardwalk and in downtown San Miguel.

If you want to experience some real local Mayan food, you can try the tasty cochinita pibil tacos in one of the many street food stands.

# COZUMEL A NATURAL PARADISE



Cozumel is Mexico's largest Caribbean island, and Mexico's third-largest island. The island is a treasure trove of biodiversity, here you will find all the ecosystems of the Yucatan Peninsula: reef, coastal dunes, forests and wetlands.

Like that of all tropical regions, Cozumel's plant life is varied and plentiful, here you can find 542 species of plants, that means about 40 percent of the flora of the State of Quintana Roo. Among them, there are some endemic, like four species of mangroves and one palm of the region, known as Chit.



The immense coral reef structures, teeming with a wealth of vibrant marine life surrounding the island, along with the management and conservation measures, have placed Cozumel as one of the 5 top dive sites in the world. The reef system of Cozumel consists of over 1100 marine species, of which 403 are algae, 62 coral, 293 fish, 301 invertebrates (sea urchins, starfish, crustaceans, mollusks and polychaetes) and 67 sponges, an absolute world treasure.

The Island has been known to be a paradise for tourist but you may not know that it is home to more than 30 endemic animal species like the lizard picasombra, the raccoon *Procyonpigmaeus* dwarf, the dwarf coati *Nasua badger* or *nelsoni*, tamanduas and the Cozumel thrasher. It is considered home to 23 species of amphibians and reptiles, 224 of birds, 15 land-mammals and 24 bats.

To preserve this unique biodiversity, over 185,000 hectares have been declared as protected area. Means 75% of island's area is protected; this is the highest percentage of territory as natural parks in Mexico.

The indigenous snakes are not poisonous. Crocodiles live only in the lagoons and mangroves, and there are no big cats on the island. The island is a safe environment for scholars and observers of nature.

Cozumel is one of the favorite places of the marine turtles to spawn. Thousands of turtles such as green sea turtle and the hawksbill turtle arrive to the beaches of island during the summer and part of autumn.





# PROTECTED AREAS OF COZUMEL



Cozumel has five natural areas that promote the conservation of the unique natural resources of the island.

## COZUMEL REEFS NATIONAL MARINE PARK

The site covers 11,987 ha. of coral reefs off the southern coast of Cozumel island. Part of the great Mesoamerican reef, known as the second biggest coral reef in the world. It contains rich biological communities among the coral formations and a wide reef lagoon with sea grasses fields. The authorities verify the physical condition of the reefs and instruct the tourist resort managers, diving instructors, local community and visitors with policies towards conservation and management of the reefs.

### WHAT TO DO ?

It is considered one of the best places in the world to practice diving.



## FLORA AND FAUNA PROTECTION AREA "THE NORTHERN PORTION AND THE EASTERN, TERRESTRIAL AND MARINE COASTAL STRIP OF THE ISLAND OF COZUMEL (APFFIC)

The new area offers protection for flora and fauna, both on land and water, and spans the northern and eastern coastal strip. The total area is 93,477 acres (37,829 hectares.) with a great diversity of ecosystems such as reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, coastal dunes, jungles and the largest system of wetlands and coastal lagoons of the island. It is an important area that protects terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species. For conservation of biodiversity, environment, and natural resources there are several guidelines associated with cultural values and traditional natural resource management system.

### WHAT TO DO ?

Located north of the island, is a place that offers beautiful scenery and the opportunity to venture out to enjoy nature. There are some of the most beautiful beaches of the island and a recognizable landmark, the old lighthouse at Punta Molas, which is accessible only with a 4x4 vehicle through a narrow unpaved road surrounded by tropical vegetation. The beaches are not suitable for swimming, but you can enjoy a panoramic view, since it is hard to see the coast of the Riviera Maya, as well as cruise ships and yachts arriving to the island by the north channel of Cozumel.

The beaches here are generally too dangerous for swimming but if you can climb to the top of the lighthouse, you will be rewarded with 360-degree views of the coastline and the Eco reserve.

You should carry everything you need for a day on a secluded beach because you will not find any services. Also, there are some ruins near the waterline, "Castillo Real" (Royal Castle), in front of the lighthouse worth checking out.



### *CHANKANAAB NATIONAL PARK*

It is a state protected area, with an area of almost 14 hectares of land. Chankanaab boasts the world's only inland coral reef, and is home to numerous ecosystems and a natural aquarium with over 60 species of tropical fish, crustaceans and corals.

#### *WHAT TO DO ?*

The park is adventure, fun, tranquility and security. It provides dedicated areas for scuba diving and snorkeling. The shallow site promotes opportunities to take underwater photos of a 14-foot Christ statue and a smaller statue of the Virgin Mary against a background teeming with marine life. Here you can swim with the dolphins and enjoy the lush green vegetation of the island.

### *COLUMBIA LAGOON, AREA SUBJECT TO ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (PUNTA SUR ECOLOGICAL PARK)*

With an area of more than a thousand hectares (247-acre), the Natural Protected Area has a remarkable variety of natural wonders. There are coastal dunes, mangroves, lagoon systems and beautiful beaches.

#### *WHAT TO DO ?*

At the park's (and the island's) southernmost point stands the Faro Celarain, and in what used to be the lighthouse keeper's home, there is a museum dedicated to navigation with five exhibit rooms depicting Maya navigators, buccaneers, marine navigational signs and a display on how lighthouse keepers lived in the 1930's.

The highlights of this park include wide and deserted beautiful beaches that serve as a sanctuary for sea turtles, and there's great snorkeling offshore. Spot crocodiles and birds from observation towers near Colombia Lagoon or take the amazing boat ride on the Colombia Lagoon and enter a world of mangroves, creeping plants and coastal jungles.

### *FORESTS AND WETLANDS OF COZUMEL STATE PARK*

It is a State Protected Natural Area, which covers an area of nearly 20,000 ha of jungle. It is home to 30 endemic species found in island. It is an important place with a unique biodiversity, which seeks to protect each of its elements, but primarily the results of forest and water ecosystem interaction.

#### *WHAT TO DO ?*

It is an excellent option for those who like bird watching and enjoy nature.

# ENJOY THE UNDERWATER WORLD



## DIVING IN COZUMEL

There is no other diving destination in the Caribbean that can compete with Cozumel.

The crystal clear waters surrounding the island offer spectacular coral formations and the sight of hundreds of colorful fishes. It is rightly considered among the top - five diving destinations in the world. The reefs surrounding Cozumel's shores are some of the largest and oldest coral reefs in the world, and there are 40 different dive sites offering a variety of dive environments including dramatic depths, inspiring underwater cliffs, intriguing caverns, and idyllic shallow reefs.

The currents in these reefs are normally moderate to strong, so Cozumel is famous for its drift diving. Visibility is incredible year round and water temperature varies very little between the winter and summer months. During winter the water temperature hovers around 77-82°F, and you can count with average visibility of 40 feet. During the summer months the temperatures are warmest -

up to around 85°F, and visibility can be 100-plus feet.

## DIVING SEASONS

There's no bad time to visit Cozumel. However, the summer months offer better weather, increased water clarity and better visibility, but you must keep in mind that hurricane

season runs from June until the end of November. The air temperature ranges from 18-32 ° C/65-90 ° F. The rainy season runs from May to October and the dry season is from November to April. May and June have the highest rate of humidity.

## EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

There are a wide variety of diving and snorkeling shops in Cozumel. All of them have trained captains, dive masters and instructors with experience. There is always staff trained oxygen first aid, CPR and decompression sickness. You may rent or buy specialized equipment; tanks, weights and weight belts are included for all divers. You can also rent quality photographic equipment. However, it is always a good idea to carry your mask, fins, snorkel and regulator. Heavy wetsuits are rarely necessary due to the warm water conditions, Lycra or 3mm (1/8 inch) suits are more than fine, you have to keep in mind that drift diving does tend to chill the body a little more. Beside you are not allowed to wear scuba gloves while scuba diving to prevent divers from the temptation of touching any plant life or animal while in the water.

In Cozumel you can become a Certified Scuba Dive or enroll in the PADI Open Water Diver course and learn the basic diving techniques that are required to visit the underwater environment.

You can select the boat according to the size of your group and your budget. There are many options, fast boats easily reach the many excellent reefs located on the southern end of the island, but there are also luxury boats, or even catamarans.

To dive in Cozumel Reefs National Marine Park, you have to look for boats that have the corresponding authorization.

# REEFS OF COZUMEL, A NATURE'S HIDDEN TREASURE

NORTH COAST - WEST SIDE OF THE ISLAND



## BARRACUDA REEF

Depth: 45' - 110'

Skill level: Expert

Current: Strong

Type: wall/drift/deep

Photography: No

It is located on the north end of the island. Because of the severity of conditions, the Port Captain monitors and restricts tourist diving in this area heavily. Even in good weather, the current runs 2 to 3 knots and down-currents along the wall are not uncommon. These ocean conditions attract large pelagic like nurse sharks and eagle rays, but you can also see lobsters, crabs and turtles.

## SAN JUAN REEF

Huge beautiful fields of finger coral, which houses thousands of Damselfish, dominate the coral here. You will also enjoy with big barrel sponges oddly shaped reflecting the continual swift current and nice patches of lettuce coral. Just like in Barracuda Reef, the Port Captain monitors and restricts tourist diving in this area heavily because of the severity of conditions.

Depth: 40' - 80'

Skill level: Expert

Current: Strong

Type: reef/drift

Photography: No

## CANTAREL REEF (SPOTTED EAGLE RAY WALL)

This is a unique place, from December until the end of February, Spotted Eagle Ray females start to promenade, so it is not uncommon to see as many as 20 rays swimming by the wall at about 80'. It sits amidst a large sand bank and has many sponges and soft coral with a unique scenic beauty.

Depth: 40' - 100'

Skill level: Intermediate

Current: Moderate to Strong

Type: reef/drift

Photography: No



### VILLA BLANCA SHALLOWS, WALL

Depth: 35' - 50' Shallows/ 50' - 60' Wall

Skill level: Novice

Current: Moderate

Type: wall/reef/drift

Photography: Yes

This is a great beach dive (day or night) accessible for all skill levels. The dive is usually done between the cruise ship peers. Abundance of tropical fish and vibrant coral makes it a photographer's paradise. There are golden-tail eels, squirrelfish and lots of sea fans.

Villa Blanca is a sloping wall, dominated by huge basket sponges, barrel sponges, gorgonians, and big schools of jacks and angelfish. Not uncommon to see spotted eagle rays and some turtles in this area.

The local university, tourist services and environmental authorities are undertaking a major project in Villa Blanca with artificial reefs to increase reef areas and restore the areas damage by hurricanes and other factors.

### LAS PALMAS SHALLOWS, WALL

Skin Diver Magazine readers in 2002 considered it the best snorkel spot in the Caribbean, and it makes an excellent beach or boat dive both day and night. The rough tube sponges, brain coral, and rope sponge predominate. There are patches of coral growth throughout the sandy bottom filled with lobsters, crabs, golden-tail eels, spotted morays and splendid toadfish. In the sand flats you can see turtles and sting rays, especially during the winter months.

Slants smoothly to a wall. Most action is near the top or above the slant. Be sure to check the direction of the current as it often varies and often runs a bit stronger along the wall. This is a great night dive.

Depth: 20' - 40' Shallows / 50' - 70' Wall/  
Cave 35'

Skill level: Novice to Intermediate

Current: Moderate

Type: wall/reef/drift

Photography: Yes

Snorkel: Yes



### PARADISE REEF

Depth: 25' - 40'

Skill level: Novice

Current: Moderate to Strong

Type: Shallow/ drift

Photography: Yes

Snorkel: Excellent

This is actually a series of three separate reefs with excellent visibility, varied coral and abundant marine life, a real paradise! The colorful corals of the reef are crisscrossed by sandy channels and bordered by eelgrass. Because of its proximity to Caleta many dive shops and freelancers use this as a staging area for certification dives. This is one of the few reef areas accessible to beach divers. There are nice coral heads they range from 10'-20' tall that jut out from a sandy bottom, anemones and an assortment of nice sponges. A great place for beginners and a popular spot for night dives. The current runs from south to north normally. You will see Spotted Moray Eels, Spiny Lobster, octopus, large Parrot Fish, Splendid Toad Fish and some barracudas. There is a sandy area towards shore, where you can see camouflaged Scorpion Fish and Seahorses. Seven to 10 days after the August full moon, the reef explodes in a reproduction frenzy known as mass coral spawning.

### CHANKANAAB REEF, SHALLOW, BALONES, CAVES

This is a shallow platform reef with mild currents and small coral heads. Here you will discover the Chankanaab Lagoon, a natural aquarium. This name in Maya means "Small Sea", considered one of the most exceptional eco-systems in the world. Visitors can practice completely safe free diving – without a tank – or sports diving. A long continuous band of colorful coral reef filled with cracks and crevices and holes which attract all sorts of marine life like stonefish, scorpion fish, splendid toadfish and lots of trigger and tang fish. Near and under the coral heads you can find Spiny lobster, crabs, Spotted Moray eels, Grunts, and sometimes Lion Fish. Generally the current will run from North to South and the visibility is not as good as other dive sites because of the flow of the cool fresh water from the Chakanaab lagoon. The name comes from a large series of balloon-shaped coral heads. Here you'll find crags measuring 13 to 32 feet with abundant cavities full of marine life such as lobsters, eels and manta rays. Excellent night dive when you can see the typically shy octopus.

An interesting dive found at the south end of park. A unique experience is the mixing of cold fresh water that flows out of the limestone caves called cenotes on top as you can still feel the warm salt water below. Large Tarpan can be found swimming around the entrance of the caves, but try to stay in the ambient light and do not venture far back.

Depth: 30' - 50' Shallow / 60' - 70'

Balones / Caves 35'

Skill level: Novice to Intermediate

Current: Moderate to Strong

Type: shallow/drift

Photography: Yes

Snorkel: Yes



### *C-53 SHIPWRECK XICOTENCATL*

Depth: 50' - 70'

Skill level: Intermediate to Expert

Photography: Yes

Originally built in Tampa at the Wilson Marine Shipworks in 1944. This ship was put into service as mine sweeper for the US Navy as SCUFFLES. In 1962 it was sold to the Mexican Navy, converted to an Admiral Class gunboat and named and numbered Felipe Xicotencatl C-53. After 55 years of service C-53 was donated to Cozumel underwater park. C-53 was sunk in 2000 in 82' of water just off shore from Chankanaab Park.

Marked by a highly visible buoy, the vessel is 184 feet long & 33 feet wide, and 40 feet high from keel to the top of the super structure, Divers should be experienced, since the site generally has a strong current. There is mostly sand close to the wreck, and if you leave the wreck, you will be looking for sand dwelling creatures, such as Manta Shrimp or Peacock Flounder. Always have to be careful not to hit sharp edges and buoyancy control is a must. Underwater photographers have plenty of opportunities to snap great photos of lobster, mackerel and jacks.

### *TORMENTOS REEF*

This dive is usually done as a second dive. Some of the fastest currents can be found here, great for adventurous drift divers. A series of colorful coral heads (20-30' tall) separated by sand valleys and dunes pushed up by prevailing currents. Under the ledges and in holes, you can find lobsters, Angelfish, grunts, snapper and Splendid Toad Fish. It is also common find Black Grouper, Nurse Sharks, Turtles, and King Crabs. There are nice tunnels and overhangs that contain large schools of French Grunts and snappers.

Depth: 50' - 70'

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: Shallow/drift

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

### *SAN CLEMENTE REEF*

Depth: 20' - 30'

Skill level: Novice

Type: Shallow/drift

Current: Moderate

Photography: Yes

This reef is ideal for beginners or qualified divers interested in a long shallow dive. There are small coral heads, with a variety of marine life. Usually done as a second dive.



### *YUCAB SHALLOW/ WALL*

Depth: 45' – 60' / Wall 40' – 130

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: wall/reef/drift

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

This is one of the longest reefs in Cozumel, with an area 4,921 feet long by 65 feet wide. Several dives are needed to fully absorb the site. Yucab is a low profile reef generally with a strong current, which encourages healthy reef growth. Reef heads range from 10'- 20' tall.

In the turtle grass look for stingrays, Sea Horses and Puffer fish. After cruising the turtle grass you will come across a sheer vertical wall. Excellent multilevel computer dive. The sand-scoured overhangs at Yucab offer refuge for lobsters, banded coral shrimps, arrow crab, parrotfish, squirrelfish and angel & butterfly fish always swimming in pairs. You can also see some turtles and barracudas.

### *PUNTA TUNICH REEF*

From a sand bottom at 70 feet, a long ridge of coral rises from the sand dunes between 40 to 60 feet. This vibrant colorful reef is a swift drift dive with many fish to be seen. Often turtles hide in the seagrass. There are an abundance of barrel and rope sponges and a lot of black feather hydroids, which are beautiful to look at but painful to get touched by. You will see large sloping hills of sponges and coral, inhabited by thousands of Damselfish, schools of grunts and snapper, and lots of cruising parrotfish and angelfish. Nurse shark is almost always seen here.

Depth: 50' - 130'

Skill level: Intermediate to Expert

Type: wall/ drift/deep

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: No

### *SAN FRANCISCO REEF SHALLOW/ WALL*

Depth: 35' - 50' / 45' - 120'

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: wall/ drift/deep

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

This a quarter mile long ridge of coral running parallel to the shore, broken into three sections, separated by about 60 yards of sand. This is usually a second dive. This is an especially colorful reef where red, yellow, pink and orange sponges abound. The best dive sights at depths ranging between 25 to 60 feet. A sandy slope leads to a seagrass plain where you may find turtles, giant Parrotfish, French Angelfish, Black Groupers, green moray eels, nurse sharks and in some season eagle rays. This is one of the shallowest wall dives and is loaded with marine life. San Francisco Wall starts at 50' then slopes into an abyss. This is an exciting place to see with pristine sponges, and brain corals. You can go as deep as you want.





### *YELLOW HOUSE REEF ("NO NAME REEF")*

Depth: 35' - 50'      Skill level: Novice  
 Type: Shallow/drift  
 Current: Moderate      Photography: Yes

It seems to be more of a transition reef than one that has permanent fish life. It is a great dive for beginners with a large sandy plain. This is not a popular reef. You will find rope sponges and the soft corals.

### *SANTA ROSA REEFS SHALLOWS / WALL*

Undoubtedly some of the best dive spots in Cozumel and the second most popular drop-off. Usually a very swift current allows you to "fly" along the wall. A perfect place for underwater photography and a good first dive. Excellent multilevel computer dive.

The wall starts at 50 feet and drops straight into the deep! Best dive between 80' and 100' where you can enjoy the beautiful coral formations with many swim through tunnels, overhangs, caves and colorful sponges.

In Santa Rosa expect to see an array of marine creatures like big groupers, lobsters, barracudas, green moray eel, giant Parrotfish, French and Queen Angelfish, lion fish, barracuda and eagle ray, but you can also come across a Hawksbill turtle. You will not be disappointed with this scuba diving adventure.

Depth: 20' - 50' Shallow / 50' - 130' Wall  
 Skill level: Intermediate  
 Type: wall/ drift/deep  
 Current: Moderate to Strong  
 Photography: Yes

### *CARDONA REEF*

Depth: 20' - 30'  
 Skill level: Novice  
 Type: Shallow/ drift  
 Current: Moderate to Strong  
 Photography: Yes      Snorkeling: Yes

This is a perfect shallow dive for beginners with mild currents and great visibility. A great place for underwater panoramic images. There are a number of sea anemones gorgonians and sponges. This reef area is teeming with schools of colorful tropical reef fish.



### *PASO DEL CEDRAL REEF SHALLOWS / WALL*

Depth: 35' - 60' Shallows / 50' - 90' Wall

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: wall/ drift/deep

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

This is a strip reef separated into three sections. The part of the reef that is not a wall consists of a mile of sloping hills covered with star and brain corals, sea fans and colorful sponges. The second section is a labyrinth of interconnected tunnels; one room that connects all of the tunnels is home to a school of glassy sweepers. This site is great for second dives and is a photographer's paradise. The third section splits into two tapering strips where you can see barracuda, spotted moray and nurse shark.

You'll feel like you're flying along a wall while you're not moving a muscle since the current is usually swift. Be sure to stay with your dive leader! You can find many large schools of blue striped grunt, black and yellow striped porkfish and snappers. You will also see trumpet fish, large parrotfish, black groupers, turtles and eagle rays. If lucky you can spot lion fish, large green morays, sharks and some nice sized drum fish.

### *LA FRANCESA REEF*

Depth: 30' - 60'

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: shallow/drift

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

This area is partly a strip of colorful coral as well as patches of small coral heads with a good variety of multicolored sponges and gorgonians. Stay left to follow the main section of the reef. You could easily find butterfly fish, black grouper, splendid toadfish, lobsters, crabs, sharks, turtles and barracudas. Usually done as a second dive is a great spot for photography.

### *PUNTA DALILA REEF*

Depth: 30' - 60'

Skill level: Intermediate Type: shallow/drift

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

Good variety of corals and sponges along with the typically mild current makes this a good choice for photographers. This is a relaxing second dive. Punta Dalila is a reef strip populated by crabs, green morays, angelfish, squirrelfish and schools of grunts. Look carefully in the anemones and find popcorn shrimp and ghost shrimp.



*PALANCAR REEF GARDENS / HORSESHOE / CAVES / BRICKS*

Depth: 40' - 70' Gardens / 25' - 125'  
 Horseshoe / 60' - 90'  
 Caves / 60' - 90' Bricks  
 Skill level: Intermediates to experts  
 Type: shallow/drift/deep  
 Current: Moderate to Strong  
 Photography: Yes

The reef is more than three miles long (5km) and about one mile (1.5km) offshore and is one of the most beautiful reefs in the world. The coral formations are very colorful and have literally hundreds of species of coral jammed together with lavender and orange sponges interspersed, as well as sea fans and a wide variety of marine life. With typically mild currents and great visibility this reef is excellent first dive for those not yet confident in their dive skills.

Palancar Horseshoe gets its name from the shape of its large, natural u-shaped amphitheater, which can be seen from the surface. The corals form tall towers, deep buttresses, gullies and canyons. With these unique diving conditions each dive is an interesting experience. A spectacular dive site to catch some mesmerizing sights and capture some photos, since currents are usually slow running and visibility stays around 200' minimum. The large caves, tunnels and caverns are alive with abundant marine life. Turtle, shark and eagle ray sightings are very common. The beauty of the underwater world will mesmerize you.

Another section of Cozumel's most spectacular reef is Palancar Bricks, an excellent deep dive. Large coral formations rise up from the brilliant white sandy bottom, which easily slopes off, into the blue abyss. The stunning blue color of the abyss contrasted with the sandy bottom is what astonishes most divers visiting this area. You can easily see jacks, turtles, nurse sharks, green moray eels, groupers and eagle rays.

*ARRECIFE COLOMBIA*

This reef offers several options, so you get a little of everything on this dive. Giant barrel Sponges, sea fans and black coral contour the landscape. This reef is renowned for its teeming sea life. This seemingly never ending sea garden is a popular second dive full of colorful tropical fish, schooling snapper and grunts, as well as some barracudas. This is the perfect dive for photographers wanting maximum bottom time. Colombia Deep is a beautiful wall dive with series of gigantic coral pinnacles, almost 100' built over millions of years on the skeletons of ancient coral. There are also caves, tunnels and caverns. Large marine life is common in this area like sea turtles, nurse sharks and eagle ray. You can discover some octopus hiding in the small caves and cracks along the wall.

Depth: 50' - 90' Deep / 15' - 35' Shallows  
 Skill level: Novice to Intermediate  
 Type: wall/drift/deep  
 Current: Moderate to Strong  
 Photography: Yes



## PUNTA SUR REEF

Depth: 50' - 130'

Skill level: Experts

Type: wall/drift/deep

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

An excellent multilevel dive for experienced divers only. This ecosystem is one of the deepest and most impressive dives in Cozumel. Punta Sur has tunnels, caves (including the “Cathedral” chamber and the “Devil’s Throat” vertical passageway) canyons, cracks and vertical columns.

Due to its southern location and exposure to prevailing trade winds, topside conditions can be rough. This coupled with fast running midwater currents that can cause one to miss the dive site entirely, makes this not a dive for those who cannot descend relatively problem free.

The Devil’s Throat is considered is a “must dive” experience by scuba divers visiting Cozumel. It is an underwater cave formation and you enter the swim-through at about 80’ and dump out over the wall at 100’ to 120’ depending on which way you turn at the end. The scariest part of Devil’s throat is where the tunnel narrows to about 5’ wide and drops about 15’ down before it opens up again. Diving the Devil’s Throat requires use of an underwater light, and it is recommended that divers not scissor kick because it stirs up sediment, which heavily obscures visibility. You will usually see barracudas, angelfish, toadfish, eagle rays, sharks and turtles. The Cathedral section is spectacular, it has been described as a “mystical experience”. It is a large vaulted cave opening with giant sponges that form a cross in the ceiling of the cave where light passes through.

## CHUN-CHACAAB REEF

This reef is often overlooked in favor of the surrounding well-known sites. Chun-Chacaab reef has huge fields of Sea Plums, an excellent variety of sponges and some sea fans in the flats, which gently slope down to an eventual wall. This reef is very different from the other reefs in Cozumel. The current can be quite stiff, but there are plenty of breaks in the ridges to drop down in and get out of the current. Look for Spotted Eagle Rays, Reef Sharks, Nurse Sharks, and lots of turtles.

Depth: 50' - 100'

Skill level: Expert

Type: wall/drift/deep

Current: Strong

Photography: Yes

## PUNTA CELARAIN REEF

Depth: 5' - 20'

Skill level: Novices

Type: shallow/drift

Current: Moderate

Photography: Yes

Snorkel: Yes

This is a wonderful and beautiful shallow reef that runs parallel to the shoreline. Many divers do not frequent it. This a memorable place with a large number of sea fans, parrot fish, damsel fish, snappers, turtles and schools of grunts and snappers.



### *MARACAIBO REEF SHALLOWS / WALL*

Depth: 70' - 90' Shallows / 90' - 160' Wall

Skill level: Expert

Type: wall/drift/deep

Current: Moderate to Strong

Photography: Yes

This is one of the southernmost dive sites exposed to current and topside surf, and is generally considered Cozumel's most challenging reef, recommended for the experienced diver. Maracaibo actually consists of two dive areas, the shallower ridge and the more interesting, and aggressive deeper dive at the edge of the wall.

The shallows consist of healthy amounts of soft coral like sea whips gorgonians, black scattered coral all anchored on the sandy flats, it is spectacular, an invitation to adventure.

Wall starts at 90 feet and is covered with large orange elephant ear sponges, black coral and sheet coral. At the edge of the wall has a thin but vibrant covering of coral along its ridgeline. Drifting along the wall the current will lead divers to a dramatic arch, approximately 30' wide, whose base lies at about 120 feet.

Very deep Maracaibo Reef and steeply inclined wall are subject to unpredictable currents, only the most experienced divers should attempt this site and only under supervision of a very experienced local dive master, since this reef is best seen at depths exceeding recreational limits, this is a decompression dive, but from 140' to 160', its awesome.

Often during nesting season (May to September), as many as 3 different species of turtle can be spotted: hawksbill, which do not nest in Cozumel but migrate through, and green and loggerheads. Big barracuda, jacks, large groupers, schools of hammerheads or shoals of eagle rays are typically all around for those with a keen eye.

### *EL ISLOTE REEF*

This is an interesting dive site located on the eastern side of the island, a deep dive that will show you a different view of Cozumel. In this area the ocean bottom is covered with long ribbons of coral growth that start in the shallows and continue on into the deep. There are incredible quantities of staghorn coral in these bands. This site is for experienced divers as it goes deep relatively quickly. With the water clarity offered this becomes a dive with an exceptional "big picture" view, especially during the calmer months of May through September. You can see turtle, shark and eagle rays.

Depth: 80' - 150'

Skill level: Expert

Type: wall/drift/deep

Current: Moderate

Photography: Yes

### *CAÑONES (CANNONS) REEF*

Depth: 20' - 40'

Skill level: Intermediate

Type: shallow/drift

Current: Moderate

Photography: Yes

As well as Hanán, this dive is usually done during a "Norte", in which the wind is battering the west side of the island, and the east coast is relatively calm. You can find outstanding Elkhorn coral, probably the biggest one near Cozumel, and about a dozen large cannons and several cannon balls. It is believed a Spanish Galleon sank there in the late 1700's. In this reef is easy to see a large number of lionfish, parrotfish, damselfish and some snappers.

*WILDLIFE PROTECTION AREA IN THE ISLAND OF COZUMEL  
(NORTHEAST, NORTH, NORTHWEST AND WEST OF THE ISLAND)*



*PLAYA BOSCH, EL MIRADOR, PUNTA CHIQUEROS, CHEN RIO, PUNTA MORENA*

Depth: 20' - 50'  
Skill level: Expert  
Type: shallow/drift  
Current: Moderate  
Photography: Yes

These shallow dives along sections of reef offer a lot of coral variety and marine life. Since this is the wild side of the island you will not see many sponges or sea fans, but you will find healthy coral, many juvenile fish, as well as green moray eels and nurse sharks. Visibility is good and allows for good photography especially in the early morning hours.

*HANÁN REEF*

Hanan is not a common dive in Cozumel. This dive is usually done during a "Norte", in which the wind is battering the west side of the island, and the east coast is relatively calm. You will cruise at the bottom of some crevices in the coral rock, which have been carved by the constant wave action. This is an interesting reef to see where you can find a lot of sea fans and sponges, which are home to a large number of lionfish, as well as some parrotfish, a few damselfish and some snappers.

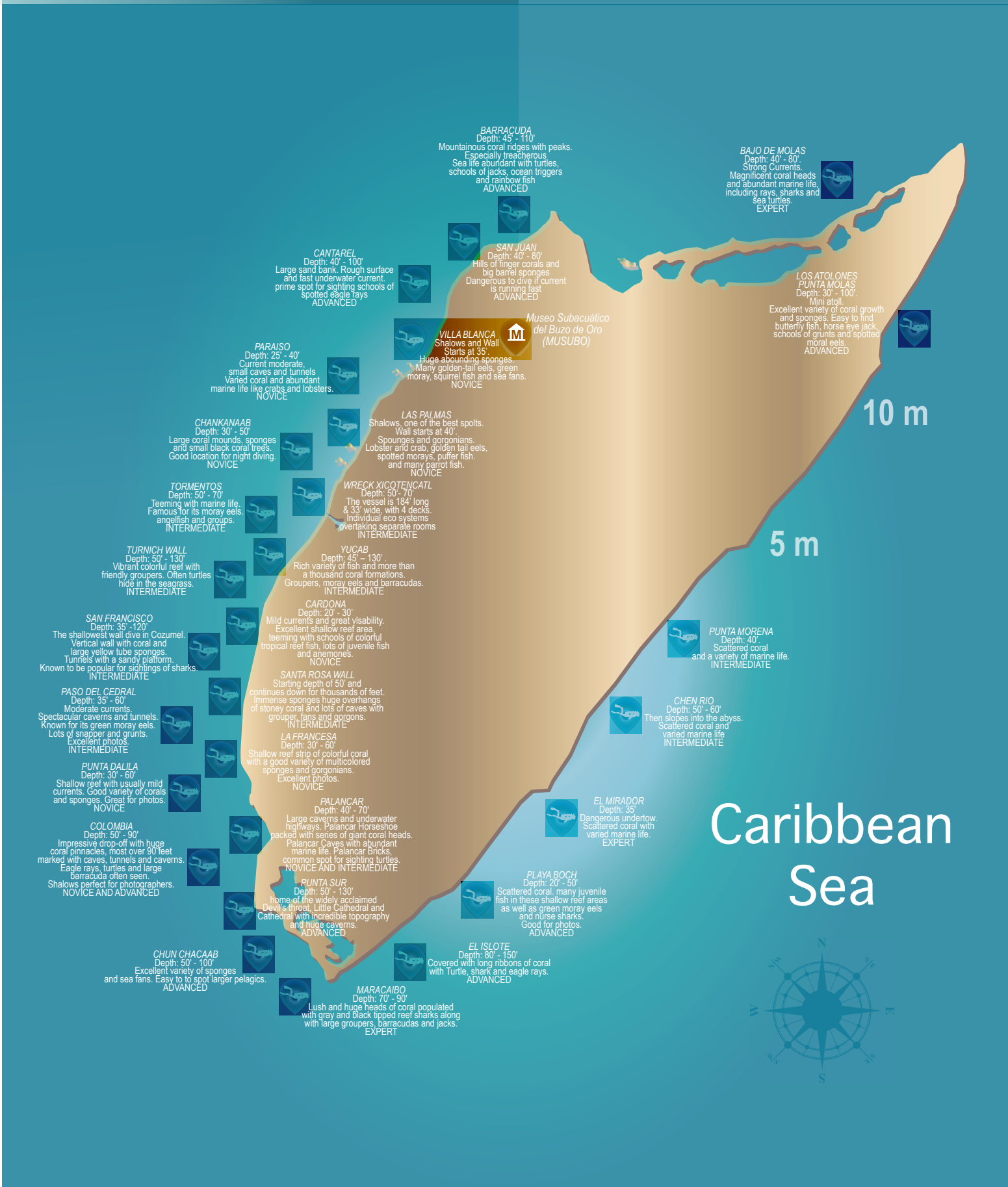
Depth: 30' - 50'  
Skill level: Intermediate  
Type: shallow/drift  
Current: Moderate  
Photography: Yes

*LOS ATOLONES, PUNTA MOLAS*

Depth: 30' - 100'  
Skill level: Expert  
Type: shallow/drift  
Current: Moderate  
Photography: Yes

Punta Molas is becoming more and more popular, but you have to dive here with caution, as there are often very strong currents. You will find an excellent variety of coral growth and sponges. In this reef is easy to see butterfly fish, horse eye jack, schools of grunts and spotted moray eels.

# MAP OF THE REEFS IN COZUMEL



# UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES IN COZUMEL

## GOLF IN COZUMEL



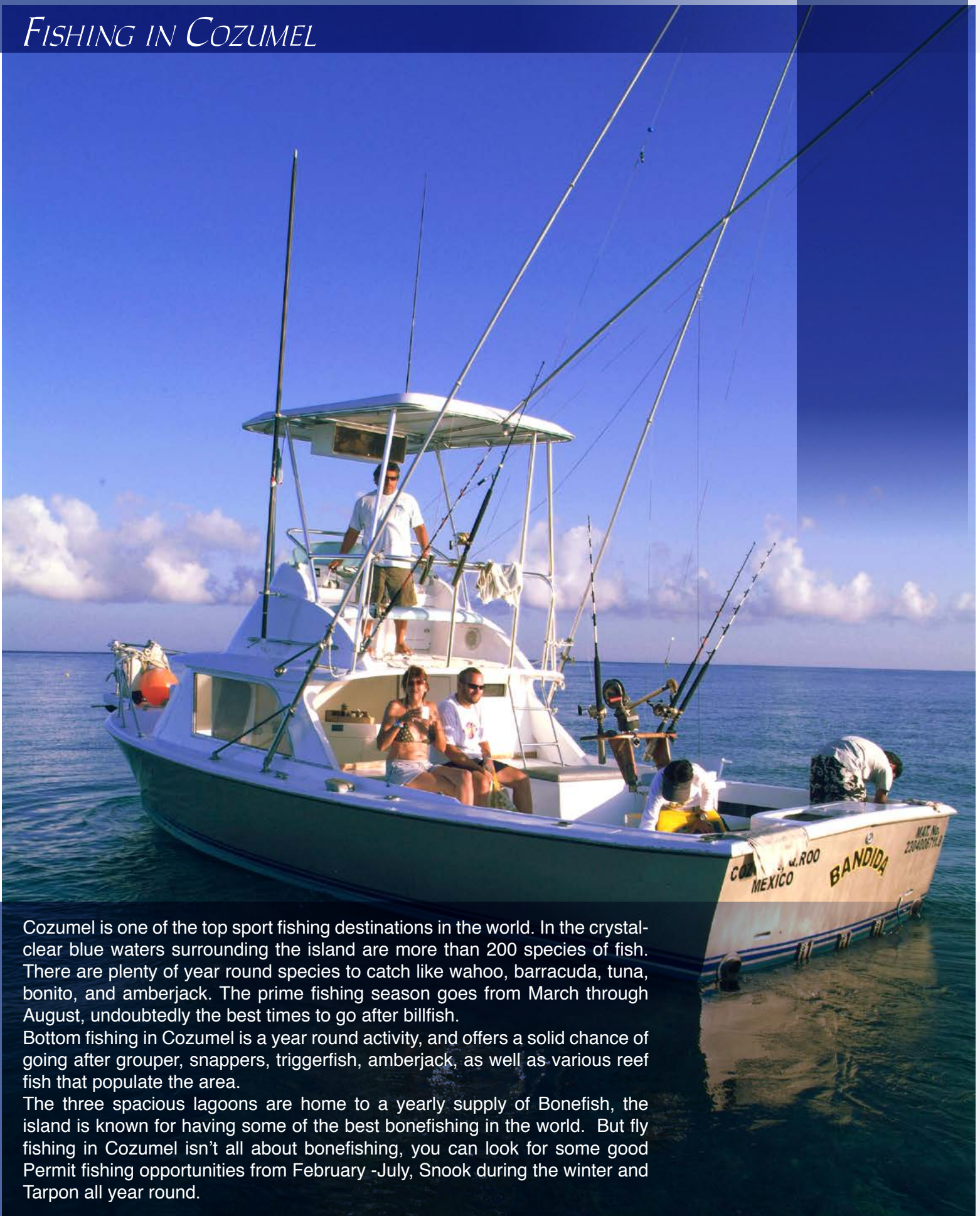
Cozumel Country Club, on Cozumel's north shore, features 18 holes of great golf from Nicklaus Design Group. This is an impressive 6,734-yard, par-72 course, which winds around trees, mangroves and wetlands, incorporating the natural habitats of the island, and offers a challenge to golfers of any level. The course maintains a high degree of environmental quality and became the first golf course in Mexico to earn the designation of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary from Audubon International. The golf course is home to blue crabs, iguanas, crocodiles, raccoons and a multitude of species of birds as well as other wildlife, which call this habitat home. It is located just 15 minutes from the International cruise ship pier and 10 minutes from the airport.

### COZUMEL COUNTRY CLUB





# FISHING IN COZUMEL



Cozumel is one of the top sport fishing destinations in the world. In the crystal-clear blue waters surrounding the island are more than 200 species of fish. There are plenty of year round species to catch like wahoo, barracuda, tuna, bonito, and amberjack. The prime fishing season goes from March through August, undoubtedly the best times to go after billfish.

Bottom fishing in Cozumel is a year round activity, and offers a solid chance of going after grouper, snappers, triggerfish, amberjack, as well as various reef fish that populate the area.

The three spacious lagoons are home to a yearly supply of Bonefish, the island is known for having some of the best bonefishing in the world. But fly fishing in Cozumel isn't all about bonefishing, you can look for some good Permit fishing opportunities from February -July, Snook during the winter and Tarpon all year round.

# FISHING SEASONS IN COZUMEL

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
AMBER JACK	***	***	**	**	*	*	*	**	***	***	***	***
BARRACUDA	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
BLACK FIN TUNA	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
BLUE MARLIN	*	*	*	**	***	***	***	***	**	*	*	*
BONITO	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
DORADO	*	**	***	***	***	***	***	**	*	*	*	*
GROUPE	***	***	***	**	*	*	**	***	***	***	***	***
KING FISH	***	***	**	**	*	*	*	*	**	**	***	***
SNAPPER	*	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	*	*	*
SAILFISH	*	***	***	***	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***
WHITE MARLIN	*	*	**	***	***	***	***	***	**	*	*	*

\*\*\* HIGH SEASON

\*\* MEDIUM SEASON

\* LOW SEASON



## KAYAK IN COZUMEL

Kayaking in Cozumel is a very popular beach activity due to the relatively calm and crystal clear waters of Cozumel. There is a selection of single and double kayaks or tours in glass kayaks so that you can see marine life up close without getting wet. These “dry snorkeling” tours last approximately 45 minutes. Cozumel has beaches ideal for kayaking. Some of the best spots are: Playa San Francisco, its calm waters invite you to take in the natural surroundings as you kayak in the open sea. Playa de San Juan, here you can do a pleasant kayaking outing thanks to its shallow waters and gentle waves. Parque Faro Celaráin, it has virgin beaches and wonderful jungle landscape. This ecological reserve has a lagoon surrounded by lush vegetation and it offers great kayaking conditions due to its calm waters. Playa Mia, which is one of the user-friendliest kayaks available in Cozumel.



## 4WD, ATV'S & OFF-ROAD TOURS

This excursion is a great way to experience the thrill and adventure of the island wilderness. Drive your off-road vehicle along the coastline road or through winding trails to explore the beautiful jungle of Cozumel. You can enjoy Jade Cavern swimming in its crystal clear, fresh water; visit an ancient Mayan Ruin that was used for weather observatory; or ride along the Columbia Lagoon, teeming with nesting birds and a sanctuary for crocodiles. Mud, rocks, narrow paths, twists and turns, speed...whatever you want, these Cozumel vehicles can deliver.

The all-terrain vehicles ensure a safe and exciting ride. The experience is guaranteed to bring out your adventurous side.

### ATV'S

A fun way to explore Cozumel's inland jungle and trails is aboard a thrilling ATV and discover the island mysteries like El Cedral archeological site, or you can hop on your ATV for an adventure ride to a secluded beach.

### SEA-TREK & SNUBA

Is the easiest and most comfortable way to explore the Cozumel's pristine underwater world. You wear a special helmet and your hair doesn't get wet and you can even wear prescription glasses. Sea Trek lets you feel the bottom of the ocean under your feet and enjoy watching colorful fish. Snuba is for those seeking more than a snorkel, you can swim at your own level of comfort with a maximum of 20 feet depth without having to carry heavy gear.

### TREKKING & HIKING

Hike through the lush Mayan jungle is the perfect way to immerse oneself in the stunning natural environment of the island and experience the lingering Mayan spirits and the legacies of their temples. There is a broad range of tours sure to suit all tastes.



## BIKING

One of the most relaxing and rewarding ways to see more of Cozumel is on a 4-person bike. This is a great option for families as the bikes can accommodate two adults and two children under the age of 12. Ride along the northern scenic coastal road of the island on a specially made bike trail. You will stop at several monuments along the way and enjoy the views of the blue Caribbean Sea. There are also tours that will take you into the Mayan jungle to learn about the regional flora and fauna.

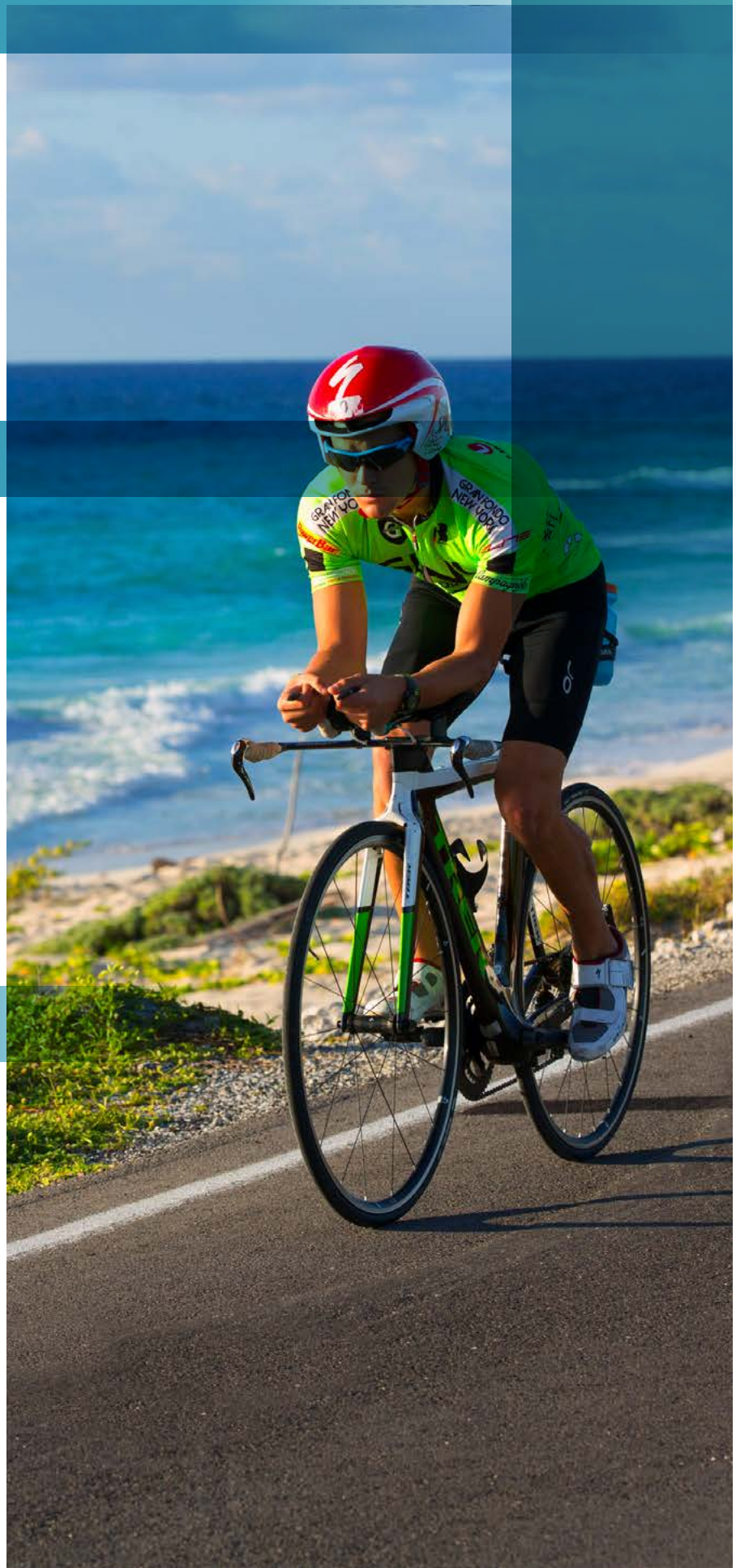
## MOTORCYCLE TOUR

Cozumel is the ideal destination for motorcycle enthusiasts. You get to pick from among a variety of new models and a large selection of styles. You can hop on a Harley and explore the coastline and head south on the way over to the “Wild Side” of the island. The road parallels the gorgeous Caribbean water on one side with lush jungle on the other side. You can ride through the Chankanaab National Park; have a sightseeing stop at the first Mayan town of El Cedral, or head to the southern tip of the island where you can enjoy the view from the Punta Celarain Lighthouse. All driving is on relatively smooth, paved roads. Another option is just ride the streets and avenues of San Miguel, and visit the main plaza.

## PARASAILING

You will experience the thrill of flying over 600 ft. above the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean and see the island like few will ever see. Start safely from the parasailing boat’s platform, then pulled behind a speedboat at high speed, and with the aid of your parachute, you rise high in the air for an approximately 12 minute flight. Enjoy the views and the silence floating above the water before returning again safely to the platform on the back of your boat. This excursion is available as a single flight as well as double/tandem flights. Don’t forget your waterproof camera or portable binoculars - the view is breathtaking!

Safety is very important; all instructors are certified by the PAPO (Professional Association Parasailing Operators).



Experience the thrill of flying high above the jungle floor on a series of zip lines. There is a park with 6 towers where you'll have panoramic views of Cozumel. There are 3 towers with the maximum height of 80 feet, while the other three have different models of bridges. Through a series of pulleys and cables, you will climb the first tower, hook into the pulley/cable system and zip down to the next tower. There are 2 steel cables for your added safety and protection. There is another Zip Line Adventure, a perfect excursion for real adventurers to experience the sensation of flying from tree to tree over the jungle.

## HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding is a nice way to relax and enjoy the scenery of the island. You can ride along sandy trails that border the Caribbean or head deep into the Mayan jungle, exploring Mayan ruins, ancient caves and cenotes. The horseback rides are suitable for kids and families of all ages, since you are matched up to a horse according to your riding ability.

## JET SKI

Enjoy some high-speed Jet Ski fun in Cozumel. You choose to ride the Jet Ski single or double. Enjoy the warm sunshine and the cool breeze on your jet ski fully automatic and easy to drive.

## PADDLE SURF

StandUp Paddle or SUP is one of the fastest growing water sports today; it is like a cross between kayaking, canoeing and surfing. Unlike surfing, this sport does not require waves, the flat water here is great. All you will really need is one lesson on the SUP to be up on the board and paddling as you enjoy and explore the beautiful, turquoise blue Caribbean water on your 1.5 hour guided tour. Easy and fun...this is a great sport for the young and young at heart alike.



## BOAT TOURS

There are a wide variety of tour boats to enjoy the crystal clear waters surrounding Cozumel. All vessels are in excellent conditions and have experienced crew.

You can experience the beautiful sunsets of the Mayan Caribbean from the deck of a state-of-the-art 65-foot sailing catamaran. Take a ride on a glass bottom boat, where you can see the tropical fish and marine life going by below you as you motor out to the reefs. Or just enjoy luxury and comfort on a 55' luxury yacht.

The most thrilling experience in Cozumel is a world famous jet boat ride. The fun starts from the moment the captain steps on the accelerator, zooming through the turquoise Caribbean waters at speeds of 45mph. Make sure to hold on tight when your captain makes the signal for a 360° spin, when the jet boat quickly turns in a circle without losing momentum. Another exciting moment is when the jet boat stops at full speed, having the entire boat nosedive into the refreshing ocean before heading back to shore.

A submarine tour provides visitors with a glimpse of reefs and rich marine life of Chankanaab Park. You will actually fully submerge in a real submarine, and dive to depths of 100 feet beneath the surface of the water. Throughout your submarine voyage an experienced co-pilot who will be happy to answer any questions provides an informative, live narration.

Travel back in time to the era of the pirates on board the Old Spanish Galleon, and indulge yourself in a delicious dinner while sailing through the Caribbean waters of Cozumel.

## FLYBOARD

This is one of the most ultimate adrenaline activities in Cozumel. Cruise above the water on a flyboard like a bird or dip below the water like a dolphin. Easy to learn, fun to try and safe to practice. You are propelled by water jets beneath the board supplied by an 18 meter hose. With just a few minutes with a certified instructor, you can be flyboarding. It all depends on your 18-meter skills and natural abilities. This is one of the most amazing things you have ever experienced.

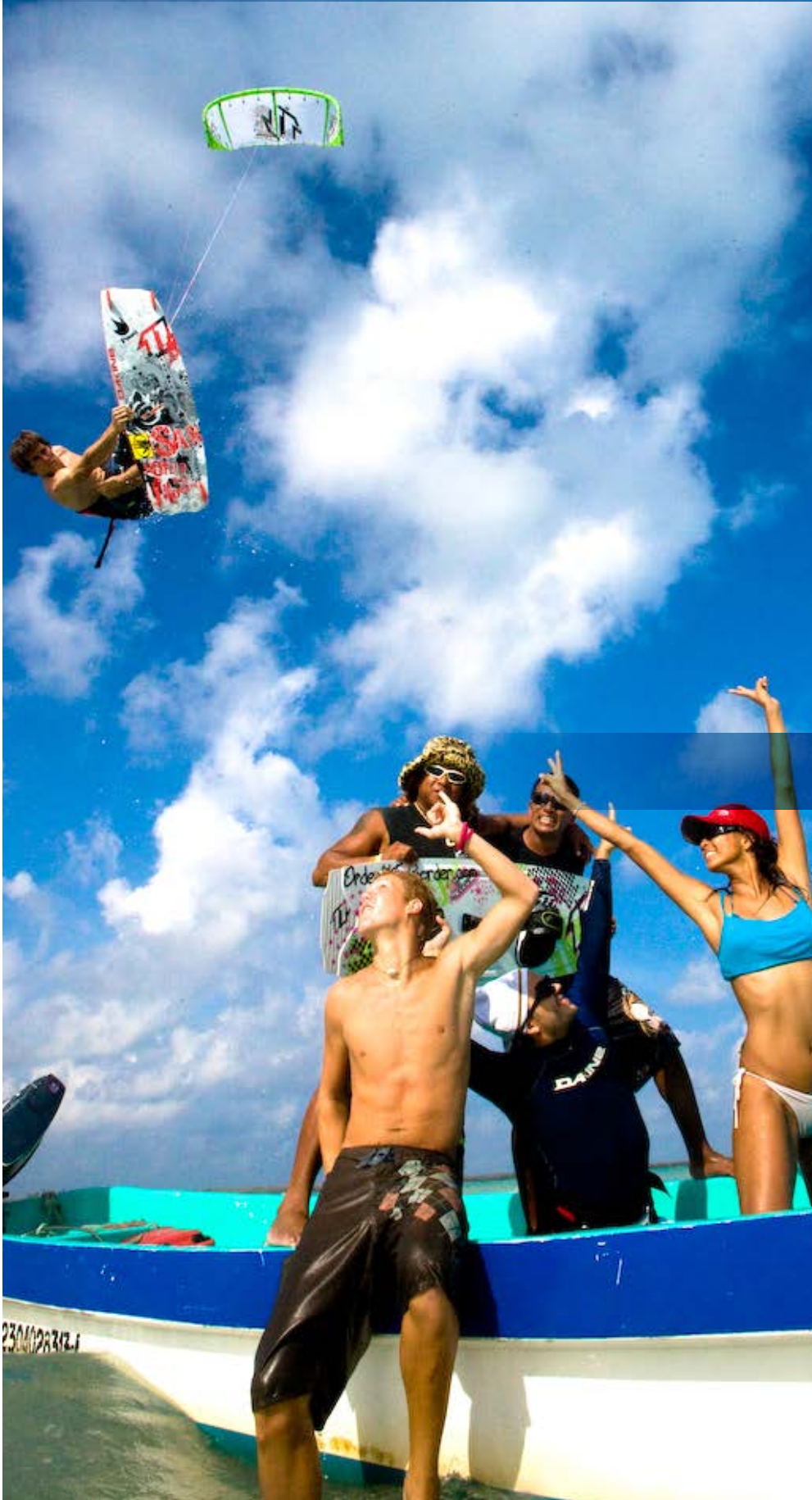


## KITEBOARDING

Cozumel offers a wide variety of riding venues (flatwater, chop or waves). The island is quickly gaining steam as one of the world's top kiting destinations. Found along the entire northern Cozumel bank are a series of lagoons, fantastic for flat water riding, but be aware that there are strong currents if you get too far out. Punta Molas Lighthouse, is a great place to do downwinders (heading south west), you'll hit breaks, kickers and ship wreck sliders! The Country Club Beach is the most popular and most accessible launch area with the typical northeast winds. Cozumel's east coast has a number of launch areas, one of the best is Playa Bonita, and here the waves are always on, sometimes 10-12' high. The best time to come for kiting is in the 'cooler' winter months when the temperature is in the low to mid 20's (70's F).

## SEGWAY

Explore the scenic waterfront of Cozumel by Segway, a unique and fun type of personal transportation. You can enjoy the views of the stunning Caribbean Sea and the beautiful beaches.





Cozumel is a major nesting ground for the Loggerhead, the Green Sea Turtle and the White Sea Turtle, and all of them are endangered. There is nothing more exciting than watching the little turtles make an effort to reach the sea.

There is an active participation of the government, various sectors of civil society and the private sector in the Municipal Committee of Protection of Cozumel Sea Turtle. Each year many during nesting and hatching season, volunteers get together at the turtle camp "San Martin" to protect the marine turtles. This project has many beautiful stories and extraordinary results.

Over the years the number of sea turtle nests marked and monitored on Cozumel's east side beaches has grown from just a few hundred to over 5,000 nests each year.

During the nights of April through September each year, the beaches of Cozumel plays host to thousands of sea turtles who come ashore on the eastern side of the island to nest, this time of year is perfect for nature enthusiasts. Sea turtle nests marked and monitored on Cozumel's east side beaches has grown from just a few hundred to an average of over 5,000 nests each year. Tourists visiting Cozumel have the opportunity to observe, learn and release baby turtles one night for a few hours with a turtle brigade for a nominal donation per person.

In Punta Sur there is a sea turtle research and protection center, which includes 8 Kilometers of beach for marine turtle nesting. In this program there are activities in the field that mark the nests, follow the process of incubation and liberation of young hatchings.

### BIRD WATCHING

The Yucatan Peninsula has 548 bird species, of which 224 are located in Cozumel. The island has 19 endemic species and subspecies, and some of the most important are: Ocofaisan Cozumeleño, the Cozumel Emerald Hummingbird, Rose-throated Tanager and Yellow Warbler.

Additionally, thousands of migratory birds winter each year on the in sheltered lagoons and coasts of Cozumel like the American Redstart, the Flaming Warbler, the Yellow-throated Warbler, the Roseate Spoonbill, the Ibis, a wide diversity of Canadian ducks, among others. The best time to see the migratory birds is from October to March.



# HEALTH & BEAUTY IN COZUMEL



Cozumel offers a wide range of holistic and personal care treatments. Some hotels offer various treatments, but there are specialized centers with very attractive options, both with professional therapists trained in modern and ancient techniques.

Enjoy a relaxing Caribbean beachfront massage, in any of its modalities (Swedish, deep tissue, Shiatsu, Thai, hot stone), as you listen to the sound of the ebb and flow of the waves.

There's no better way to indulge and relieve stress than with a facial, a full body exfoliation, or a mud wrap to cleanse and reactivate your body.

On the island you can find a wide range of the most effective alternative treatments such as acupuncture, reiki, biomagnetism, floral therapy, reflexology, aromatherapy and postural alignment.


If you want to harmonize the body, mind and spirit, there are several hotels and a center offering yoga classes and workshops, or you can try the Temazcal, a relaxing and cleansing therapy for the nervous system and reactivation of the skin cells, at the end you will be invited to bath in the fresh water cenote, a mystical and magical experience.

# Tourist Promotion Council of Quintana Roo Cozumel

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