

Beaches, Castles, and Caves of Mexico

Adventures in Good Company's General Information

Welcome to Adventures in Good Company's Mexico adventure and the beauty of the Yucatan peninsula! We have compiled some information that may be helpful as you prepare for your journey.

Getting there

We will be meeting at the Cancun International airport at 3 pm on the first day of the trip. Many of the major airlines fly into Cancun including: American, Northwest, Sun Country, Spirit, US Air and Continental.

One good way to get cheap tickets to Cancun is to call your local travel agent because there are often charter flights and deals close to you that they will know about. Another way is to read the ads in the travel section of the paper - there are always deals to Cancun. If you see an ad that advertises a hotel and flight package, but you want to travel independently and forgo the hotel, call them anyway. Sometimes they will sell you an air only package.

Documents

You must have a valid passport for all travel to Mexico (as of December 31, 2007). A tourist card is also required for entry to Mexico. There is a new \$20 tourist tax for this, although it may be included in your airline ticket. To receive a stamp on a tourist card, you must show your passport. If flying, your tourist card will be issued at the airport and stamped upon arrival in Mexico. You must keep your tourist card with you until your departure from Mexico. There can be a \$50 re-issue fee. If you need information on how to apply for a passport, please contact us.

Weather

During the winter months the weather tends to be mild and windy but variations are possible. Days average in the 70's and 80s and can fall into the 50's at night. Rain is infrequent but possible so rain gear is essential. As everywhere in the outdoors, weather conditions may alter the itinerary.

Conditioning

Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly. If you don't, you will probably find that you have more energy during the trip if you start a moderate exercise program a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe deeply.

What if you don't have time to start an exercising program? Don't worry, you'll be fine - just a little more tired than usual at the end of the day!

Money

Mexico's monetary unit is the peso. Note: places often use the \$ to indicate the price in pesos. The exchange rate of the pesos can fluctuate a lot. Currently, 1 USD = about 11 pesos.. Dollars and traveler checks in small denominations are accepted almost everywhere.

Small-denomination bills and coins are hard to come by, so start collecting them early in your trip. Shopkeepers everywhere always seem to be out of change and small bills; that's doubly true in markets. In general, avoid carrying the U.S. \$100 bill, the bill most commonly counterfeited in Mexico and therefore the most difficult to exchange

ATMs are common in Cancun (should you come early or stay late) and even some smaller towns in the Yucatan. They typically have the best exchange rate. Check with your bank before leaving home to make sure you can use it in Mexico. There may be a service fee charged, but the rate is still the best exchange.

You can also exchange money at banks or *casa de cambio* (money exchange houses). Some, but not all, banks charge a service fee of about 1% to exchange traveler's checks.

There is a *casa di cambio* that the group will stop at on the way to CESiaK. We recommend you have cash or traveler's checks to exchange. Your trip fee covers all your expenses from dinner on February 10 through breakfast on February 16, except alcoholic beverages. Other options for spending money would be for shopping (some stores may take credit cards), additional activities not specified on the itinerary, or other items of a personal nature.

Water

Drinking water used on trips will be from a local purified water outlet. You can also buy bottled water. If you are concerned about the possibility of an intestinal disorder, we suggest a daily dose of acidophilus for one to two months before travel. Be sure to buy the kind that needs no refrigeration, and remember to keep taking them before, during, and for a short time after your trip.

Emergency contact information

The number at CESiaK is (52) 984 104 0522. You will need to dial 011 for an outgoing call from the U.S. They will do their best to get a message to you. You should also leave the Adventures in Good Company office number: 877/439-4042.

Technology

Sian Ka'an is an ecology-conscious enclave in the jungle. Electricity is provided by generators. Running water is available with the usual conservation recommendations. In nearby Tulum wireless Internet access is broadly available. Cell phone reception has been good in Tulum, but may be unavailable at CESiaK. Check with your carrier for exchange rates and service.

Some Pre-trip Reading

The following are easy and informational, and will serve to whet your appetite.

A Tourist in the Yucatan by James McNay Brumfield

A good book to read on the beach. It's a mysterious and suspenseful tale that offers a view of what it's like to travel around Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, near the popular tourist areas of Cancun, Playa del Carmen and the Riviera Maya. Brumfield paints a clear picture of the Mayan ruins and takes you to the inner caverns that aren't included on any tourist visit to Tulum or Chichen Itza.

The Maya (Ancient Peoples & Places) by Michael D. Coe
Michael Coe tells the story of the Maya civilisation in his usual vivid and captivating style.. Great for anyone interested in finding out the basic facts about the Maya of Mexico and Central America.

Where the Sky is Born: Living in the Land of the Maya

by Jeanine Lee Kitche

Author Kitche and her husband moved to the Yucatan in 1985. This is a memoir of their experiences there.

Tipping Guidelines

Tipping at the end of the trip is completely optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$5-\$10 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it to the guides at the last shared meal.

Lodging

If you are arriving early or planning to stay after the tour is over, check out the list of possible accommodations in Cancun.

The Royal Sands

Blvd Kukulcan Lote 32, Section A
Cancun, Quintana Roo 77500 Mexico

Phone: 998-881-0100

Prices \$89 - \$140

Beachfront resort located in the heart of the Hotel Zone.

Amenities: Swimming Pool, Spa/Massage, , Broadband Access, Restaurant in Hotel, Kitchen, Tennis, Snorkeling, Bicycling, Beach

Cancun Inn El Patio

Bonampak 51 esq Cereza

Cancun, Quintana Roo 77500 Mexico

Average price \$50

Charming Inn with an 'old hacienda' atmosphere. Only 15 rooms surrounding a beautiful courtyard full of plants.

Amenities: Air Conditioning, Television, maid service. 2km to beach

The Imperial Las Perlas

Blvd Kukulcan km 2.5

Cancun, Quintana Roo 77500 Mexico

Average price: \$30

The Imperial Las Perlas is situated across from Isla Mujeres, approximately two miles from downtown Cancun and 20 miles from Cancun International Airport.

Amenities: Swimming Pool, Kitchen, Scuba Diving, Snorkeling, Water Skiing, Fishing, Boating/Sailing, Beach, Air Conditioning, Television

Flamingo Cancun Resort and Plaza.

Blvd. Kukulcan km. 11, Hotel Zone

Cancún, Q. Roo , México

Ph: (998) 848-88-70

Average price: \$170 european/\$200 all inclusive

In the center of the hotel zone, this resort fronts 183 meters (200 yards) of white-sand beach on Cancun's Caribbean shore. 2 pools, fitness center, restaurants, public bus, high speed internet