

Rivera
Maya's

SECRET *TREASURES*

“The most amazing things in Riviera Maya that
you don't have to pay for.”



If you are interested in traveling to the Riviera Maya, it is important to know what your options *really* are. Most importantly, you should know what you do and don't need to pay for as a tourist in this beautiful stretch of the world. With all the natural beauty surrounding this area there are many places that you can visit for either Free or next to nothing! In the following pages we will explain those options to you, why they're important, and how you can benefit from this new knowledge. However with all of these free and cheap options available, it doesn't mean that they will all be right for you. Our goal is to simply help you plan your trip the right way and give you the "real scoop" coming from a locals point of view. Before going further ask yourself this one simple question.

**If I moved to your home town tomorrow,
would you expect me to have the same
advantages that the locals do?**

Of course the answer to the previous question is no. However, we live in a brave new world for travelers, where dreams of international travel are becoming easier and easier to achieve. With the introduction of the internet, message boards, online reviews, and travel blogs at your fingertips navigating a foreign land is for the most part, available at the touch of a button. However even with all of this knowledge available it is still very difficult to get the “whole story.”

Much of what you read on the internet is what online companies would like you to know, not necessarily what you actually should know. As a tour & travel company ourselves you may be asking why we would assist you with free and cheap options for travel, and how we would benefit from such a thing? Well the answer is simple. Our benefit is knowing that we have given you the right advice, allowing **you** to make informed decisions, no different than what we want in our own lives. Simply to be treated fair. We are not just a travel company, we are also a group of travelers ourselves. Our interest is in helping you plan a trip that is right for you, and providing you with the same advice that we give to family and friends. Our hope is that we can save you money, and allow you to travel more. So get ready, and let's start working to extend your next vacation!

Who we are, and why we care.

Before we get into the meat and potatoes of this book I thought it was important for you to know what drives us. Several years ago my business partner and I set out on a road trip to Mexico, 2 guys, a van, a dog, and a dream to experience new cultures. At the time we had planned to just pass through Mexico on a multi country driving trip intended to change our lives. However the ultimate goal was to create a business around travel, the one thing that we loved more than anything. Well change our lives it did, but not in the original way we had imagined. What started as a trip through Mexico, abruptly ended after the first sight of the Caribbean on the beaches of Tulum. Although we had a desire to continue on down the road, the magnetic energy of the Riviera Maya had somehow out powered our desire to leave. It was this feeling of joy that has kept us here in Playa Del Carmen, led us to open one of the [top rated hostels](#) in the city, and pushed us to explore every inch of this land. It is because of the great joy, and blessings that this area has brought to us that makes us feel responsible to share it with the world. After all, a trip to the Riviera Maya can literally be life changing. It changed mine. We hope you enjoy the following information and find it useful for your next trip. Saludos!

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1. Saving money on flights:

Discover the most competitive websites, and how to find the best deals

Finding cheap flights has become easier, and easier these days due to advanced software that allows you to price and compare flights globally. There are a few websites that we hear about time and again by friends and travelers that swear by the service. However, do pay attention to the airline that you are choosing and take into consideration their luggage fees. Sometimes the cheapest flight isn't the best flight depending on the amount of luggage that you carry. We have found in Mexico for example AeroMexico does not charge luggage fees for up to 2 bags, and have a tendency to provide free cocktails! So if you find a price match on one of the websites you may want to consider this option if coming to the Riviera Maya.

Pro Tip: Before you search for flights on the following websites you may want to consider clearing the "cache" on your internet browser (eg. Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox). If you have been on one of these websites in the past they could track your activity on the site, and deliver a higher price if they so choose.

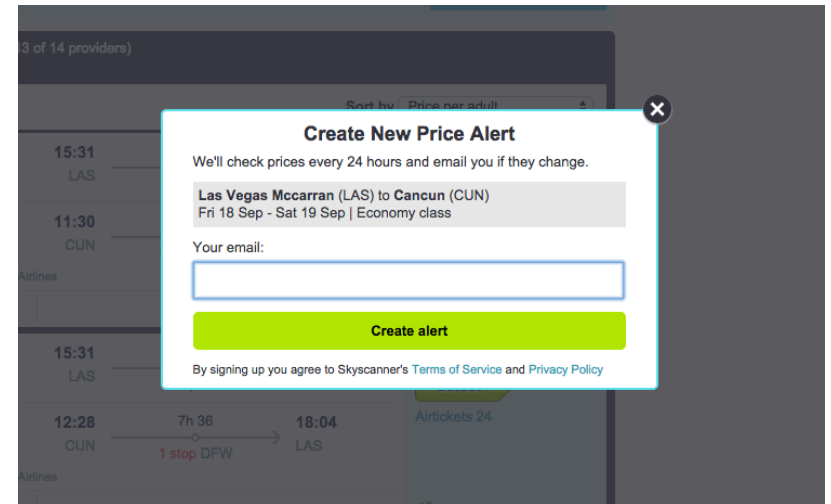
Top website to search a Flight



Skyscanner has time and again proven to provide some of the lowest flight pricing options available. To many this website is considered the king of the sky at the moment.

Click here to search Skyscanner now: [Skyscanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com)

Arguably one of the best features of Skyscanner is their built in price alert software. After you search a flight you have the choice to simply have Skyscanner email you if the price drops on your flight choice. If you are planning your dates in the future and they are flexible this is a great feature because the software monitors the airlines specials, and gives YOU the benefit.



Additional Flight Options

Outside of Skyscanner there are a number of different competitive flight websites you may want to consider that have similar capabilities. However like I said Skyscanner has become very good at providing the best pricing for flights. If you discover a lower priced flight on any other website we would love to hear about it. You can email us at info@wonderousworld.com if you find one, or message us on facebook [here](#).

Pro Tip: Also one more thing to consider. It does *sometimes* pay to check the actual airline website itself. Even though websites like the ones listed here do a great job, most airlines still reserve the right to run their own promotions without restrictions.

Here are some other choices for flights if you would like to compare:

- Kayak.com
- Expedia.com
- CheapOAir.com
- Travelocity.com

How to Fly for Free!

Ok so many people have heard of this method, but few have taken the time to truly explore it. Are you ready?... that's right we are talking about frequent flyer programs, and airline branded credit card plans. I am sure, like me, many of you have not taken this seriously enough. However I can assure you this is a very real option. I have family members that have been doing regular shopping with airline credit cards, then simply paying them off the first month at 0% interest. But guess what! The airline miles continue to roll in, and from my experience even regular household spending can score you a few free tickets a year depending on the distance of travel!

Anyways we are not the experts on this subject but we know who is. A man by the name of Scott Keyes was able to plan a worldwide trip involving 21 flights, yes all for free. We first heard about him on [Business Insider](#) and his discoveries are pretty amazing. If you are interested in becoming a true flight professional you can take a look at his e-books that are guaranteed to surprise you! He has two, they are "How to Fly for free," and "How to find cheap flights." If you want to get serious, he's your guy.



2. Transport Options:

Learn why most people pay way to much for transport and how you can avoid it. Safely.

One of the most common questions we get asked on a regular basis is what is the cheapest or best way to get around the Riviera Maya? It is a good question because knowing the right answer could literally save you hundreds of dollars depending on the size of your group, and what your needs are. For most people your first concern will be how do you get from the Cancun airport to your hotel in Cancun, Playa Del Carmen, or Tulum. So lets go ahead and start there.

Pro Tip: *You Don't have to pay for Private Transport.* This simple fact is important to know, as this will likely be the most accessible option that you will find online. The reason you see so much of it, is because it is very profitable for the transport companies that run to and from the airports. However based on your particular needs private transportation might be the last thing you should spend money on. On the other hand if your needs permit it private transportation could be your best friend.

Airport Transport Options

Private transport: As stated earlier here is the scenario when private transport *is* your best friend. If you have a group, or groups of I would say between 6 – 10 people all flying in at the same time, private transport becomes a great option. When you have a large group your cost per person drops considerably because when you hire private transport you are basically renting an entire van with driver, insurance etc. in most cases. One advantage to this is you can be dropped off at the door of your hotel eliminating any need for additional transits (like a taxi from a bus terminal for example.) Because of the overall convenience of this service it can make for a good idea sometimes as you can see, especially in the case of a group. Prices will vary depending on which city that your hotel is in with Cancun being the cheapest, Playa Del Carmen 2nd cheapest, and Tulum the most expensive based on the distance of travel. If this option appears to be the best for you we recommend trying out [Happy Shuttles](#). Their pricing is very competitive, but most importantly they have a good reputation with customers in the area.

Shared transport: This option can be a great one if you are traveling with one or 2 people, and in most cases will get you dropped off at the front door of your hotel. This option provides similar convenience to the private shuttle option with the exception of having more time spent dropping people off in different locations. With this option you do not need to schedule in advance you would just simply wait at the airport for shared shuttles that leave pretty frequent. Approximately 10 minutes or less between departures in most cases. If you choose this option you can expect to pay between \$12 - \$15 USD for a ride to your hotel. Not to bad, if you are looking for overall convenience, but there is still a cheaper way.

Bus Transport: This last option is for the true value seeker, that would rather spend their money on additional activities instead of heavy transport costs. At the Cancun airport exit there is an ADO Bus booth to buy tickets. ADO is one of the largest local bus transport companies with cold A/C, on board bathroom, and usually a movie depending on the distance of your ride. To get to Playa Del Carmen for example your ticket is approx. \$9 USD. The trick to this is once you arrive you will need to take a taxi to your hotel from the station. In most cases you shouldn't pay more than about \$3 USD for up to 4 – 5 people. If done properly this should give you a little extra fun money for your trip! If you choose this option you can book your ticket online [here](#).

Local Transport Options

Collectivos (Local shared van transport): In the Riviera Maya there are an abundance of local transport vehicles called Collectivos. Collectivos ultimately are the equivalent of what you would consider the local bus in many countries. This is a very cheap way to travel from city to city, but only after you are settled into your location because they do not service the airport. Because of the cheap cost not all of them have A/C, and are typically used for workers traveling between cities to get to their job. They can be crowded, but if you are focused on budget this is an excellent form of transport. For example to get from the center of Cancun to the center of Playa Del Carmen will only cost you approximately the equivalent of \$2 - \$3 USD per person which is an amazing value. Collectivos are also a great option to get to locations between cities as well such as cenotes, etc. because the collectivos will stop anywhere on the federal highway (this is the highway that connects Cancun all the way through to Tulum) by just holding up your hand. If you don't mind a little walking in the heat, and rubbing elbows with the locals this can save you a ton on transport to visit surrounding areas from your hotel.

Taxi transport: To move about a city like Playa Del Carmen or Cancun, a taxi is quite often your best option. In these cities taxi's are everywhere so it is always easy to find one. It sometimes feels like for every 5 cars that passes one will be a taxi. However in this part of the country they do not use meters to calculate the cost of your fare. So for this reason, it is good to keep note of your average fares to determine the local average. For example, in Playa Del Carmen I always state where I am going in advance and ask for the price. I never pay more than 50 pesos to get just about anywhere in the city. If a taxi driver asks for more, I will usually turn it down and wait for the next one to pass. It is easy to do this because of the frequency that taxi's drive by. Another good rule of thumb is to walk away from major intersections before stopping a taxi. For example if you stop a taxi in front of the bus terminal it is common for them to ask for more. This happens for two reasons, the first is they have to wait in line typically to get the fare, and the second is that you look new to the city and less likely to question the price. Also always remember many taxis own their vehicles so they can set whatever price they want, after all it's their business what they charge. But it is your business whether you accept or not.

Bus Transport: As stated in the last section the ADO is a great option from the airport. Well it can also be a great option for city to city transport. It is certainly one of the more comfortable ones. If you are after leg room, guaranteed A/C, and a comfortable ride this is always a great option. You can check all of the local schedules and purchase your ticket online [here](#).

Private Transport: Again this goes back to the same principles of the airport transfer. If you have a large enough group this may be a viable option for you. However city to city service is less common with private transport making the costs sometimes higher and harder to arrange. However if you are looking for super convenience starting from your hotels front door, this could be what you need.



3. Top Free Magical Locations:

We reveal our favorite spots in the Riviera Maya to visit that you don't have to pay for.

Ok, so now that we understand our best options on how to arrive to the Riviera Maya let's dive right into the fun part. What can you do for FREE! We have a number of different Free recommendations as well as a few super cheap options. We are going to talk about both of them in this section to give you a little taste of local knowledge. As I stated before these options aren't for everyone because it does leave the responsibility of transport, what to eat, best time to arrive, scheduling, and trip planning up to you. For some this is more than they would like to deal with while on vacation. However for the brave pioneers of budget travel these are some great options. I meet backpackers all the time at [our hostel](#) who take advantage of options like these. They stretch their budget and travel longer by spending their savings on cheap shared lodging. These choices really just boil down to budget, comfort level, convenience, and travel goals. We hope you enjoy our top free and cheap picks!

Akumal Bay

This has to be one of my all time personal favorite free locations that you can visit in the Riviera Maya. Akumal Bay is notorious for it's natural Sea Turtle habitat, and a sanctuary for Sea Turtles almost year around. I have been to this location at all different times of the year, and have literally always seen Sea Turtles. The Turtles reside approximately 100 ft. from the beach making it very easy to snorkel out and find one. You are also likely to see Manarays, as well as other small coral fish. If you decide to visit Akumal on your own there are a few things you should know.

Location: Akumal is located between Playa Del Carmen and Tulum on what is called "The Federal" highway. If you take a colectivo you will have to walk into town from the highway. It is approximately a 20 minute walk from the main road. If you are driving or have other means of transport you will exit at the exit labeled Akumal. Once you arrive the easiest way to park is at the paid area across from the Oxxo convenience store. The Oxxo is easy to locate as you will be forced to drive past it when you enter Akumal by road.

Things to know: The first thing to know is that visiting Akumal Bay IS free. The reason I say this, is occasionally sales reps for snorkel companies on the beach can mislead you into thinking it is not. They may say things like life jackets are required, you are only guaranteed to see a Turtle if you get a guide, etc. Now you may very well want a life jacket, and a guide depending on your comfort level, but just know that none of it is required to be there. You are welcome to enjoy the public beach, swim, and snorkel at your own leisure without paying anything.

Pro Tip: Renting snorkel gear at Akumal can be expensive because of the demand. Rent snorkel gear locally at your hotel or hostel and save the high costs at the beach!



Please remember under all circumstances DO NOT TOUCH THE SEALIFE PLEASE. Sorry for the all caps text but I would really like for you to remember this because you could very well visit this location on your own. It may not seem like a big deal to “interact with a turtle” but this behavior has a negative impact, and causes unnecessary stress on the animals. Please remember there will always be people that don’t care about these things, but it is your responsibility to set the example.

Punta Esmerelda

Punta Esmerelda is located in Playa Del Carmen and is an excellent way to have a great experience and see a unique cenote connecting to the ocean. This cenote is not a typical cave cenote at all, it is more like a large crystal clear pond. What makes it a cenote is the fresh water that pumps into it from an underground fresh water river system. This location is unique because it is one of the only places in the area where a fresh water cenote meets with the Caribbean Sea. Also this is a great location to experience a little local culture. Because of the Free dollar price tag, it has become a very popular location with the locals, including myself. There are usually food carts at the location with authentic Mexican snacks to try. One of my personal favorites is the flower cut mango on a stick lathered in Tajin and fresh lime juice!

Location: Punta Esmerelda is located at the north end of Playa Del Carmen. You can get there by walking north on the beach (approx. 30 min walk past Coco Beach). You can also walk north on 5th Avenue all the way north to a resort called Paradisus. Immediately after you walk past the entrance of Paradisus you will see a road headed right towards the beach. Take this road and it ends at Punta Esmerelda. You can also take a taxi, most of them know of this location by name.

Things to know: If you walk to this location from Playa Del Carmen north on 5th avenue you will get to see some amazing street art. Anything past 46th street on 5th avenue is no longer considered the “tourist stretch.” All I mean by this is past 46th there are far less retail shops and more residential housing. However this is a popular jogging and walking trail. One of the great features about this path is that amazing artists from all over Mexico have come to paint murals pretty much canvassing the entire trail between 60th street, and the resort Paradisus. Remember when you get to Paradisus it is the sign to turn right down the road immediately after passing the resort entrance. This road will lead you to Punta Esmerelda.

Pro Tip: Bring a camera to get an amazing picture on the point of Punta Esmerelda. On the tip of Punta Esmerelda with a beautiful Caribbean Sea backdrop you will find a large log that you can sit on and get an amazing picture. This is a very popular place with the wedding photographers, and if you got married in Playa Del Carmen chances are this one is in your collection. However once the brides clear out you will have a perfect opportunity to get in there and get your own money shot, without the large package price!

Mayan Ruins at Wah Wah

Yes! A FREE Mayan Ruin right under our noses in the heart of Playa Del Carmen! Before you get too excited we are not talking Chichen Itza here, when I say ruin I don't mean a massive pyramid. However none the less, this is an amazing piece of history well preserved under the management of Wah Wah Beach Bar literally in their back yard. Remember look but do not touch this interesting piece of history. I have heard many different stories about this ruin so it is unclear to me what the exact use of it was. One story was that it was used as a watch tower to signal the town of any incoming boats or activity from the water. However the most consistent story I have heard is that it was used as a ceremonial offering temple for couples trying to have a baby. I am told that one of the best fertility shamans of the time resided in Cozumel, and the first step before going to visit him was to present an offering at this location. I'll let you decide what to believe, but in the least it is a great picture opportunity!

Location: Wah Wah Beach Bar is located just north of the Cozumel ferry terminal on the beach. It is literally on the corner of Calle 2 norte, and the beach! It is also a great place to enjoy free live rock music, enjoy a nice drink, and take advantage of the always FREE beach chairs in front of the restaurant.

Casa Cenote

Casa Cenote is an unbelievable location where a underground river, emerges above ground and then feeds into the Sea. It is fresh water, and full of life. This location has a small price tag of approximately 50 pesos, or \$3 USD per person, but very worth it! There are many incredible things about this location. The first being the water clarity. For as deep as this river is, it is literally crystal clear right through to the bottom. This is great for a couple reasons. One is that you can easily see all of the colorful fish that inhabit the river, but the other is the Mangrove Trees. Casa cenote runs directly through a Mangrove forest which is essentially a type of tree that grows on top of the water. Because of this natural phenomenon you can literally swim under the forest beneath the roots. It is a really cool thing to see. Just another amazing terrain to explore in the Riviera Maya.

Location: Casa Cenote is located just south of Tulum on what is called “The Federal” highway. If you take a colectivo you will have to walk to Casa Cenote from the highway. It is approximately a 20 minute walk from the main road. If you are driving or have other means of transport you will exit at the exit labeled Casa Cenote. Once you arrive it is easy to park right at the entrance of Casa Cenote.



4. Cheap Tours with BIG value:

We explain the reasons behind what makes a tour a top seller, and why people are lining up to buy them.

It's almost unavoidable that you will spend some hard earned coin on a few tours while staying here in the Riviera Maya. However that isn't a bad thing. Riviera Maya because of it's diverse eco-systems, and rich history provides some of the best experiences money will ever buy. This section is intended to help you get the most out of your choices, and leave here feeling like a champ!

Now, as you know we are a full service travel agency focusing specifically on the Riviera Maya in Mexico. Because of this let's just say I've personally done a lot of tours with a lot of different companies. I have found that where many tours are good, others can be great. As a company we have also found a fine line between quality and value that we think is important to consider. So without the intention of hurting anyone's feelings too much we would like to present our most "valuable" tour choices for your consideration. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do!

Isla Mujeres Catamaran Tour

The Isla Mujeres Catamaran Tour that we offer is easily one of my favorite tours, not only for the experience but also for the value. We offer this tour with one of the only companies that has permission to include the new “Underwater Museum Snorkeling” during the tour if the weather permits it. This is an amazing underwater graveyard full of cement art and statues that were placed there to improve growth of the Reefs. This is often sold as a separate tour in itself making this trip like getting 2 tours in 1! Also included for the duration to and from Isla Mujeres on a luxury Catamaran is an open bar dude! All the Caribbean cocktails and beer that you can consume on the boat is on the house my friends. Also included with this tour is an amazing Mexican themed buffet at a beautiful outdoor beach resort on the shores of Isla Mujeres! This typically includes fish, chicken, beef, and plenty of veggy options for all of our non carnivorous friends out there. After the buffet you have approximately 1 ½ hours to explore the Island of Isla Mujeres. It is a very small island which can be explored in approx. 30 minutes giving you extra time to soak in some rays on one of the most beautiful beaches in the area. If you are looking for a day to entertain a diverse group of friends or family this is it. It has something for the eaters, the drinkers, and the adventurers alike. Also with a price tag currently under \$70 it makes this day on the beautiful waters of the Carribean hard to resist!

Chichen Itza Bus Tour

Our Chichen Itza Bus Tour option is our best selling tour and for a good reason. In 2007 Chichen Itza ruins became one of the 7 wonders of the world by popular vote! However that is not the only reason that this tour is popular. On top of visiting the most famous Mayan Ruin in the world, you also stop for a swim at an amazing natural cave cenote called Cenote Ik'kil! For those of you that are unfamiliar with cave cenotes they are typically caves formed from eroding limestone that are connected to underground river systems. They are an amazing thing to see, and the Riviera Maya is riddled with them. This particular cenote has places to jump from small cliffs into the water, as well as roots hanging all the way down from the earth's surface. It is like standing in another world. Truly amazing experience. One more addition to this tour is a photo stop in the historic city center of Valladolid to see some of the amazing cathedrals left behind from the Spanish era. I have done this tour with several companies, but the results are typically the same. You come, you see, you go. You can always spring some extra cash for a van, or private tour if you like. However, for the price the you can't beat the Bus Tour option. It covers all the necessities, transport, guides, park entries, it even includes lunch. For the true value seeker this is the quickest, easiest option to visit one of the world's most amazing places!

Turtles, Zip Line, Rappel, Cenote

Ok, so this is not necessarily one of our top sellers but trust me, it should be. This is quite possibly my favorite tour option that we offer! It combines the Akumal Sea Turtle experience, with some jungle adventure you will never forget! After living here several years the jungle has felt more captivating than many other locations for me which is surprising considering all the Caribbean beauty to see, but none the less that has been my experience. It is so full of life, and on this tour you get to see it first hand! On this tour you are picked up in a small van with your personal guide, and are brought to 2 locations. The first location is to swim with the Sea Turtles in Akumal. This part of the journey does include all equipment, life jackets, refreshments, transport, and a personal guide to take any stress out of the day. Also the swimming portion is easier because the guides know where they feed. However the second location is away from the public touristic areas in the jungle on private property making this a much more quality experience. Here you will do a series of very large Zip Lines, soaring high over the tree line of the jungle. You also learn how to Rappel, and visit a breathtaking cenote in the center of this property. They are lucky to have this property as it is amazing. The day ends with a delicious top quality buffet in a bug free gazebo in the center of the jungle. I highly recommend this tour!