AT&T: 01.800.288.2872 or 001.800.462.4240 MCI: 001.800.674.7000

TOURIST INFORMATION There is a Visitor Information desk located in the cruise ship complex. The main Visitors Information Center is located in the Plaza del Sol mall, downtown.

TRANSPORTATION Car rentals, scooters and taxis are available at the cruise complex located at the end of the pier.

#### USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Yes - Si No - No Hello - ¡Hóla! Good Bye - Adiós Please - Por favor Thank you - Gracias You're welcome - De nada

NOTES

U . S . A Miami Mexico CUBA Cozumel

GENERAL INFORMATION The island of Cozumel is located just across the channel which separates it from Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. The island is a municipality of the State of Quintana Roo. Cozumel, the largest of Mexico's Atlantic islands, is approximately 30 miles long and 10 miles wide. Covered with a great deal of vegetation, the land is primarily flat.

The population and business center of Cozumel is the town of San Miguel, located on the northwest coast of the island. This is a duty-free port, understandably popular with the many cruise ship passengers who visit each year. Shopping may be a major attraction however Cozumel's true claim to fame is not to be found on the island itself. The primary attraction of Cozumel is the beautiful reef below the waters surrounding the island. In 1996 the government of Mexico wisely decided to protect and preserve the island's undersea life by forming the Cozumel Reefs National Marine Park. Cozumel continues to be one of the Caribbean's primer dive locations.

Mayans to Cozumel as far back as the beginning of the first millennium AD. It appears, however, members of the mysterious Olmec tribe may have been on the island hundreds of years prior to the arrival of the Mayans. Under the Mayans, Cozumel was an important center of costal trade and pilgrimage for the worship of Ix Chel, their goddess of the moon and fertility. There were numerous temples built on the island. Women from throughout the region are said to have come across from the mainland to pay homage to their deity. The importance of Cozumel as a religious site continued through to the arrival of the Spanish in the early 1500. The largest of the island's Mayan holy sites was unfortunately destroyed during the Second World War when the land was used to build an air-strip. The Spanish, under the leadership of Juan de Grijalva arrived on Cozumel by way of Cuba in 1518. This was only the second voyage to the South American mainland from Spain's new colony in Havana. With a small flotilla of ships and 300 men, de Grijalva discovered the island as he sailed the coast of the Yucatán. He did not spend much time on the island. Little did the Mayans of the Yucatán and Cozumel know, their way of life was about to change forever.

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# PORT EXPLORER SHOPPING GUIDE

## Cozumel MEXICO

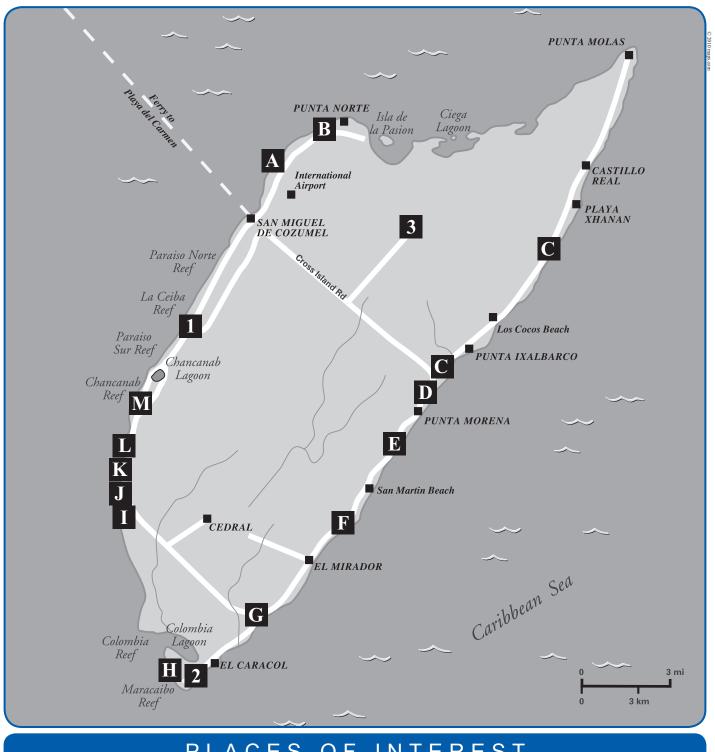
HISTORY Archeologists have uncovered evidence dating the arrival of the

The following year the famous conquistador Hernán Cortés arrived on Cozumel. Cortés had come, not in the name of exploration or colonization but rather, as his title implies, in the name of conquest. Though the Mayan rulers on Cozumel submitted peacefully many of the ancient temple sites were soon destroyed. Throughout the island and on the continent, European disease quickly spread and decimated the Mayan population of the island. Within thirty years Cozumel was nearly uninhabited save for the occasional pirates who used the island as a hideout and base from which to attack the Spanish gold fleets.



In the mid 1800s civil war broke out in the Yucatán and many people in the region fled to Cozumel for refuge. In the mid 1900s the island was used as a forward base for U.S. airplanes hunting German submarines in the Caribbean and Atlantic. A decade following the end of the war famed underwater explorer and film maker Jacques Cousteau

came to Cozumel. Amazed at the quality of the undersea life thriving in the reefs surrounding the island, Captain Cousteau is credited with spreading the word and helping to turn Cozumel into one of the premier scuba diving locations in the Caribbean.



### PLACES OF INTEREST

### COZUMEL PLACES OF INTEREST

**Discover Mexico** is a cultural theme park which offers visitors **I** a broad overview of this nation and its people. At this attraction guests travel through Mexican history from the Pre-Hispanic age on to the Spanish Colonial period and up to the modern era.

**The Punta Sur Ecological Park** provides guests the opportunity *L* to see a part of the natural beauty of Cozumel. The costal lagoons offer a protected refuge for many of the island's birds and reptiles. Mayan ruins in the area are easily explored.

**7** The Maya Ruins of **San Gervasio** are the best preserved site of LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Though prices in restaurants and **)** the ancient culture remaining on Cozumel. This was a temple area stores are usually fixed, bargaining is often practiced in open markets dedicated to the worship of Ix Chel, the Mayan goddess of fertility. and with street vendors.

The Beaches (playa in Spanish) of Cozumel: The island has many Tipping: A tip of 15% or more is appropriate in restaurants. Check very nice beaches. Some of them have facilities and amenities while your bill, because a 10% service fee may already be added. others are beautifully secluded. Starting north of the main city of San LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES The seafood in Co-Miguel and moving clockwise around the island we have profiled a zumel is fresh and delicious and the local restaurants know how to few beaches so you can get an idea of which one might be right for prepare it to perfection. Most of the restaurants along Rafael Melgar you. Keep in mind the beaches on the east side of the island face the Avenue understandably cater to the tastes of visiting tourists. Howopen Caribbean. This means the water may be rougher and the currents ever, (and this is the biggest culinary secret in Cozumel) many of the may be stronger than beaches on the west side of the island. Many of best cafés and restaurants in town are small, mom-and-pop, kinda outthe beaches will have colored flags flying which signify swimming of-the-way places just a few blocks off the main ocean drive. They conditions: Green Flag - Safe, Yellow - Caution, Red - Dangerous, offer a variety of wonderfully traditional dishes. Here are a few fause caution, Black - Dangerous, swimming prohibited vorite dishes of Yucatán: Tikin Xic (teekeen sheek)is fresh fish, usu-Playa Azul has lots of amenities. There is a nice park for kids ally snapper or grouper, marinated with Adobo de Achiote (a spice A as well as a café and beach bar. Snorkeling equipment can be paste), sour orange juice and oregano, covered with onions, peppers rented and there are showers available. and tomatoes then wrapped in banana leaves and baked to perfection. Playa San Juan has a nice little beach bar. Frijoles con Puerco is black beans and pork garnished with onions and B cilantro and served with white rice. Sopa de Lima is a soup made with a mixture of fresh vegetables and chicken which has been marinated Playas Santa Cecilia and Bonita are quiet and often deserted.

in lime juice.

You will usually find two sauces on the table. One is green and it is Mezcalitos is often deserted however there is a small popular called salsa verde. It is a little tangy and medium hot in terms of spices restaurant there. and chilies. The other sauce is called Salsa a la Mexican. It is very Chen Rio usually has calm water. Other than occasional campspicy and very hot; but that's what the cold beer is for.

ers the beach is never crowded.

With visiting tourists the most popular beer is a cold Corona and the F Punta Chiqueros is usually calm. There is a nice little restauobligatory slice of fresh lime and salt. Local beer drinkers tend to prerant fer a brand known as Montejo. Other popular beers on the island in-Playa Bosh has a couple of small bars and restaurants. clude Indio, Carta Blance, Tecate, Modelo and Estala. Mixing Worces-T tershire sauce and lime juice with beer is called a Michelada. Mixing clam juice and tomato juice with the beer is called a Clamato.

Parque Punta Sur is a nature reserve with a lighthouse and a nice beach. Snorkeling is good and there is a small restaurant. SHOPPING FACILITIES Cozumel is one of the most popular dutyfree ports in the Caribbean. The island is famous for the prices offered on diamonds and other colored gemstones, jewelry and Sea of Cortez Playa Palancar offers plenty of room. There is not much in the pearls. Mexican made arts and crafts are also popular.

The following beaches are on the eastern shore of Cozumel. Here the water is much calmer than on the west coast.

way of facilities but there is a small beach bar and café.

There are two primary shopping areas in Cozumel. The first is in the Playa Nachi Cocom offers a lot of activities such as parasailing cruise complex at the end of the pier where ships dock. Here visitors windsurfing and jet skis. There is also a café and beach bar. can find everything from hand-made silver jewelry to leather goods and souvenirs. Many are particularly fond of the colorful and ornately Mr. Sancho's has all the water sports you can imagine plus a

decorated wide-brimmed Mexican sombreros. Cozumel's main shop-**I** swimming pool and horseback riding. There are bars and caping area is downtown along the beautiful oceanfront drive, Rafael fés. Melgar Avenue.

Playa San Francisco is a nice family beach.

LOCAL CURRENCY The peso (MXN) is Mexico's official currency. The symbol (\$) refers to pesos, not U.S. dollars, unless specifically Playa Maya does not have much in the way of water sports or noted. Prices marked in U.S. dollars are noted as USD or US\$. ATM's activities but there is a small beach bar and café. are available, especially in heavily trafficked tourist areas. Most businesses and restaurants accept major credit cards.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Cozumel and the surrounding area we suggest you take one of our organized POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE The Post Office (SEPOMEX) is Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and priclocated in town at the intersection of Calle (Street) 7 South and Rafael ing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Ex-Melgar Avenue (the ocean front drive). cursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only Place a call with your personal calling card using the following access necessary items and secure any valuables onboard. numbers: