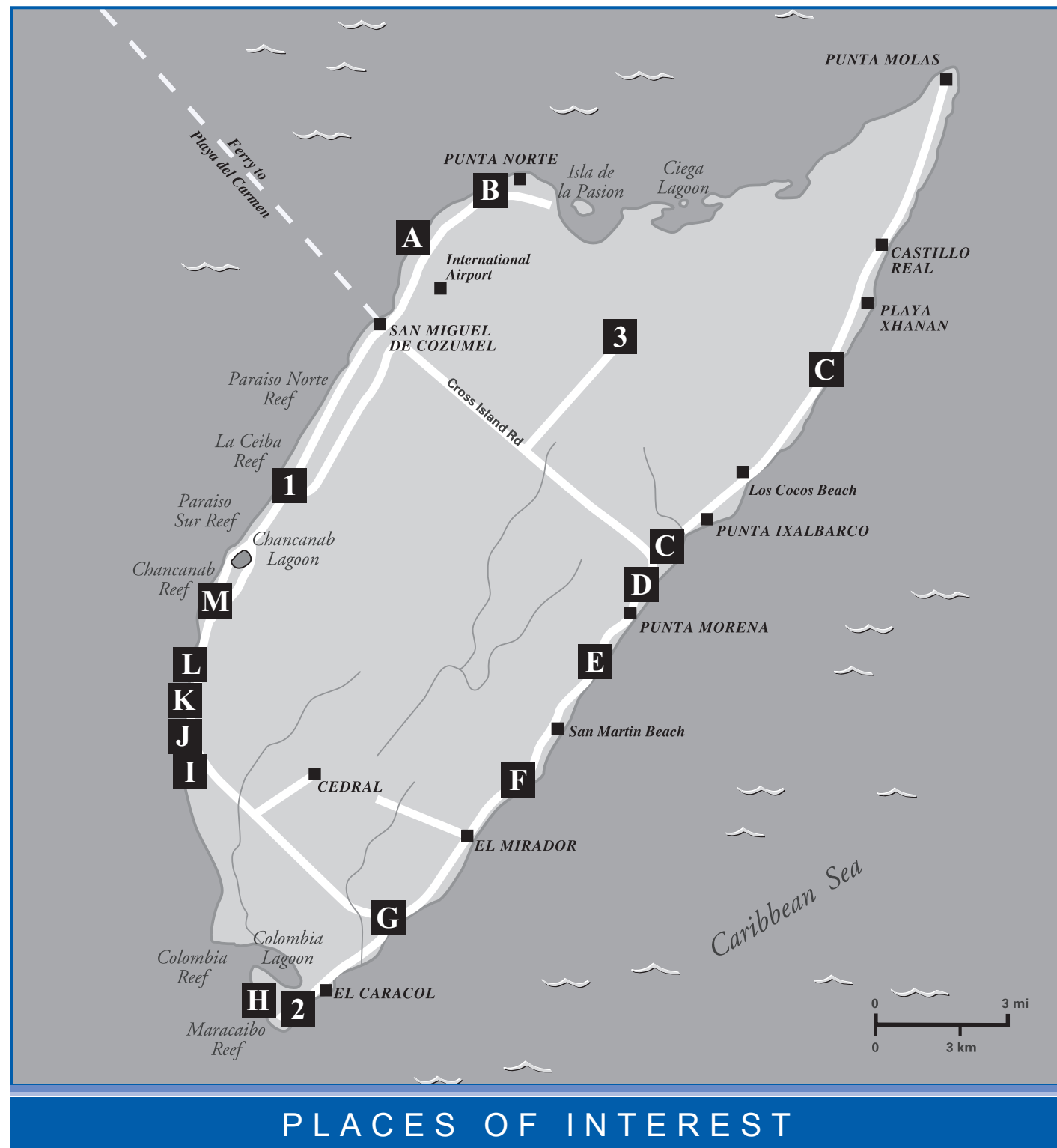


In the mid 1800s civil war broke out in the Yucatán and many people in the region fled to Cozumel for refuge. In the mid 1900s the island was used as a forward base for U.S. airplanes hunting German submarines in the Caribbean and Atlantic. A decade following the end of the war famed underwater explorer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



COZUMEL PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Discover Mexico is a cultural theme park which offers visitors 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.

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

3 The Maya Ruins of **San Gervasio** are the best preserved site of the ancient culture remaining on Cozumel. This was a temple area dedicated to the worship of Ix Chel, the Mayan goddess of fertility.

The Beaches (playa in Spanish) of Cozumel: The island has many very nice beaches. Some of them have facilities and amenities while others are beautifully secluded. Starting north of the main city of San Miguel and moving clockwise around the island we have profiled a few beaches so you can get an idea of which one might be right for you. Keep in mind the beaches on the east side of the island face the open Caribbean. This means the water may be rougher and the currents may be stronger than beaches on the west side of the island. Many of the beaches will have colored flags flying which signify swimming conditions: Green Flag – Safe, Yellow – Caution, Red - Dangerous, use caution, Black - Dangerous, swimming prohibited

A Playa Azul has lots of amenities. There is a nice park for kids as well as a café and beach bar. Snorkeling equipment can be rented and there are showers available.

B Playa San Juan has a nice little beach bar.

C Playas Santa Cecilia and Bonita are quiet and often deserted.

D Mezcalitos is often deserted however there is a small popular restaurant there.

E Chen Rio usually has calm water. Other than occasional campers the beach is never crowded.

F Punta Chiqueros is usually calm. There is a nice little restaurant.

G Playa Bosh has a couple of small bars and restaurants.

H Parque Punta Sur is a nature reserve with a lighthouse and a nice beach. Snorkeling is good and there is a small restaurant.

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

I Playa Palancar offers plenty of room. There is not much in the way of facilities but there is a small beach bar and café.

J Playa Nachi Cocom offers a lot of activities such as parasailing windsurfing and jet skis. There is also a café and beach bar.

K Mr. Sancho's has all the water sports you can imagine plus a swimming pool and horseback riding. There are bars and cafés.

L Playa San Francisco is a nice family beach.

M Playa Maya does not have much in the way of water sports or activities but there is a small beach bar and café.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Cozumel and the surrounding area we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Though prices in restaurants and stores are usually fixed, bargaining is often practiced in open markets and with street vendors.

Tipping: A tip of 15% or more is appropriate in restaurants. Check your bill, because a 10% service fee may already be added.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES The seafood in Cozumel is fresh and delicious and the local restaurants know how to prepare it to perfection. Most of the restaurants along Rafael Melgar Avenue understandably cater to the tastes of visiting tourists. However, (and this is the biggest culinary secret in Cozumel) many of the best cafés and restaurants in town are small, mom-and-pop, kinda out-of-the-way places just a few blocks off the main ocean drive. They offer a variety of wonderfully traditional dishes. Here are a few favorite dishes of Yucatán: Tikin Xic (teekeen sheek) is fresh fish, usually snapper or grouper, marinated with Adobo de Achioté (a spice paste), sour orange juice and oregano, covered with onions, peppers and tomatoes then wrapped in banana leaves and baked to perfection. Frijoles con Puerco is black beans and pork garnished with onions and 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 in lime juice.

You will usually find two sauces on the table. One is green and it is called salsa verde. It is a little tangy and medium hot in terms of spices and chilies. The other sauce is called Salsa a la Mexicana. It is very spicy and very hot; but that's what the cold beer is for.

With visiting tourists the most popular beer is a cold Corona and the obligatory slice of fresh lime and salt. Local beer drinkers tend to prefer a brand known as Montejo. Other popular beers on the island include Indio, Carta Blanca, Tecate, Modelo and Estala. Mixing Worcestershire sauce and lime juice with beer is called a Michelada. Mixing clam juice and tomato juice with the beer is called a Clamato.

SHOPPING FACILITIES Cozumel is one of the most popular duty-free ports in the Caribbean. The island is famous for the prices offered on diamonds and other colored gemstones, jewelry and Sea of Cortez pearls. Mexican made arts and crafts are also popular.

There are two primary shopping areas in Cozumel. The first is in the cruise complex at the end of the pier where ships dock. Here visitors can find everything from hand-made silver jewelry to leather goods and souvenirs. Many are particularly fond of the colorful and ornately decorated wide-brimmed Mexican sombreros. Cozumel's main shopping area is downtown along the beautiful oceanfront drive, Rafael Melgar Avenue.

LOCAL CURRENCY The peso (MXN) is Mexico's official currency. The symbol (\$) refers to pesos, not U.S. dollars, unless specifically noted. Prices marked in U.S. dollars are noted as USD or US\$. ATM's are available, especially in heavily trafficked tourist areas. Most businesses and restaurants accept major credit cards.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE The Post Office (SEPOMEX) is located in town at the intersection of Calle (Street) 7 South and Rafael Melgar Avenue (the ocean front drive).

Place a call with your personal calling card using the following access numbers: