



Digital Nomads Guides

Playa del Carmen

EXTRA
GOODIES
ONLINE!

Fer Gallart

Playa del Carmen

Free Sample

Digital Nomads Guides

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Everything in this book has been researched thoughtfully and with great care. However, things can change at anytime. We can't rule out mistakes 100%. We are not liable for any damage created by the information in this book. This book is not a substitute for thinking for yourself ;)

Cover photo by Jaimie Williams - follow him on [Instagram!](#)



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Why Playa del Carmen?

Playa, as it's known by the locals, is a great digital nomad destination for many reasons, but its location is only one of the top reasons. Surrounded by amazing beaches, lakes, cenotes, and ancient Mayan ruins, this spot is full of things to do, see and people to meet. It's an endless paradise for fun and adventure.

Located in the Yucatan peninsula, in the state of Quintana Roo - 45 minutes from Cancún International Airport - Playa is really well connected to the world: cheap flights to Europe, South America and the United States are easy to find. In the middle of Cancún and Tulum, Playa's privileged location allows you to take day trips to many of the interesting places around the peninsula.

While Playa isn't itself considered a significant cultural spot in the region (it has grown mainly through tourism), its location makes it a prime location for Mayan culture immersion. Cobá and Tulum are less than an hour away, and Chichén Itzá - one of the New 7 Wonders of the World - is just a 150 km drive away.

Back in 2005, this Mexican-Caribbean city was the fastest growing in the country, and it's now home to 230,000 people, with a large, diverse expat community (including Argentinians, Italians, French, Americans, Canadians). People from all over the world are now local *Playenses* giving this spot its own unique flavor.

Once a tiny fishermen town, Playa grew exponentially from the late 90s thanks to the beauty of its white sandy beaches, that now are populated by herds of tourists all year long. However, Playa also has its secret spots to avoid crowds, relax and enjoy the heavenly year-long summer climate.

Playa is a livable city where you can find the ambiance you're looking for: from relaxed to highly vibrant beaches with Ibiza-style music beach clubs; from public parks where you can practice sports, to top notch private gyms; tiny family-owned restaurants serving up local food, to the best Italian cuisine (quite possibly the best in Mexico, as Playa was, and still is, a top destination for Italian expats).

Nightlife in Playa can be as wild as you want it to be: from little bars far up in *La Quinta*, to big night clubs open all night. If you decide to let go, be prepared to dance to electronic music, which is by far the local's preferred music. Abandon all worries and visit the many rooftops pounding loud electro music until the sun rises.

If you're looking for a place to stay for a few weeks or months, consider Playa del Carmen as your next destination. You won't be disappointed!



About this Guide

Part One of this guide has all the tools you need to get set up in Playa del Carmen. If you read this book at the airport or on your flight, you'll be as prepared as can be in **just 25 minutes**. Important Spanish words are introduced if they're necessary vocabulary. They follow directly after the English. All prices are in United States Dollar (US\$) as it's widely understood, and the Mexican Peso is quite notorious for its instability.

Part Two of this book has specific information about the neighborhoods (*colonias*) in Playa del Carmen. In the city, locals don't really refer to the neighborhood's names to define areas, but it's helpful to know about them especially when you're looking for an apartment to rent. Landlords and agencies will know what you're talking about when you mention a neighborhood name. Filtering results on Airbnb by neighborhood will also save you some time.

All cafés included mention the internet speed in Megabit (Mbit), a PowerScore and ZenScore. The PowerScore is a rating of the number of charging points out of five: five is the best and one is the worst. People with great laptop batteries can go to a café with a low PowerScore, but energetically challenged people should skip over these. The ZenScore is about how workable a café is in terms of noise, again with a rating out of five: five being very quiet and one being very busy. It's not just decibels, it's also how many people are walking by your table causing distraction. This is of course a little more variable as it's dependent on the time of day and day of the week. Our writers visited all the cafés during a weekday before 17:00.



Part One: How to Get Set Up in Playa del Carmen

Money, ATMs and Prices

The currency in Mexico is the Mexican Peso. It's a very unstable currency and it can happen that from one day to another your dollars/euros/pounds can buy 10% more pesos than the day before. The exchange rate as of March 2018 is:

100 MXN = 5.40 USD = 4.40 EUR

Check the latest trends to try to optimize your money value, using apps like XE currency exchange to help you do this.

In Playa you can find many different types of ATMs, on La Quinta Avenida you'll find them on both sides of the street, and some of them have the possibility of withdrawing USD instead of MXN. These are the most expensive ATMs in town, with a fee of US\$4 to US\$ 9. They are there for the "lazy" tourists and urgent withdrawals, but if you plan to stay longer than a couple of days, then head to bank-owned ATMs like the ones at Mega Supermercado or at Avenida Juarez. These are owned by *BBVA Bancomer* and *HSBC*, both with a current withdrawal commission of US\$1.90.

Most major credit cards are widely accepted at many restaurants, bars, hotels and independent shops, with the exception of the Discovery card, which is rarely accepted. Also, keep in mind that taxi services don't take credit cards.

Be as careful as you'd be in any other country and don't lose sight of your credit card when paying, to avoid possible fraud. Also, always ask for your bill in Mexican pesos - it's common practice to be charged in USD as it seems easier for everyone, but you'll be paying more in the end.

Tips are sometimes included in your bill, don't be surprised about this. It's common practice, but not legally mandatory to tip. The tips usually range from 10 to 15% of the bill - it's a way to express how good or bad the service was.

Here are some examples on the costs of some basic stuff:

Taxi ride inside town - from US\$1.95

Coffee - US\$2.50

Alcoholic drink - from US\$3.35

Beer in a bar - from US\$2.80

1 liter bottle of water - US\$1

Lunch - from US\$4.45

Hostel bed - US\$8



Airbnb room - from US\$15

Airbnb apartment - from US\$25

Playa del Carmen is certainly not as cheap as many parts in South East Asia or Central America, but there are ways to still have a nice time in town without spending too much.

So, how expensive is it to live in Playa for a week? Let's say you are on a budget. You stay in a hostel dorm and cook for yourself or eat at cheap places. You have two beers per week and you walk everywhere you go. That sums up to a weekly budget of US\$135 or US\$580 per month.

If money is not that tight, you might opt for your own apartment, go to a restaurant every day and have a proper night out twice per week. You explore the city by taxi. That comes to US\$400 per week or US\$1700 per month.

This is about the range you can expect. The biggest factor is obviously your choice of accommodation and whether you cook for yourself or eat out.

The best value always comes when staying for longer periods, like a month. This way it's easier to access big discounts for comfortable and centrally-located condos/apartments.

The budgets range from US\$900 to 1500 per month for a nicely furnished, well-equipped one bedroom apartment with WiFi and a shared swimming pool.

Food is quite cheap and fresh when bought at the local market *DAC*, on Avenida 30 and Avenida Constituyentes. So, having an apartment with access to a nice kitchen will make your stay much more affordable.

Here's some helpful finance vocabulary:

Is it possible to pay by credit card? - *¿Es posible de pagar con tarjeta de crédito?*

Is there an ATM? - *¿Hay un cajero automático?*

How much? - *¿Cuanto cuesta?*

The bill - *La cuenta*

Tip - *Propina*

Signature - *Firma*



Part Two: Neighborhood Guides

Bonus material unlocked! In the full version of the guide, you'll find the access to the online area here, to find an interactive map and more goodies to use in the city!

Playa del Carmen east and west, let's revisit this again. The city is divided into two parts by the Federal highway. There's the **east side** at the ocean and the **west side** at the jungle.

Preferably, and budget allowing, always stay on the east side. The general rule is, for many reasons including the cool sea breeze, the closer to the beach the better. It's also where everything happens.

The west of Playa is a diverse residential area, from tiny houses and apartments to regular size houses and big city malls. This side is usually cheaper and availability is generally better. The downside is that you'll need a car to move around. In the warmest months, it can get really, really hot as you're so far from the ocean and its cooling breeze.

Staying on the east side, from *Avenida Benito Juárez* to *Avenida 46 C.T.M*, there's not a big difference regarding convenience as you can go from one side to the other quite easily. It's all connected by a pedestrian street called *Avenida Quinta* (5th Avenue), or as locals call it *La Quinta*.





Centro & Playacar

As with every city, downtown is the noisiest and busiest neighborhood in town. But it also has its rewards. In this case, being close to the best beach in town: PlayaCar. The city center was the first neighborhood to be developed, it goes from *Avenida Aviación* to *Avenida Constituyentes*. Its southern neighbor PlayaCar is a big complex with a golf course, hotels and big villas. When leaving the beach, have a look at the amazing green spaces.

Work

Our free sample only shows one coworking space and one working friendly café. The full guide has three places in Centro and nine in total.

Nest Coworking

*Avenida 10, between calle 12 and 14, Centro
Mon - Sat 08:00 - 00:00, Sunday closed
50 Mbit*

The coolest coworking in Playa, this is definitely the place to find remote workers, digital nomads and some local entrepreneurs. The mix generates a nice, inspiring atmosphere for working. Nest has the most convenient location - if you are staying east central Playa - and most importantly, great opening times and speedy internet. It's the perfect place if you have to work with people in different time zones. When you become a regular member, they give you 24/7 access. The prices are:

US\$15 per day
US\$75 per week
US\$250 per month
US\$600 per month for a private office

Cinco - Thompson Playa del Carmen

*Calle 12, between Avenida Quinta and 10
Mon - Sun 07:00 - 18:00
20 Mbit*

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆
ZenScore ★★☆☆☆

Cinco restaurant at the Thompson Hotel is located on the hotel's impressive rooftop. It has very nice views of the ocean and a big swimming pool, reserved for guests and paid day-pass visitors. If you don't have to do video calls, it's a great option for a breakfast/brunch work session. Just bring your swimming suit in case you're tempted to stay at the pool with a day pass.



Final Words

Did you like this free sample? In the full guide, you'll find so much more, including a total of nine coworking and café reviews. Head to digitalnomadsguides.com/playa-del-carmen/ for more information.

