

# EXPLORE!

## Cycle Mexico - The Yucatan Peninsula

9 days

Mexico - Trip code CMX



## Cycle Mexico - The Yucatan Peninsula

Discover the beaches, ancient temples and colourful villages of the Yucatan Peninsula by bike. From the beaches of Playa del Carmen we catch the ferry and cycle on beautiful Cozumel Island. From the colonial towns of Merida and Valladolid we cycle through colourful Mayan villages on quiet roads with chances to swim from beautiful beaches and in an incredible cenote (fresh water hole). Along the way we discover fascinating Mayan archaeological sites at Chichen Itza and Tulum. Our route ends on the idyllic white sand beaches of Tulum where we explore the Sian Ka'an Biosphere and relax.

### Trip highlights

- ★ Easy cycling - on quiet back roads on the flat
- ★ Explore amazing Mayan sites - including Chichen Itza
- ★ Swim - from pristine beaches and in freshwater cenotes
- ★ Mexican food and drink - Enjoy authentic and delicious regional food

#### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

##### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

#### CYCLING GRADE:

##### Easy

Suitable for anyone who enjoys easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

#### GROUP SIZE:

##### 10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Cancun

Our journey begins in Cancun. Located on the northeast coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, Cancun is a popular tourist destination with a good range of international flight options.



**Accommodation: Adhara Cancun** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Morning cycle ride and swim in cenote. Drive to Merida

Early this morning we leave Cancun and drive inland (2.5 hours) to the village of Yaxunah where we start today's ride. You will have time firstly to familiarise yourself with your bike and make any necessary adjustments. Once everybody is comfortable we will start today's ride that goes through a couple of small villages and once we finish cycling we hop on our bus for a 20 minute drive towards a small property that has an amazing cenote for a refreshing swim. Cenotes are natural pools formed in limestone and used by the ancient Mayan culture as a source of fresh water. A batch of 'Tamales' (traditional Mexican food) will be ready for a late lunch (included) after our swim and while we are here we will have the opportunity to learn more about the Mayan language in the form of a traditional song that locals can help translate. Later this afternoon we drive for about 1.5 hours to Merida, famed for its beautiful Spanish-Moorish style architecture and where we spend the next three nights. Merida was founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo and the city was built over the ruins of a Mayan city. Trade with Europe during the Spanish colonial rule brought the city great wealth that is now reflected in the many grand mansions, churches and plazas that lend the city a faded elegance and more of a European feel than elsewhere in Mexico. Merida is now the capital of the state of Yucatan and is also known as the 'White City'. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (flat, paved roads).



**Accommodation: Hotel Dolores Alba** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 3 - Visit Mayapan Mayan site; bike to Nomozon Cenote. Try a Mayan local dish

After an early breakfast we drive (45 mins) to Tekik de Requil village to begin our cycle ride. We explore by bike through four small villages up to the Mayan site of Mayapan - the last inhabited Mayan city before the Spanish conquest. We spend time visiting this ancient site, before getting back on our bikes and riding via the villages of Telchaquillo and Pixya to the impressive Nomozon Cenote where we will take a short break and you have the chance for a swim. We return the same way on our bikes (optional 12 kilometre ride, non-cyclists travel in group bus), then drive a short distance to a local hacienda where we enjoy lunch before driving the 11 kilometres back to our hotel in Merida. This evening we have arranged for a cooking demonstration at a local house where you can see how the host prepares a pre-Colombian traditional Yucatecan dish such as Sac Cool, prepared with corn, wild turkey and deer. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 39 kilometres plus 12 kilometres optional cycle (flat, paved and dirt roads).



**Accommodation: Hotel Dolores Alba** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 4 - Cycle to beach, seafood grill

We start the day with a drive to Dzilam Bravo that should take around 1.5 hours. En route we plan to stop at Dzilam Gonzalez to see an unrestored archeological site in the main square. Today's cycle ride takes us up to the Yucatan north coast as we ride alongside the Caribbean, past small fishing villages until we reach the palm-fringed sands of San Crisanto Beach. You may like to have a dip in the sea before we help in the preparation of our seafood lunch, including shrimp ceviche and fish. While at the beach you will also be able to learn a little about some of the exotic local drinks and your Tour Leader will show how to make drinks such as Michelada, Chelada or Red Eyes. Later this afternoon we return to Merida by bus. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (flat, paved roads).



**Accommodation: Hotel Dolores Alba** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 5 - Cycle to Ake, see Izamal Spanish convent, visit Chichen Itza Mayan temple

This morning we bid farewell to Merida with a short early drive to Tixpehual where we start today's cycle. We ride through several interesting little villages to Ake. We finish cycling here and drive to the colonial backwater of Izamal. Following the Spanish conquest a colonial city was founded atop what was an important Mayan ceremonial site which became a focal point of the Spanish attempts to convert locals to Catholicism dominated by a 16th century Franciscan Monastery. After exploring the site we have lunch (not included) and there may be time to see the local handicraft workshops. In the afternoon we drive (1hr) to Chichen Itza. Founded in AD432 and conquered by the Toltecs in the 10th century, the culture of the Maya and the Toltec gradually fused. Chichen Itza is one of the most outstanding archaeological sites in the Americas and we visit the site with a local guide before enjoying some free time to explore further. Founded in AD432 the city is believed to have reached its zenith during the Terminal Classic Period (800-1000AD) and remarkable sculptures adorn the pyramids, palaces, temples and ball court (where death was the penalty for defeat). Finally we drive (1.5hrs) to colonial Valladolid where we spend the next two nights. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres (flat, paved and dirt roads).



**Accommodation: Hotel Maria de la Luz** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Coastal ride to pink lagoons. Tequila tasting

We leave early today with a drive (1.5hrs) north to the coastal town of Rio Lagartos where we start our ride. Our ride ends near the little village of Las Coloradas home to the remarkable pink lagoons where locals harvest massive quantities of sea salt. The colours derive from a specific unicellular algae called 'dunaliella salina' that has pink and red pigments. This algae is the base of nutrition for birds such as flamingos and spoonbill herons and is usually found in places with large concentrations of salt. From here a short drive brings us to a secluded beach where you have a chance to swim. Another short drive takes us to the fisherman's village of Rio Lagartos for a seafood lunch (not included) (vegetarian options available). We then take to the waters for a short boat excursion seeking out local birdlife. Finally we plan to learn all about tequila and you will have a chance to try some before returning by bus to our hotel in Valladolid. In the case of bad weather the tour leader may need to alter today's itinerary. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (flat, paved roads and compacted sand paths).



**Accommodation: Hotel Maria de la Luz** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Cycle to Coba Mayan site; visit incredible Tulum

We bid farewell to Valladolid this morning as we head east to the Caribbean coast. First we drive (1hr) to Xiulub village where we start our cycle ride via small interesting villages on a secluded road amidst thick vegetation to the Mayan ruins of Coba. On our guided visit of Coba you will have the chance to ascend the tallest Mayan temple in the region for panoramic views. We continue by bus to our hotel in Tulum then later this afternoon visit the Mayan site with a local guide. The ruins of Tulum enjoy a dramatic setting

perched atop a cliff overlooking the turquoise waters and white sand beach below. The city was guarded by a watch tower and thick ramparts which reflect the late Mayan period that Tulum dates back to, when there was increasingly enmity between Mayan city-states. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (flat, paved roads).



**Accommodation: El Mestizo** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Free day in Tulum. Optional bike rides to Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve

You may choose to kick back and relax on the beaches of Tulum today or even revisit the ruins to see them in a different light. Alternatively you may prefer to explore the neighbouring UNESCO biosphere reserve of Sian Ka'an by bike on an optional 35 kilometre cycle ride. One of Mexico's largest reserves with about 120 kilometre of coastline Sian Ka'an means 'Origin of the Sky' in Mayan. The diversity of life is exceptional with a large number of migratory and resident birds and marine life, as well as famous mammals such as the Jaguar, Puma, Ocelot and Tapir. Landscapes are equally varied with pristine wetlands, lagoons, mangrove forests, dunes, tropical forests and palm savannah. For our cycle we leave early to enjoy the sunrise as we set off the first few kilometres along a paved road and then the rest of the way on a dirt path inside the biosphere reserve, surrounded by dense tropical vegetation, to a bridge that overlooks an amazing lagoon and mangrove forest. We ride back along the same route. A second shorter optional 12 kilometre cycle is also available later in the morning, travelling up as far as the Tulum entrance. It is possible to do both cycle options, giving a total distance of 47 kilometres. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 or 35 kilometres (optional) (flat, paved and dirt roads).



**Accommodation: El Mestizo** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Trip ends in Cancun

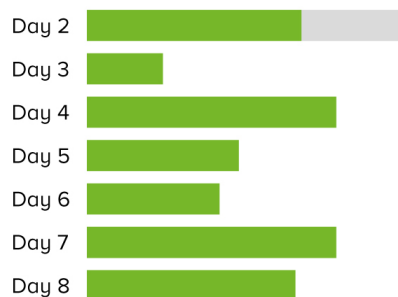
We drive 2 hours to Cancun International Airport where the trip ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

# Cycling information

## DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Rides

### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 194 km over six days (an average of 32 km per day). The terrain is mostly flat we ride on a mixture of tarmac and dirt roads. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as easy.

### Bike included

18 gear BH Beartrack hybrid bikes with front suspension.

### Bike information

Your included bike is an 18 gear BH Beartrack Lite hybrid bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A small handlebar bag and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

### Cycling grade

Easy



## Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 8  
Lunch: 2  
Dinner: 1



### Transport

Bus  
Bicycle



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle guide  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel

## Trip information

## Country information

### Holidays to Mexico

#### Climate

Mexico is a country whose weather is very much determined by its geological make-up. Whatever time of year you visit the weather produces a range of diverse contrasts. The summer months (June to October) are generally the wettest, with the areas around Mexico City and Guadalajara averaging some 6 inches of rain in July, whilst the coastal areas like La Paz only get at most an inch. Temperatures at this time of year can also vary greatly, from the mid 70s F in Mexico City, to the high 90s at La Paz. Winter is generally the busiest period, when rainfall is at a minimum and the daytime temperatures average a pleasant 72° across the region. Do bear in mind that at altitude the temperatures can drop considerably at night and sudden changes can occur at anytime.

#### Time difference to GMT

-6

#### Plugs

2 Pin Flat

#### Religion

Roman Catholic, Protestant

#### Language

Spanish is the official language, but around 50 languages/dialects are also spoken by the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

## Budgeting and packing

### Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require. General: Pack layers of clothing, essentially for mild or hot weather depending on the time of the year.

### Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

### Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

### Tipping

#### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. We recommend US\$50 for this kitty.

### International Departure Taxes

Mexico departure Tax - US\$35

### Country Information

## Holidays to Mexico

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Breakfast price

£5

#### Lunch price

£7

#### Dinner price

£13

#### Beer price

£2

#### Water price

£0.7

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency

Mexican New Peso

#### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

#### Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

#### ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

#### Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

#### Travellers Cheques

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual



travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa Information

Mexico: Citizens from UK, New Zealand, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada require a Mexican Tourist Card to enter. This is obtained from the consular office or at the check-in desk of the airline you are travelling with and will need to be kept until exit. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit) For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html> Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp> Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Non refundable permits**

## **Holidays to Mexico**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.