

Here are our favorite things to do and favorite recommendations for our friends who are visiting our home, Playa del Carmen! - [Alex](#) & [Karla](#) <3



Playa del Carmen Restaurants

1. [Gourmet Food Park](#) - Fun food park with a variety of food options in the heart of Playa del Carmen. Our favorites: homemade loaded cheeseburgers, and the Southern cuisine food truck (Southern fried chicken, corn, honey glazed sliders).
2. [Harry's Steak House](#) - Great service and high end ambiance for a steakhouse. They also have great sides, and a decent wine list. You can also find them on Open Table. Try the steaks + sides, of course!
3. [Sonora Grill](#) - This is Karla's favorite place to take first time visitors because everything in the menu is good! A more casual steakhouse with a great variety of food (with vegan options) on the menu. Her favorites: roasted cauliflower with truffle and cheese, guacamole with ribeye.

4. [India Jones](#) - One of the highest rated restaurants in Playa del Carmen. They serve Indian cuisine + a great selection of cocktails and wine. Small menu, really good food. Favorites: Chicken Tikka Masala, Lamb short rib, Butter chicken, Lentil soup.
5. [Taco trucks at Super Aki](#) - Located at Calle 38 and 30 avenue. Look for "Super Aki" with this address because it's not an official restaurant. Just a great taco truck spot with multiple options and at least 12 kinds of authentic Mexican tacos. Try the birria, suadero, tripa, and castacan if you find them!
6. [ALUX Cave Restaurant](#) - Very famous place, and a must-see in Playa del Carmen. Alux is a semi formal dining restaurant (no flipflops and tank tops friends!) inside a natural cave and a cenote. Small menu and good food + wonderful wine options at the cellar. You need to taxi to this place from centro, it's about 10 mins away from downtown. Easy to taxi back. Favorites: Wagyu beef starter, Octopus and mole appetizer, Seafood risotto, Catch of the day.
7. [Moshe Cube \(Kosher\)](#) - Also a Top 5 restaurant in town, Moshe Cube serves great mediterranean food, made from fresh ingredients. For those staying at Lunada or Ipana, this is a few steps away! Favorites: chicken shawarma hummus, fish balls, Beef arayes, and Israeli salad.
8. [Mezcla](#) - Modern Mexican fusion with dishes that are both adventurous and homey. Favorites: brisket tacos, chipotle corn on a cob, grilled octopus, patatas brava.
9. [Zo Zen](#) - Playful options for frozen yogurt with healthy and decadent toppings! Try their CBD yogurt for a relaxing wind-down treat at the end of your day.
10. [Papaya Slice](#) - No - nonsense New York style and Detroit style pizza. In hearty servings! One slice is a full dinner.

Beauty and Relaxation Little Black Book



Work hard, spa harder. - Karla and her girlfriends

Best spots:

Reef 28 Spa

Sauna, cold plunge, steam room with mint essential oils, powered hydrojets
Massages, facials, and body scrubs

Soul Beach Spa

Sauna, cold bucket, powered hydrojets
Massages and facials

The Hyatt - Spa

Sauna, hot and cold tubs, man-made Cenote-like pool and lounge area
Massages and facials

GH Spa

Appointment-only spa, great for anti aging and deep cleanse facials, manicures, pedicures, and lashes

Bric Spa

Appointment-only spa with creative massages and healing modalities. My favorite: hot oil head massage and Reiki x Lomi Lomi massage by Coralee

My Beauty “Justice League”

Reasonable prices, great service, on-time touch ups.

Home/ Hotel Service Nails, Lashes, Waxing

Jessica (Depilsun Beauty)

Whatsapp +52 984 320 8852

Home/ Hotel Service Massages

Marisol Mota - Deep tissue, lymphatic drain massages, sports and recovery

Whatsapp +52 984 593 7588

Flavia Sotto - Swedish massage, deep tissue, facial massages

Whatsapp +52 998 317 3040

Things to do in Riviera Maya:

- Cenote: They are either enclosed caves filled with water or collapsed (open) caves with water people swim in. They are also tied to the Mayan culture and are protected. Also, they are everywhere. Seriously, there are hundreds. Usually you pay a small fee to enter. They are crystal blue and mineralized, very magical and rejuvenating. Our favorite Cenotes to visit: Yax Muul, Dos Ojos.



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- **Tulum Ruins:**
 - <https://tulumruins.net/>
 - 700 year old city that was one of the last populated Mayan Cities. It's super busy on Sundays because it's free for Mexicans/ locals. This is about 45 minutes off of Playa del Carmen, and you need a car to get there (or commission a taxi as a private car + driver).



- **Islands**
 - *Cozumel*
 - Island directly off-shore from Playa del Carmen w/ ferry (~\$20 round trip) or by propeller plan (\$250 for 5 people)

- Island is a great day trip with snorkeling, surfing, ruins, shopping, boat trips, 4-wheelers, etc
- World famous for diving (never seen the good stuff be I hear about it all the time from people who scuba dive)
- You can actually find direct flights to Cozumel on Southwest Airlines but they are limited and you'd still have to ferry to Playa del Carmen



- *Isla Mujeres*
 - Island near Cancun. Very relaxed with basically the same things to do as Cozumel but people tend to find it nicer and quieter than Cozumel.
 - Has better snorkeling than Cozumel and has underwater statues to see.



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- *Holbox (pronounced "hall..ba..shhh")*
 - This is more of a weekend trip but well worth it. Avoid any weather that might rain because it's mostly dirt roads that will turn into mud roads.
 - By far the most relaxing and beautiful location in the Riviera Maya. Very short ferry ride but also the furthest away from Playa del Carmen (about 3 hour car ride but drivers will take you and drop you off or get a rental car).
 - Things to do: Snorkeling, swim with Whale Sharks, see wild flamingos, Kiteboard, amazing beaches, great food, good night-life if you're looking for it, shopping, tours of island, crocodiles, bioluminescent, etc)



- **XCaret (pronounced “ishh..carrot”):**
 - <https://www.xcaret.com/en/>
 - They pretty much do everything (theme park, 4 wheelers, zipline, cenote, themed dinners, snorkeling, turtles, tours, transportation, lodging, etc).
 - They have 8 different parks and by far the most popular tourist destination here. They also have a Michelin star restaurant inside one of the properties.



- **Golf:**

- Not to be missed of course! Tons of courses here and all are great. Ask Alex about this because he will want to join. ;)

Favorites: Hard Rock Playa del Carmen, Gran Coyote, PGA Bahia Principe and the Par 3 Jack Nicklaus Course at Vidanta



- **Fishing:**
 - [Google search for "Fishing Playa del Carmen Mexico"](#)
 - Types of Fish: Barracuda, Wahoo, Kingfish, Bonito, Tuna, Amberjack, Mahi Mahi, Sailfish, White Marlin, Blue Marlin
 - There are too many options to list. Contact them as early as possible to book



Yachts

- This is very popular and almost always takes place out of Cancun
- We suggest organizing with a group to bring down costs but there are various options of size of vessel to choose from to meet your expectations. Easy to book and find online.



For our general “Traveling to Mexico” tips, head over to [this travel guide on our wedding page](#).

BONUS TIP:

Log in your Airbnb account and check out “**Airbnb Experiences**” in this area. You’ll find language exchange, snorkeling, cooking classes, massages, temazcal, diving, and other tourist-y things to do.

Booking is super easy, choose a highly rated host! :)

We worked so hard on this guide and the website, so if you have any other custom advice that you need, please check tourism blogs or plan a custom trip with a travel agent. Also explore Tripadvisor for other tips.

Alex & Karla <3