Costa Maya, Mexico

Everybody argues about whether this port is too fake. I think they are asking the wrong question, and I think most of them walk straight past the best thing here.

At the Costa Maya cruise port: what’s there

Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

Costa Maya is one of the few ports where staying put is a real plan: a long pier with a free trolley, then a whole village of pools, shops, bars and a spa built for cruise guests. My own favourite thing here is that spa, right in the port complex, where I book a massage that is far kinder to the wallet than the ship's. One honest warning: Royal Caribbean now runs this port and has big plans for it, so the layout may shift under your feet over the next year or two.

Port map: this port doesn’t publish a map of its own that we could find, so we drew the simple walk below from the port’s and cruise lines’ own descriptions.

Book it from your phone

Tours in Costa Maya: the bookings Granny uses, one scan away.

Point your phone camera at a code. Your phone opens the booking page. No camera app? Type the web address printed under the code.

Costa Maya shore excursions

Cruise-only tours with a return-to-ship guarantee. Non-refundable from 14 days before the tour.

SHORE EXCURSIONS GROUP

aicruisegranny.com/go/costa-maya-tours

More Costa Maya tours

Thousands of reviewed tours. Most cancel free up to 24 hours ahead; look for the Worry-Free tag.

VIATOR

aicruisegranny.com/go/costa-maya-viator

Travel insurance

Compare cruise travel insurance plans side by side before final payment.

SQUAREMOUTH

aicruisegranny.com/go/insurance

Check the official source

Rules, prices and hours change. Scan to open the official page and confirm before you go. These are not paid links.

Chacchoben ruins
INAH

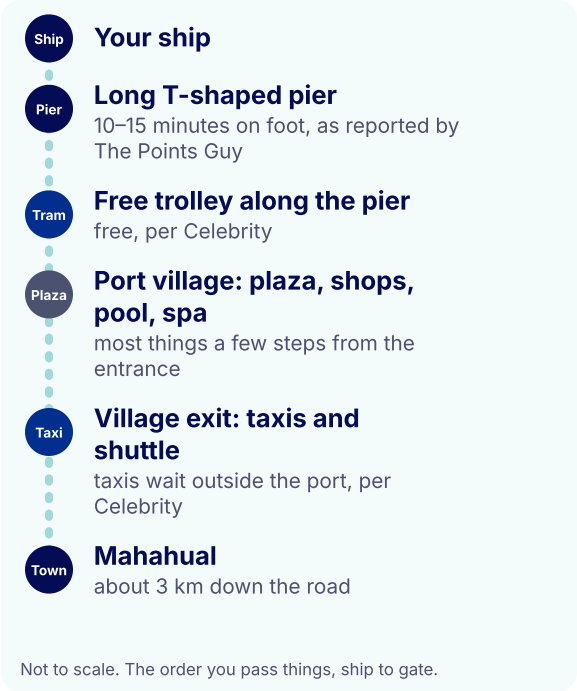
Mahahual
Caribe Mexicano

Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at **aicruisegranny.com/port-costa-maya**

Booking codes are affiliate or travel-agent links: AI Cruise Granny may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. Prices, rules and availability are set by each company; check them before you book.

From the ship: Puerto Costa Maya

Four berths (three large, one smaller), so up to four ships at once; extra ships anchor and tender, as reported by CruiseMapper. Run by Royal Caribbean Group since 11 July 2025 and open to other cruise lines.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Free trolley along the pier Free — A trolley runs from the ship to the port village. Celebrity recommends it on hot days; Life Well Cruised (2023) says anyone who has trouble walking can ride it.
Pier, from the ship to the village
Access: The easiest way to cover the long pier.

Main saltwater pool Free — A large saltwater pool with a swim-up bar. Cruise Fever (April 2026) and Life Well Cruised (2023) both report it is free for cruise passengers; no official page states the price.
Inside the port village
Access: No published pool lift or ramp.

Pool loungers Free when not busy — Loungers around the pool. The Points Guy (September 2026) says they are complimentary; Cruise Fever (April 2026) says you need to buy food or a drink from a nearby bar to use them.
Around the main pool

Papantla Flyers Free — Traditional pole-flying performance, reported by Cruise Fever (April 2026) as a free show near the entrance; tips welcome.
Central square near the port entrance

Port Wi-Fi — Celebrity lists Wi-Fi at the port without a price; Life Well Cruised (2023) reported it free throughout the terminal.
Port village

Flamingo spotting Free — Cruise Fever (April 2026) says flamingos on a sandbar are usually visible from the port.
Port waterfront

Pools and beaches

Main saltwater pool with swim-up bar Free — The big pool everyone heads for; Cruise Fever (April 2026) warns it gets crowded by midday on busy days.
Port village

Castaway Pool Bar area — A quieter pool area behind the spa with better ocean views, as reported by Cruise Fever (April 2026).
Behind the spa

Port beach — Celebrity says you can swim from the port's beach but tells beach lovers Mahahual's beaches are better. CruiseMapper lists a private beach in the complex.
Inside the port
Access: No beach mats or beach wheelchairs published.

Food and drink

Swim-up bar at the main pool — Bar in the main pool.
Main pool

Mamasita's — Poolside bar with a 3–4 pm happy hour, as reported by CruiseMapper.
Poolside

Bbandito's Lobster Shack — Beach restaurant with live entertainment, as reported by CruiseMapper.
Port beach

Castaway Pool Bar — Bar in the quieter pool area, reported by Cruise Fever (April 2026).
Behind the spa

Café Mexico — Café that The Points Guy (September 2026) uses as a landmark inside the port.
Port village

Other named eateries — Cruise Fever (April 2026) lists Cantina Latina, El Faro, El Mero Mero, El Pan Dulce, Flavors of Mexico and La Tortilleria. Celebrity says the port's restaurants lean towards international tastes.
Port village

Shopping

Port shops — Celebrity says there are dozens of shops within the port. CruiseMapper names Diamonds International, Tanzanite International, Carpet Emporium, Havana Club, Del Sol, Silver Factory and Taxco.
Around the terminal and main pool

Tequileria International — Tequila shop that CruiseMapper says stocks over 200 brands.
Port village

Artisan market — Crafts, textiles, hammocks, vanilla, chocolate and hot sauce, per The Points Guy (September 2026), which warns prices nearest the ship run higher.
Port village

Kakaw — Cocoa history with handmade chocolate to taste, listed by Celebrity among the port attractions.
Port complex

La Consentida — Tequila distillery listed by Celebrity among the port attractions.
Port complex

Spa and pampering

Port spa — Milk baths, a steam room and massages, sold singly or as a package. Cruise Granny™'s own favourite at this port; Celebrity also lists a spa.
Inside the port complex

Mayan Wellness Rituals

$90 per person (reported September 2026)
— An 80-minute shaman-led ritual with temazcal and clay mask, reported by The Points Guy (September 2026).
Port area
Access: A sweat lodge is hot; check with your own doctor if heat is a problem for you.

Open-air massages — Massage tables and hammock massages near the terminal, reported by Cruise Fever (April 2026).
Near the terminal

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Aviarius aviary — Bird walk on hanging bridges, listed by Celebrity. Cruise Fever (April 2026) says it is affected by redevelopment and may be limited or closed.
Above the boardwalk
Access: Hanging bridges; not for unsteady walkers.

Jade Maya Museum and Mayan pyramid replica — Listed by CruiseMapper among the port attractions.
Port complex

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

ATMs — Celebrity says ATMs at the terminal dispense US dollars. Life Well Cruised (2023) said pesos; CruiseMapper says there is no bank in port.
Cruise terminal

Restrooms Free — Listed by Celebrity; no details published.
Port village
Access: Accessible restrooms not published.

Tourist information booth Free — Advice on beaches and excursions, reported by Life Well Cruised (2023).
Port village

Excursion meeting area — Where pre-booked tours gather. Life Well Cruised (2023) suggests allowing at least 15 minutes to get there from the ship.
Port village

Tour desks by the Costa Maya sign — Desks selling Chacchoben ruins and Bacalar lagoon trips (Cruise Granny™ photo, December 2023).
By the Costa Maya sign

Getting out of the port

Taxis

About $5 per person to Mahahual (reported September 2026)

— Taxis wait outside the port (Celebrity). The Points Guy (September 2026) reports about $5 per person to the Mahahual beach clubs, about $20 to Xcalak and about $30 to Bacalar, and warns a dollar sign may mean pesos.

Outside the port / village exit

Access: Confirm per person or per car before you get in.

Shuttle to Mahahual — Celebrity says a shuttle runs to Mahahual for a small fee; CruiseMapper puts it at about US$5 per person.

Village exit

Golf cart and car rental — Both available, per Celebrity; no prices published.

Outside the port

Walk to Mahahual Free — Celebrity puts it at about 45 minutes on foot.

About 3 km south · about 45 min walk from the ship

Access: Hot and unshaded; not one I'd suggest for anyone with mobility trouble.

Carnival Beach Escape with open bar $70.99 adult, $64.99 child — Five hours at Fisherman's Village with chairs, kayaks and an open domestic bar (Carnival price on our live page).

Fisherman's Village, outside the port

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the whole day at the port here, I'd ride the free trolley down the pier, walk straight to the spa and book my massage time before the crowds wake up, then claim a lounger by the big saltwater pool early, because it fills by midday. Lunch at one of the village cafés, a slow browse of the artisan market, the Papantla Flyers if they're performing, then back to the spa for my appointment. If the main pool is too busy, try the quieter one behind the spa. Head for the trolley well before all-aboard; that pier is longer than it looks.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- The pier is long: The Points Guy (September 2026) puts the walk at 10–15 minutes. A free trolley runs from the ship to the village, and Life Well Cruised (2023) says it's there for anyone who has trouble walking.
- Ships normally dock here; CruiseMapper reports that when more than four ships call, extra ships anchor and tender.
- No pier surface, ramp, pool lift, beach mat, accessible restroom or wheelchair rental information is published by any official source.
- Construction for Royal Caribbean's redevelopment may close or reroute areas; check with your own cruise line before you sail.
- The aviary's hanging bridges are not for unsteady walkers.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

▼ Is the pool at the Costa Maya cruise port free?

Recent guides (Cruise Fever, April 2026; The Points Guy, September 2026) say the big saltwater pool is free for cruise passengers, though no official page states it. Cruise Fever adds that you may need to buy a drink to use a lounger.

▼ How long is the walk from the ship at Costa Maya?

The pier is long: about 10 to 15 minutes on foot, reported by The Points Guy. A free trolley runs from the ship to the port village.

▼ Is Royal Caribbean closing Costa Maya to other cruise lines?

Royal Caribbean took over running the port in July 2025 and says it stays open to other lines, but Mexico's environment ministry rejected the Perfect Day Mexico plan in May 2026. Carnival has largely dropped the port, so check your own itinerary.

Where the port facts come from: Celebrity Cruises: Costa Maya port guide (30 October 2026); Princess Cruises: Costa Maya cruise (30 October 2026); The Points Guy: Costa Maya cruise port (September 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruise Fever: Costa Maya things to do (April 2026) (30 October 2026); CruiseMapper: Costa Maya port (30 October 2026); Life Well Cruised: Costa Maya port guide (2023) (30 October 2026); Cruise Industry News: Royal Caribbean takes possession of Costa Maya (July 2025) (30 October 2026); Royal Caribbean Blog: Mexico rejects Perfect Day Mexico (May 2026) (30 October 2026); Yahoo / TravelHost: Carnival slashes Costa Maya visits (August 2025) (30 October 2026)

Let me start with the thing nobody tells you

Almost everyone walks off the ship at Costa Maya and heads straight for the pool, the shops, or a bus to the ruins. And a hundred feet behind them, right there in the port complex, is a spa.

WHAT I FOUND THERE MYSELF

Milk baths. A steam room. Massages. They sell it as a package if you want the whole thing, or you can do what I do and just book the massage on its own.

Two things I want you to hear. It costs considerably less than the same hour in the spa on your ship. And the massages are genuinely good. I have a professional background in bodywork, so I am very hard to impress on this particular subject, and I was impressed.

If you have a sea day coming, or your knees are done, or you simply do not want to get on another bus, this is the best hour you can spend in this port. Walk in when you get off, book your time, then go enjoy the rest of the day and come back to it.

Now let us deal with the argument everybody has about this port.

"Costa Maya is fake." Yes and no.

The complex was built for cruise ships. The pool, the swim-up bar, the shops, the tequila tasting, the aviary with the hanging bridges — none of that existed before the ships came. If what you want is an unvarnished Mexican fishing town, you will not find one forty feet from the gangway.

But "built for tourists" is not the same as "not worth your day," and I think the people who sneer at this port are usually people whose knees still work.

Here is who Costa Maya is genuinely good for. If you are travelling with small children. If you have a bad hip or a bad back. If this is your fourth port in five days and you are honestly a little tired. If you want a beach day with no negotiating, no taxi, no wondering whether the driver will come back for you. You walk off the ship and it is all right there.

And if you want the real town, it is three kilometres down the road and it is not hard to get to. You can have both in one day. Most people do not realise that.

How I would spend this port day

- **Tired, sore, or travelling with littles:** stay in the complex. Book the spa when you walk off, use the pool, eat there, go home rested. No shame in it whatsoever.
- **You want the real Mexico:** shuttle or taxi to Mahahual, walk the malecón, eat at a beach club, come back mid-afternoon.
- **You want the ruins:** Chacchoben, and read the warning further down before you book, because it is a real one.
- **You want all of it:** ruins in the morning, spa in the afternoon. That is the day I would build.

What is actually in the complex

A large swimming pool with a swim-up bar, shops, restaurants and bars, the spa, ATMs, restrooms and Wi-Fi. Celebrity's port guide mentions a free trolley from the ship to the port village, and you will want it, because that pier is long.

Three things inside get named again and again, and they are worth a wander even if you are not buying: **Aviarus**, an aviary connected by hanging bridges; **Kakaw**, a cocoa museum where you can taste chocolate made by hand; and **La Consentida**, a tequila distillery.

What I cannot tell you is what any of it costs, and I would rather say so than guess. The port's own website would not load when we checked it, no official page publishes prices for anything inside the complex, and nothing published anywhere states whether that pool is free or paid. Everything above comes from the cruise lines' own port pages and Mexican government documents. Budget as though the pool costs something and be pleasantly surprised.

Mahahual, if you want the real thing

Three kilometres from the pier. Take the shuttle for a small fee, grab a taxi, or rent a golf cart, which is the most fun of the three. Walking takes about 45 minutes and I would not do it in August.

Celebrity tells beach lovers to go to Mahahual outright, saying plainly that the beaches there are better. The Quintana Roo tourism board describes the malecón as a relaxed strip of restaurants, beach clubs and small shops, and that is a fair description. If you would rather not arrange it yourself, Carnival sells a beach club day at Fisherman's Village for $70.99 adult and $64.99 child, five hours with chairs, kayaks and an open domestic bar.

The ruins, and an honest warning

Chacchoben is the usual choice, about an hour each way. Carnival's own **excursion** runs four hours at $109.99 a person, air-conditioned bus, site entrance included. Going independently, Mexico's national institute of anthropology publishes entry at 155 pesos, open 9am to 5pm daily. Kohunlich is further out, 8am to 5pm, 210 pesos, or 105 for residents of Mexico. Nobody publishes the drive time to Kohunlich.

FROM MY OWN FAMILY

My daughter did the ruins and loved every minute. She came back full of it. So if you are able and it appeals to you, go — this is not me talking you out of it.

But read this before you book it. Carnival publishes that its Chacchoben tour "is not accessible for guests using wheelchairs, canes, rollators, or other mobility devices," that guests with walking difficulties or heart conditions may not take part, and that it involves "a fair amount of walking over uneven surfaces and climbing." Their Mahahual beach **excursion** carries the same exclusion. That is unusually blunt for a cruise line, and I am glad they say it. If you use a cane on bad days, this is a no. Take the spa instead, and do not feel one bit sorry about it.

Money, and the dollar sign trap

The currency is the Mexican peso. Dollars are widely accepted, but you may get your change back in pesos — and both currencies use the $ sign. A price tag reading $200 is a very different thing depending on which one they mean. Look twice, and ask if you are not sure. Nobody will mind.

At a glance

Getting ashore	You dock. Royal Caribbean states guests "step ashore without taking a tender boat." No tender, no queue, no weather gamble.
The pier	Y-shaped concrete, and long. Mexico's navy port sheet gives 14 metres depth and three cruise berths up to 366 metres; trade press reported a fourth opening in 2019. The port publishes no count of its own.
Mahahual	About 3km. Shuttle, taxi or golf cart. Roughly 45 minutes on foot.
Best for	Easy port days, families with small children, anyone whose body is tired of shore excursions

Questions I get asked about Costa Maya

Is there a beach right at the port?

There is a large pool complex at the port, and the better beaches are at Mahahual, three kilometres away. Celebrity says so themselves. If a proper beach is the whole point of your day, plan to leave the complex.

Do I need pesos?

No. Dollars work. Just watch which dollar sign you are reading, and expect change in pesos.

Can I do the ruins if I walk with a cane?

Carnival says no, in writing, and I would take them at their word. Uneven ground and climbing. There is no shame in choosing a different day.

Is the spa really cheaper than the ship's spa?

In my experience, considerably. I cannot quote you a price, because nothing inside the complex publishes one, so ask when you walk in.

Can I walk to Mahahual?

You can. It is about 45 minutes. In the heat, with the return trip to think about, I would spend the few dollars on the shuttle.

What nobody publishes, and we will not invent: prices inside the complex, whether the pool is free, the shuttle and taxi fares to Mahahual, golf cart rates, the drive time to Kohunlich or Bacalar, and any accessibility information for the port itself. If you find an official source for any of it, tell us and we will add it with the link.

Facts checked against official sources on 24 September 2026

Where these facts come from

- Royal Caribbean, Puerto Costa Maya (https://www.royalcaribbean.com/inspire/caribbean-puerto-costa-maya-mexico-shore-excursions)
- Celebrity Cruises, Costa Maya port guide (https://www.celebritycruises.com/ports/costa-maya-mexico)
- Princess Cruises, Costa Maya (https://www.princess.com/cruise-destinations/caribbean-cruises/costa-maya-cruise)
- **Mexican Navy (SEMAR), Majahual port data sheet (PDF, Spanish)** (/crew-library.html)
- INAH, Chacchoben archaeological zone (Spanish) (https://www.inah.gob.mx/zonas/zona-arqueologica-de-chacchoben)
- INAH, Kohunlich archaeological zone (Spanish) (https://www.inah.gob.mx/zonas/zona-arqueologica-kohunlich)
- Carnival, Chacchoben Mayan Ruins excursion (https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/costa-maya/chacchoben-mayan-ruins-316005)
- Carnival, Beach Escape with open bar (https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/costa-maya/beach-escape-with-open-bar-316007)
- Caribe Mexicano, Mahahual (Spanish) (https://caribemexicano.travel/destino/mahahual/)

Ports change their rules and their prices. Check the official pages above before you sail.

Mobility & access *at this port*

From **Sails Anyway**, the accessible-cruising section of this site. Nothing here is medical advice — it is what the port and the cruise lines publish, so you know what to ask.

The short answer

Ashore	Docked
Free beach	None within reach
Hardest part	600 yards to the port gate, twice

The hidden cost of this port

That **600-yard walk to the gate** is the real demand here, and it's in the open with limited shade. Cruise lines don't allow private excursion operators to collect inside the port, so anyone meeting you waits at the gate. Private accessible operators can sometimes get permission to collect there — arrange it in advance, not on the day.

Docking can depend on your cruise line

Celebrity lists Costa Maya among ports where **its** ships tender, though it is normally a docked call. Ask your line what your ship does on your date.

What the port *actually is*

- **A purpose-built shopping and pool complex.** Clean, safe, easy to navigate, everything close together once you're inside it.
- **Large pools right in the port**, which make a no-travel day genuinely pleasant.
- **No free beach within reach.** The real beaches are at Mahahual, and the accessible walking route there is about 2.5 miles — that's transport, not a walk.
- **Nothing here is free.** It's a destination built around spending, so budget accordingly.

Something this port does unusually well

Some of the **most wheelchair-accessible Mayan ruins anywhere** are reachable from Costa Maya. If ruins interest you and you can manage the vehicle transfer, this is a rare chance to see them without the usual uneven ground and steps.

600 **Yards from the ship to the port gate**, before you meet any transport — and again on the way back, in the open.

What the day *asks of you*

- **That gate walk, twice.** Everything else here is easy by comparison.
- **Heat with limited shade** along the walking areas.
- **A vehicle transfer** for Mahahual or the ruins, with a step up into the vehicle.

The Port Fit Check question that decides this port is distance on flat ground with no bench and no shade — read it honestly before you book anything outside the gate.

The low-effort version of this port

Stay inside. A pool chair, lunch, shops, and no travel at all. It's a perfectly good rest day, and it costs you nothing but the price of the drinks — particularly if the next port is a hard one.

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask whether any transport runs between the ship and the port gate** — it makes or breaks this port for many people.
- **Ask whether a private accessible operator can collect at the gate**, and arrange it before you sail.
- **Ask which ruins tours are genuinely accessible** and what the vehicle step height is.
- **Ask about wheelchair assistance** for the walk off the ship if the distance is the limiting factor.

Accessibility details last checked 22 September 2026. How we check this →

More on cruising with mobility & health needs →

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.
