

The ancient Mayan city of Uxmal. Opposite, Rosewood Mayakoba's thoroughly modern lagoon suites.





A TRIP FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

The Yucatán Peninsula

By ALEXANDRA HALL

For many a New Englander visiting Mexico, the sultry sunshine of Cancún eclipses the rest of the Yucatán Peninsula. But for history lovers and ecotourism fiends, flying direct from Logan to the city's airport—then leaving its congested, frenzied streets behind—pays off in spades. That's because just a brief drive away sit not only the sprawling beaches of the tony Riviera Maya, but a smattering of sites revered as the pinnacles of global adventuring.

Let's start with the oldest gems first. Dating from as early as AD 550, **ancient Mayan temples and pyramids** pop up among bona fide jungles from one coast to the other—from **Tulum**, near the Caribbean Sea on the east side, to **Uxmal**, on the western Gulf of Mexico coast. Between them is **Chichén Itzá**, listed as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World (alongside the Taj Mahal and Machu Picchu).

Another wonder, this time of the natural sort, is the area's glorious underground network of *cenotes*, freshwater swimming pools formed

by collapsed limestone that filter the water to a sparkling turquoise hue. You'll find them all over the peninsula, with particularly spectacular ones near the city of Merida and Chichén Itzá. Watery thrills also abound around Tulum, where you can paddle through the junglelike mangrove forests of the **Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve** on a guided kayaking tour with Yucatan Outdoors.

In between all of that exploring, of course, you'll want to squeeze in time to relax. With its minimalist suites and quietly chic pool scene, **Rosewood Mayakoba** resort is *the* place to stay in the Tulum area. Close to Merida and Chichén Itzá, small groups of six to 10 would do well to book **Hacienda Petac**, an exquisitely modernized 17th-century estate. There the full-time, on-site staff will unpack your bags, offer pampering massages in the spa, and serve up magical homemade Yucatecan cuisine—including just-made guacamole and sweet-tart margaritas made from freshly squeezed local limes—as you lie in one of the gauzy hammocks over the pool.



GETTING THERE

Delta nonstop from Logan to Cancun International Airport



INSIDER TIP

Hiring an English-speaking guide for any of the Mayan pyramids is well worth it: Most are true experts who can turn your day trip into a cultural history lesson you won't soon forget.



WHAT'S THE FASTEST WAY TO LOGAN?

You have a lot of options. But none of them are fool-proof. By CHRIS SWEENEY

MBTA

Pros: It's as simple as a quick train and shuttle-bus ride.

Cons: Just kidding, this is the T. Sorry, but you've missed your flight.

Logan Express

Pros: Low-cost shuttle rides from the Back Bay, Braintree, Framingham, Woburn, and Peabody, with \$7 daily parking in the 'burbs.

Cons: For the habitually tardy, there's little wiggle room—and this is one bus you don't want to miss.

UberPool

Pros: Available 24/7.

Cons: Stranger danger! UberPool is a Russian roulette of humanity.

Take to the Sea

Pros: With high-speed ferry service from Hingham and Hull, it's usually smooth sailing to Logan.

Cons: Ever cruised the harbor on a frigid January morning?

Stretch Limo

Pros: Pop a bottle of bubbly on the way to the airport to celebrate the start of your vacation.

Cons: No matter how flashy, no car is immune to the traffic of the O'Neill Tunnel.

Your Own Car

Pros: You're in total control of your destiny.

Cons: You're in total control of your destiny (and standard parking fees are \$35 a day).