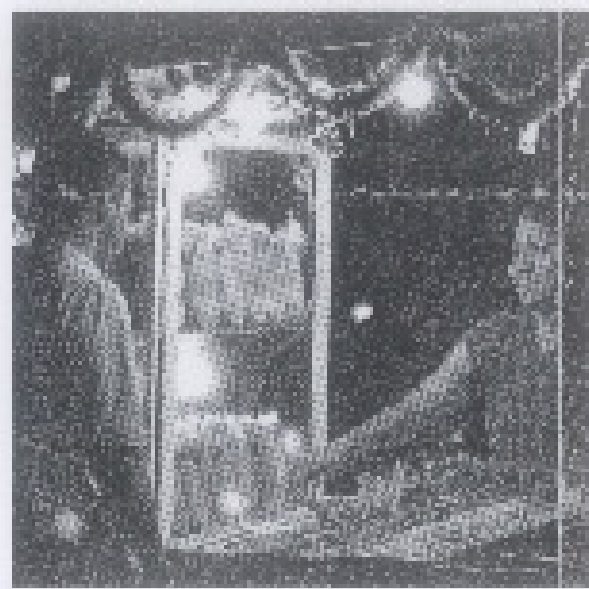
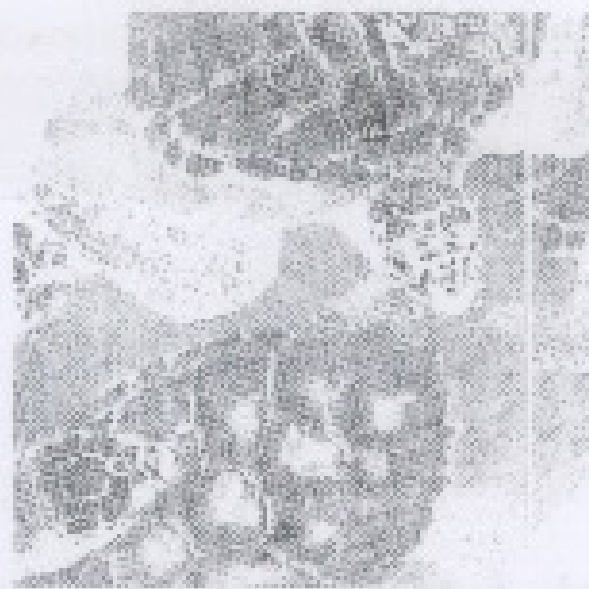


# 36 Hours *Cancún*



LEFT TO RIGHT: A fountain in the courtyard of the El Rey del Caribe hotel; statues of Santa Muerte at Finca Las Fajinas; turtles in a tank at the Isla Mujeres Turtle Farm; a vendor of fried bananas in the Parque las Palapas. Photographs by Glenn Felder for The New York Times



Top photo by Steve Schmitt for The New York Times

START TO SIGHT A fountain in the courtyard of the El Rey del Caribe hotel, streets of Santa Muerte at Tercera La Reforma further to the left, the Isla Mujeres Lighthouse, a statue of José Martí in the Parque las Palapas.

By PATRICK O'GILLY FOR TRAVEL

BEYOND the usual carnal delights of megabeaches, fancy restaurants and party-packed beaches that have made Cancun, Mexico, an easy break from home lies a rich, colorful, and very Caribbean island, which offers tropical sun and shaded parks for pool-sippers, beachgoers who have captured a voracious nightlife and a local culture. This is a Cancun, a place that's been part of the local scene, from a small village to a major resort, from a small town to a major resort. This is a Cancun, a place that's been part of the local scene, from a small village to a major resort, from a small town to a major resort.

Friday

8 a.m. Bienvenidos, Margarita

This is Cancun, as good a name for views of a Caribbean sunset, the leaves and branches of a tree, or a glass of rum and orange juice. To enjoy the view, go to La Dama Mar (Boulevard Kukulcán, 11th mile, 984-444-1111, www.ladama.com.mx), a restaurant with a view of the sea. The view is the best of the best.

BASICS

Flights from the United States: A low-cost flight from Kennedy Airport in New York costs about \$600 on American Airlines. From Cancun to Miami, a flight costs about \$100. The flight is a 1.5-hour flight. The flight is a 1.5-hour flight. The flight is a 1.5-hour flight.

Staying downtown, all they have you see from the water is the Hotel Zone. Prices here are in double rooms, including breakfast, during the December to April high season.

El Rey del Caribe (Calle 30, #149, 984-3055, www.reydelcaribe.com) is an eco-friendly hotel in central Cancun with a garden and a courtyard pool. Rates here start at \$100 per night.

Hotelzone (Calle 10, #149, 984-444-1111, www.hotelzone.com) is a hotel in the center of Cancun and has a view of the sea. The view is the best of the best.

For a good view of the sea, go to the beach. The view is the best of the best.

With 30 outdoor or a half-dozen terraces and over a dozen bars, it's about \$2-4 or \$1-2 more in the dollar) made sure fresh fruit juice on the bar tips below the bar.

7 p.m. Death Wears a Horseshoe

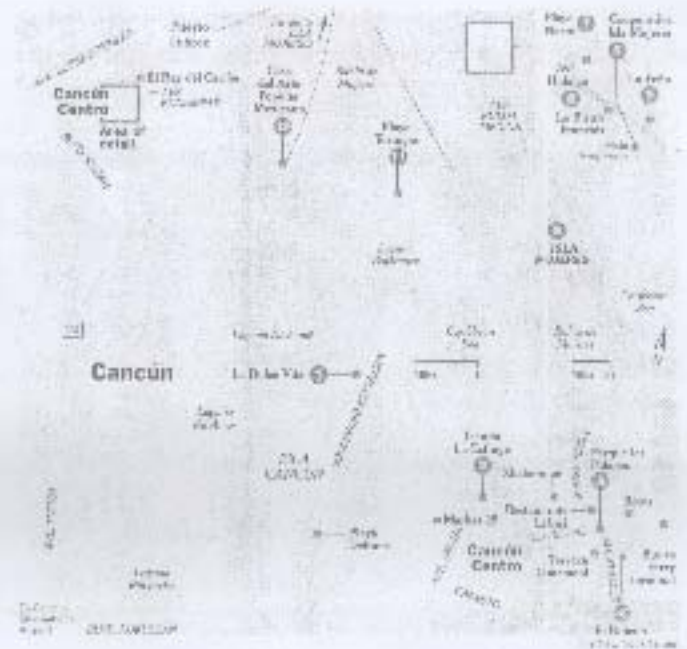
Every corner here has a classy, Latin and Latin American, but when you need a late night or night of party, there's only one place to go. The place is the one that has a view of the sea. The view is the best of the best.

8 p.m. Yucatán Tapas, Not Tacos

It's not all about tacos and burrito bowls. There's a lot more to Cancun. There's a lot more to Cancun. There's a lot more to Cancun. There's a lot more to Cancun.

10 p.m. Music in the Square

After dinner, stroll around Parque las Palapas and watch local artists hand-painting kids' pool toys, soccer balls, and soccer balls. This is the heart of Cancun's vibrant nightlife. This is the heart of Cancun's vibrant nightlife.



Saturday

8 a.m. Island, Hol

Spend the day on Isla Mujeres, a island in the heart of the Yucatán. This is the heart of the Yucatán. This is the heart of the Yucatán.

10 a.m. Getting to Know Parrot Fish

The first and best thing to do in Isla Mujeres, and perhaps in any other place, is to go to the beach. The beach is the best of the best.

around water, and most definitely will allow you to relax down to enjoy a beachside dinner. This is the heart of the Yucatán.

5 p.m. Sun Spots

Now comes a beach dinner, picking up a spot on the beach to watch the sun set. This is the heart of the Yucatán.

8 p.m. Al Fresco à la Es

After another, final beach dinner, it's time to go to the beach. The beach is the best of the best.

are markets in La Zona Francés, seventh and eighth streets, which serves well-priced lunch food in a building. This is the heart of the Yucatán.

10 p.m. Sea Breezes and Tequila

Time you need to relax in Cancun, go to the beach. The beach is the best of the best.

Sunday

10 a.m. A Jigger of la Cultura

Get into the spirit of Cancun with a little bit of Cancun. This is the heart of the Yucatán.

12 p.m. Haywatch Cancun

You didn't come to Cancun just to see the sea. This is the heart of the Yucatán.