

COZUMEL

SPRING & SUMMER GUIDE 2012



The best places to eat, sleep and play in Cozumel this spring and summer

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



You'll find reviews for more than 555,000 hotels, 200,000 vacation rentals, 175,000 attractions and 780,000 restaurants on TripAdvisor.com. Learn from other travelers what to expect before you make your plans.



PACKING TIPS

1. Don't forget your **passport**—even for travel from the United States. It's required for all air and sea border crossings.
2. "Put a **swimsuit** in your carry-on. If your room isn't ready when you check in, then you don't have to rummage through the holding room with everyone's luggage to dig out a suit. And take lots of **small bills**."—TripAdvisor Member, Oklahoma City, Okla.
3. "Definitely **pack light**, bring the **oil-free sunscreen** and **water shoes**."—TripAdvisor Member, Houston, Texas
4. "Pack some **Imodium, Pepto, Advil**, things that hopefully you will never need to take out of your bag."—TripAdvisor Member, Minneapolis, Minn.

Inside COZUMEL

A mere 12 miles off the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, Cozumel is Mexico's largest inhabited island, measuring 28 miles long by 10 miles wide. With a blend of Mexican culture and Caribbean flair, Cozumel is known for its friendly residents, tropical forest and dazzling beaches. Remarkably clear water, colorful reefs and tropical fish offer the perfect backdrop for thrilling dives. In fact, the island was a sleepy fishing community until 1960, when Jacques Cousteau pronounced it one of the most beautiful scuba diving areas of the world. And voila—a travel sensation was born!

The "cooler" winter months see temperatures averaging in the mid-70s. Once spring arrives, temperatures rise, but remain pleasant.

San Miguel is Cozumel's only town. It's small, but you'll find a number of hotels, restaurants and nightspots. Cozumel is also a popular spot with cruise ships. Make your escape to the ocean or off the beaten track when the ship passengers venture into town and then reclaim your paradise at the end of the day.

Top VIEWS



COZUMEL'S BEST VIEWS

"You can climb the very narrow steps inside **Punta Celerain Lighthouse**—winding round and round—131 total. When you get to the top, the view is breathtaking."—TripAdvisor Member, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Punta Celerain Lighthouse, Extreme southeastern point of Cozumel

"I like hanging out at **Coconuts Bar & Grill** during the daytime. Highest point on the island on the east side. Great drinks, good food and an outstanding view."—TripAdvisor Member

Coconuts Bar & Grill, Costera Esta Highway

"One of the things Cozumel is world famous for is its **diving**, its beauty below the waves."—TripAdvisor Member

Palancar Reef (one of many dive sites), Parque Marino de Cozumel

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Mayan Steam Lodge, Reserva Xkan Ha, 987 869 8201
2. Chocolates Kaokao, Bis Sur entre 80 y 85 Ave., 987 869 4705
3. Palancar Reef, Parque Marino de Cozumel
4. The Amazing Cozumel Race, Km. 3.8, Carretera Costera Sur, 987 989 0208
5. Stingray Beach, Km. 2.807, Carretera Costera Sur, 987 872 4932
6. Discover Mexico Cozumel Park, Km. 5.5, Carretera Costera Sur, 987 857 2820
7. Columbia Reef
8. Faro Celerain Eco Park, Km. 27, Carretera Costera Sur, 987 872 0914
9. Nachi-Cocom, Km. 16.5, Zona Hotelera
10. Chankanaab National Park, Km. 9.5, Carretera Costera Sur, 987 872 4014



FAMILIES

"Everyone at **The Money Bar** beach club made us feel welcome and at ease. The water was crystal clear, and the beach was very quiet and peaceful. It's a fabulous place to spend a beautiful day."—TripAdvisor Member, Little Rock, Ark.

The Money Bar, Km. 6.5, Old Road, Dzul-Ha Reef, 987 869 5141

Parque Chankanaab is a marine park with an aquarium featuring over 60 different species of turtles, coral and fish. Families can dive, snorkel and swim with dolphins. "I cannot say enough about the park; everything was great."—TripAdvisor Member, Ontario

Parque Chankanaab, Costera Sur, Km. 9, 987 872 0914

Go swimming, parasailing or just enjoy basking in the sun at **Nachi-Cocom Beach Club**.

Nachi-Cocom, Km. 16.5, Zona Hotelera

"...the 'real' Cozumel."



ROMANCE

"**Carlos' n Charlie's** is a blast! What can I say—the staff gets you on your feet. Even the reluctant, shy people were dancing by the end of the night. The drinks are good, the beers are cold and the music is loud! Don't miss it!"—TripAdvisor Member, California

Carlos' n Charlie's, Av. Rafael E. Melgar 551, Local BR2, Plaza Punta Langosta, 987 869 1647

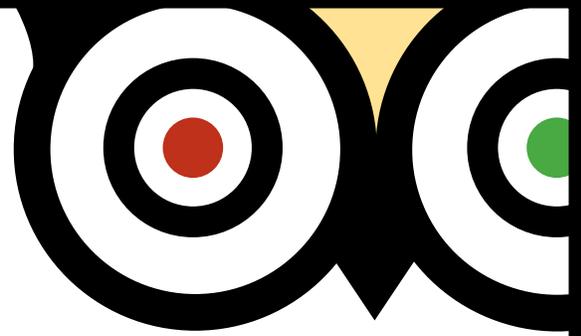
"I persuaded my wife-to-be to take the **Famous Fury Snorkel Beach Party tour**. She's not a good swimmer and was nervous about snorkeling. But the guides were fantastic. The snorkeling lasted just the right amount of time. Then they took us to a beautiful beach, and we were the only ones there."—TripAdvisor Member, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Famous Fury Snorkel Beach Party, Dock and ticket office, Carretera Costera Sur, Km. 3.5, 987 872 5145

"Once you reach the **Punta Molas Faro**, go up to the top and look over the island. The only Maya structures are found near the base and can be photographed from there. This is the side of the island where the waves crash against the rock formations and you can see the pyramids. A must-see for those who want to experience the 'real' Cozumel."—TripAdvisor Member, Indianapolis, Ind.

Punta Molas Faro (Molas Point Lighthouse), Punta Molas Road, Where the Costera Este Highway ends

Where to **PLAY**



BUDGET

“**San Gervasio Ruins** were much more extensive than I had expected and very close by. Maybe not quite as spectacular as on the mainland, but still very worthwhile and almost stress-free. These ruins are original and not reconstructed and give you a great impression of the Maya culture.”—TripAdvisor Member, South Carolina
San Gervasio Ruins, Off of Cross-Island Road

Located close to shore, **Yucab Reef**, full of colorful marine life, is a great site for beginners. “You can snorkel in many top quality areas from a shore entry, at no cost and with no schedule. Many of the same sites for tours are only a stone’s throw from the shoreline.”—TripAdvisor Member
Yucab Reef, Parque Marino de Cozumel, Playa San Francisco

Experience a “hidden treasure” at **Punta Morena**. “We lounged under the palapas, swam in a wonderful swimming area and shared platters of inexpensive, delicious seafood.”—TripAdvisor Member
Punta Morena, Costera Este Highway, San Miguel de Cozumel

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 10 million traveler photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It’s almost like being there!



ADVENTURE

“My fiancé and I booked a trip with **Spearfishing Cozumel**. There were so many fish to see and many more to spear. The experience was great. Excitement at its best!”—TripAdvisor Member
Spearfishing Cozumel, 987 876 0862

“...you have to do it once in your life”

“Swimming with dolphins at **Dolphin Discovery Group** was something that I didn’t expect; you have to do it once in your life at least. We were really surprised with the excellent treatment that the dolphins receive.” Due to popularity, “don’t forget to book your program in advance.”—TripAdvisor Member, Colorado
Dolphin Discovery Group, Chankanaab National Marine Park, 998 193 3350

“**El Mirador** is a series of rock formations, including a couple of natural bridges, carved out by the ocean. I climbed one of the bridges, which was difficult because there wasn’t much flat surface—it was like a huge pumice rock with holes and gouges. But it was worth it to get spectacular views of the waves crashing into shore and the rock all around!”—TripAdvisor Member, Albany, N.Y.
El Mirador, Southwestern coast



EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

Museo de la Isla de Cozumel is a “wonderful two-story museum highlighting the history of Cozumel and its people. There is a small outside restaurant on the second floor. The food is good, and the view of the ocean is spectacular!”—TripAdvisor Member, California
Museo de la Isla de Cozumel, Avenida Rafael Melgar at Calle 6, 987 872 1434

“**Faro Celerain Eco Park** was both educational and entertaining. Our guides took us to the Education Center, Miran lighthouse, the current lighthouse, showed us crocodiles and took us out snorkeling at the coral reef. We would recommend this excursion to anyone.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, Ohio
Faro Celerain Eco Park (Parque Punta Sur), Southernmost point in Punta Sur Park and the Coastal Road, 987 872 0914

Castillo Real is a Maya ruin that’s accessible only by boat and offers a spectacular beach for snorkeling.
Castillo Real, Carretera Costera Norte

“...both educational and entertaining.”



RELAXATION

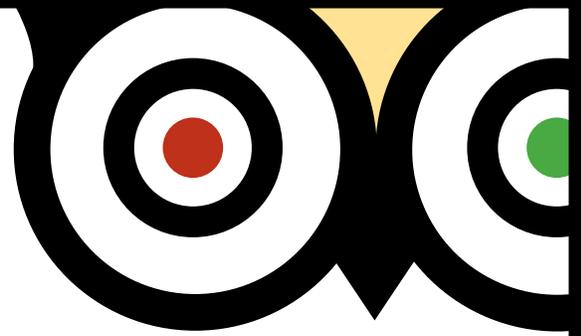
Isla de Pasión, is a tiny island, “exceeded all expectations. It’s for the traveler who wants a primitive, pristine white beach with beautiful waters. No watercraft here except for a few floats.”—TripAdvisor Member, Baltimore, Md.
Isla de Pasión, Abrigo Bay

“I had the pleasure of spending a day at **Paradise Beach**, and it truly was ‘paradise’. The beach is very spacious, and there were PLENTY of lounge chairs and umbrellas available. Everything in sight was VERY clean and well-maintained.”—TripAdvisor Member, Syracuse, N.Y.
Paradise Beach, Carretera Costera Sur, Km. 14.5

“The **Mayan Steam Lodge** was amazing. What a wonderful experience. Spiritual, relaxing, cleansing, rejuvenating. The site and sweat lodge were awesome. Then, there was the jump into the cenote at the end. Sheer heaven!”—TripAdvisor Member
Mayan Steam Lodge, Reserva Xkan Ha, 987 869 8201

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



"I'll be honest, **Wild Tours ATV** is not a laid-back cruise through the jungle on a nice sandy trail. It's basically a four-hour adrenaline rush. The trail is rough, and there are lots of rocks. That's what makes it so much fun! Being able to pretty much do whatever you want on a \$5,000 ATV with no rules except 'don't die' is about the most I could ask for out of a vacation."—TripAdvisor Member, Denver, Colo.

Wild Tours, Calle 7 #116, entra 5 y 10 Av., 987 872 5876

"It's basically a four-hour adrenaline rush."

"There are three main methods by which most visitors choose to get around Cozumel. The first is simply to **walk**. The second is to rent a **moped**. The third is to rent a **car**."—TripAdvisor Member

"We discovered **Careyitos Divers** three years ago and we will not dive with anyone else in Cozumel! This is a top-notch dive group for the advanced diver. You typically get well over an hour of bottom time on each dive. The divemasters are great and the crew is very helpful."—TripAdvisor Member, Goldsboro, N.C.

Careyitos Divers, Caleta, 987 872 1578

Want more information on Cozumel? TripAdvisor.com offers free weekly e-mail updates filled with new deals, reviews and articles for Cozumel or any other destination you choose.



WHERE to eat

FAMILIES

"A favorite is **La Choza**—fabulous Mexican food. The beef fajitas are the best on the planet! A great bar-like atmosphere, always hopping, but also suitable for a family. The locals eat here, and for good reason!"—TripAdvisor Member

La Choza, Calle Adolfo Rosado Salas #198, At Avenue 10, 987 872 0958

"**Casa Mission** is quite possibly my favorite restaurant in the entire world. They have traditional Mexican food that is fresh, extremely good and very well-priced. The guacamole is outstanding, as is the lobster. It's a serious can't-miss!"—TripAdvisor Member

Casa Mission, Two locations: Downtown, Calle 55 y Avenida Juarez and Calle Adolfo Rosado Salas between Malecon and 5th Avenida, 987 872 1641

"Try **El Moro**, a great local restaurant. It's a real family place with excellent food. Lots of children were there when I visited."—TripAdvisor Member, Cincinnati, Ohio

El Moro, Calle 75 Norte #124, 987 872 3029

ROMANCE

"I cannot put into words how much we loved **Kondesa**. The food was amazing & innovative and the ambiance fantastic. Dinner was served in a beautiful open air courtyard, with a looming umbrella tree of shade and greenery all around."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Kondesa Restaurant, 456 5th Ave. between 5th & 7th Sts., 987 869 1086

Serving only expertly prepared lobster, **Cabaña del Pescador** has a very romantic setting, complete with gardens, fountains and candles. "On the eighth day, God created the Lobster House. We ate there three times last week."—TripAdvisor Member, Texas

Cabaña del Pescador (Lobster House), Carratera Santa Pilar, Km. 4, 987 872 0795

"On the eighth day, God created the Lobster House."

"**Pepe's** serves up great steak and rolls. It's very romantic, with an ocean view and pianist playing in the background. Expensive."—TripAdvisor Member, Marin, Calif.

Pepe's, Av. Rafael Melgar at Salas, 987 872 0213

WHERE to eat



BUDGET



“**Asadero El Pollo** sells whole and half roasted chickens. The price includes tortillas, onions, rice and salsa. Very economical.”—TripAdvisor Member, Marin, Calif.

Asadero El Pollo, Av. Pedro Joaquin 498, Calle 2 entre Av. 5 y Morelos, 987 872 3665

“**Restaurant del Museo** is great for breakfast. It is in the museum on the second floor and open to the water view.”—TripAdvisor Member, Port Townsend, Wash.

Restaurant del Museo, 602-6 Av. Raphael E. Melgar, 987 872 0838

“If you are looking for something fast, cheap, and extremely tasty, you can’t go wrong with **Las Otates**. All four of us ordered the tacos al pastor and they were delicious!”—TripAdvisor Member, East Bay, Calif.

Las Otates, Avenida 15

“We eat at this place every single day”

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS



“**Especias** is open for dinner only, and I bet the chef can make you something vegetarian and wonderful.”—TripAdvisor Member, Michigan

Especias (Spices), Calle 3 , entre 10 and 15 Avs., Second floor, 1 987 876 1558

“Tired of tacos & nachos, my wife and I were so glad when we found **Olive!** Everything was great quality, made with fresh ingredients and well prepared. We split the tuna sashimi which was excellently flavored with ginger and soy.”—TripAdvisor Member

Olive, Avenida 5 and Calle 5

“A great restaurant is the **Rock ‘N Java**. We eat at this place every single day during our visits to Cozumel, sometimes twice a day. The cleanest restaurant I know of, and the food is always excellent.”—TripAdvisor Member, Texas

Rock ‘N Java, 602-6 Av. Raphael E. Melgar, entre 10 and 11, 987 869 2794

HIDDEN GEMS



“I don’t mean to overstate the case, but **Del Sur** is a gem. Not only are the empanadas exceptionally good, but the owner is the friendliest and most hospitable person we’ve ever met!”—TripAdvisor Member, Brisbane, Australia

“**Pescaderia San Carlos** is a bit off the beaten path, but well worth it. It’s a fish market with a small restaurant in the back. Best fried whole fish and the best conch ceviche! The freshest fish we’ve found in Cozumel.”—TripAdvisor Member, Walnut Creek, Calif.

Serving local favorites, like spiced chicken baked in banana leaves, in a little yellow house since 1945. “Highly recommend **Casa Denis**, right on the edge of the town square.”—TripAdvisor Member

Casa Denis, Calle I Sur 132, Between

SPECIAL EVENTS



Join the locals of El Cedral in commemorating the Day of the Holy Cross during the **Feria del Cedral**. The arrival of the town’s founders is celebrated with bullfighting spectacles, local cuisine, games and dancing. (May 3 - 8)

Feria del Cedral, El Cedral, 5 687 0567 (Tourist info line)

The **Cozumel Boat Rodeo & Fishing Tournament** is an annual three day event that features both locals and visitors competing. Those who make the first, second and third largest catches are given trucks, while the Best Captain and Best Sailor receive motorbikes. (May 10 - 13)

Cozumel Boat Rodeo & Fishing Tournament, Cozumel, 5 687 0567 (Tourist info line)

The saints **San Pedro and San Pablo** are remembered each year in Cozumel with a festival that includes local arts & crafts, an evening carnival and a fireworks display. (June 29)

Festival of San Pedro & San Pablo, Cozumel, 5 687 0567 (Tourist info line)

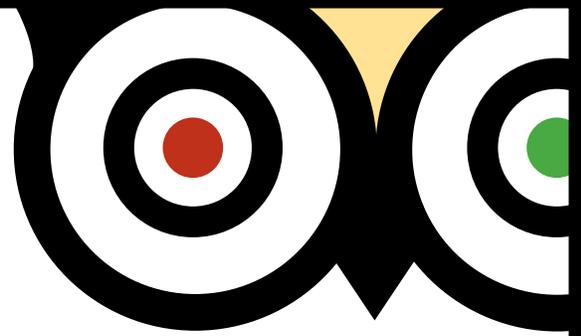
Join the crowds at City Hall for the traditional shout of “Viva Mexico!” that signals the start of the **Independence Day** celebration. The day continues with a festive parade along the downtown waterfront, as well as a carnival and many food stands that are run by local families. (September 15 & 16)

Independence Day, Cozumel, 5 687 0567 (Tourist info line)

Traditional masses, parades and parties are part of the festivities during the **Festival of Saint Michael the Archangel**, the patron saint of Cozumel. Don’t miss watching the locals shower an image of San Miguel with flowers as it sails away with the local fishermen. (September 20 - 29)

Festival of Saint Michael, Cozumel, 5 687 0567 (Tourist info line)

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

“Presidente InterContinental provided a DREAM vacation for our family. The set up is PERFECT for families with kids! We snorkeled right off the beach to a ship wreck and to perfect-sized reefs. We had hours and hours of fun every day. The food was great, and the service friendly.”—TripAdvisor Member, Sammamish, Wash.

Presidente InterContinental Cozumel Resort & Spa, Carretera A Chankanaab, Km. 6.5, 987 872 9500

“Scuba, scuba, scuba. This is the topic of breakfast, lunch and dinner. **Scuba Club Cozumel** is clean, well laid out, with every room getting an ocean view. Rooms are simple. You are not there to sit and hang out in the room; you are there to dive. Staff is second to none. Food was excellent, and no shortage.”—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.

Scuba Club Cozumel, Av. Rafael Melgar Prol S, Km. 1.5, 987 872 0853

“My only regret is that I didn’t stay at **Iberostar Cozumel** for two weeks! The resort is gorgeous, and our room was lovely. The staff was amazing. The dive shop at the hotel was wonderful. If you are twenty-ish and looking for a hotel in the party zone, this isn’t it.”—TripAdvisor Member, San Antonio, Texas

Iberostar Cozumel, Costera Sur, Km. 17.65, 987 872 9900

“My boyfriend and I miss you!”



Have questions about Cozumel? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.

ROMANCE

“Oh, **Playa Azul Golf & Beach Resort**. My boyfriend and I miss you! Everyone was very professional and kind. It was quiet and peaceful. We had an oceanview room and could listen to the ocean as we fell asleep.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Playa Azul Golf & Beach Resort, Carretera a San Juan, Km. 4, Zona Hotelera Norte, 987 869 5160

“My husband and I actually had tears in our eyes on the day we left **Ventanas al Mar**. The service was impeccable, the breakfast substantial and delicious and I can’t say enough about the owners for the service they provided.”—TripAdvisor Member

Ventanas al Mar, Carretera Costera Oriente Km. 43.5, 987 105 2684

The **Condumel Condobeach** offers “the best service I’ve ever had at any lodging. The one-bedroom condos are clean, spacious and comfortable, with a full kitchen, gorgeous ocean view and a hammock. They added flowers, candles and champagne as a special touch to our room.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nashville, Tenn.

Condumel Condobeach Apartments, Carretera Hotelera Norte s/n, 987 872 0892

“...mentally I’m still there.”

BUDGET

“Last night I dreamt of **Blue Angel Resort**. It’s a great value for the money. The rooms are simple. All we needed. And the staff is top-notch.”—TripAdvisor Member, Austin, Texas

Blue Angel Resort, Carretera Costera Sur, Km. 2.2, 987 872 0189

“I have physically returned from my stay in Cozumel, but mentally I’m still there. I generally stay at all inclusive resorts, but my first attempt at a B&B-style place could not have turned out any better. **Casa Viento** is just like staying at a friend’s house.”—TripAdvisor Member, Portland, Ore.

Casa Viento, The Country Club Estates, 987 878 4537

“You will find no better hotel on Cozumel than **Casa Mexicana**. We had a partial ocean view that was incredible. The staff was inviting, courteous and professional. The rooms were spotless and cleaned daily. Its location is very central to San Miguel.”—TripAdvisor Member, Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Casa Mexicana, Av. Rafael E. Melgar # 457 Sur entre 5 y 7, 987 872 9090

LUXURY

A 2008 TripAdvisor Traveler’s Choice winner for Best Luxury as well as Best All-Inclusive resort in the Caribbean, **Cozumel Palace** “is the best price, best quality and best stay that you’ll ever find. Not only was the hotel beautiful and perfect, but the service was OUTSTANDING!”—TripAdvisor Member, Portland Ore.

Cozumel Palace, Av. Rafael E. Melgar, Km. 1.5, 987 872 9430

“**El Cozumeleno Beach Resort**—Room: very nice, very comfortable, great view, awesome bathroom. Property: absolutely gorgeous, large, well-maintained pools, wonderful location, lots to do. Snorkeling: awesome. Beach: very, very nice.”—TripAdvisor Member, Texas

El Cozumeleno Beach Resort, Playa Santa Pilar, Km. 4.5, 987 872 9530

“We wanted our honeymoon to be the best vacation either of us had ever been on. The **Aura Cozumel Wyndham** made it just that. The level of service was second to none; the staff was extremely friendly; the atmosphere was relaxed. The food was exquisite, and the sites were unbelievable.”—TripAdvisor Member, Brunswick, Ohio

Aura Cozumel Wyndham Grand Bay, Carretera Costera Sur, Km. 12.9, Zona Hotel, 987 872 9300

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

“Let me put it to you this way: We like **Villas Las Anclas** so much that we’ve stayed there three times in the last 11 months. It’s very clean with a beautiful courtyard. The owners do a great job of making you feel right at home. The rooms are spotless and nicely decorated, and each has a kitchen. A short walk to just about anything you would want to do.”—TripAdvisor Member, Westcliffe, Colo.

Villas Las Anclas, Av. 5A Sur #325, Between Calle 3 & 5 Sur, San Miguel, 987 872 5476

“**Casita de Maya** is lovely and in an unexpected place. Even though you are right next the airport, it’s very quiet. The rooms are wonderful. The decor is neat, tidy and functional, and there is plenty of space to spread out. A great alternative if you want peace and quiet, with no one else around.”—TripAdvisor Member, Memphis, Tenn.

Casita de Maya, 65 Ave. Bis x Blvd. Aeropuerto, 987 869 2606

“**Baldwin’s Guest House** is a little paradise. It’s a perfect place to relax during your stay. They provide excellent recommendations of things to do and places to see on the island. The food (the best breakfasts you will ever eat) and service are absolutely excellent.—TripAdvisor Member, Minneapolis, Minn.

Baldwin’s Guest House Cozumel, Avenue 55 Sur, 987 872 1148

“...peace and quiet, with no one else around.”

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