

Destinations

Yucatán Offerings: New Flights, Luxury Hotels and Nature Preserves

by [Ana Figueroa](#) | Jun 20, 2017 11:47am



Chichén Itzá

Yucatán 's capital of **Mérida** is getting a boost from **American Airlines** and **Aeromexico**. Both are adding service from key hubs.

American Airlines has launched daily non-stop service from **Miami** to Mérida's **Manuel Crescencio Rejón International Airport** (MID). Aeromexico plans to launch daily non-stop service from **Atlanta** as of December 10. The airline's code-share with **Delta** makes the Atlanta connection especially valuable.

The new lift comes after efforts from local tourism officials to increase international visitors.

"A major objective for Yucatán's **Tourism Board** is to effectively articulate and encourage airlines to serve our destination. The new flights from American Airlines and Aeromexico provided an increase in airlift needed to support the growing demand of tourism and business activities. The development of the new partnerships and activities are part of the framework of our **Air Service Development Strategy**, which aims at stimulating visitation for the whole region through air-connectivity," **Fernando H. Ceballos**, director of tourism promotion of Yucatán tells **Travel Agent**.

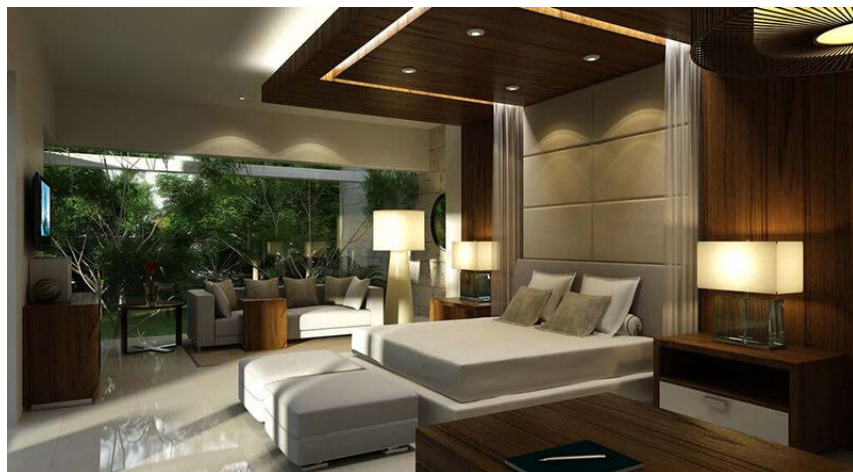
Yucatán state shares the name of the peninsula it lies on. But, the terms aren't interchangeable. The **Yucatán Peninsula**, aka The Yucatán, includes three Mexican states: Yucatán, **Campeche** and **Quintana Roo**. It also includes parts of **Belize and Guatemala**.

Quintana Roo may have the powerhouse draws of **Cancun**, the **Riviera Maya** and **Tulum**, and Campeche has its fortified cities and biosphere reserves but, Yucatán has ample attractions of its own.

Located on the **Gulf of Mexico** edge of the peninsula, Yucatán is known for pristine beaches and nature preserves. It includes the **UNESCO World Heritage** sites of **Chichén Itzá** and **Uxmal**, as well as two "Pueblos Magicos," or "Magical Towns." One of them, **Valladolid**, is a former Spanish regional capital. The other, **Izamal**, is a colonial-era town built upon a Mayan city. Today, it's a major Roman Catholic pilgrimage site.

Mérida draws visitors to its culinary scene, museums, and historical attractions. Dubbed "The White City" for its white stone buildings; it's a testament to the riches of henequen (sisal). Landowners in the 19th century grew wealthy turning the agave plant into the valuable material. They built palaces in the city and elaborate haciendas in outlying areas. Many of the latter are now acclaimed hotels.

The most well-known include **Hacienda Temozon**, **Hacienda San Jose** and **Hacienda Santa Rosa** outside of Mérida. All are part of The Luxury Collection.



Chablé Resort & Spa

And there's a newcomer in their midst grabbing the spotlight since its December 2016 debut. **Chablé Resort & Spa** has not only garnered rapturous headlines. ("Where the Yucatán Kisses Your Soul Goodnight"). It's snagged a place on **Conde Nast Traveler's** Hot List 2017. **Travel + Leisure** named it as one of most exciting places to stay this year.

Chablé's most recent honor is the **Prix Versailles**. The annual award is presented by UNESCO and the **International Union of Architects**. They've designated Chablé as the world's best-designed hotel.

Certainly, it was one of the most highly anticipated.

Located on 750 acres in the jungles of **Chocholá**, it's about 25 minutes from Merida. The one-time hemp estancia now houses 38 suites and two villas that combine colonial, Mayan and modern elements.

Accommodations at Chablé range from 1,700-square-foot casitas to the 10,000-square-foot Royal Villa. All have pools and panoramic glass walls that frame the jungle, along with freestanding stone tubs and private hammocks.

Chablé's culinary focus is on organic and seasonal cuisine, with most of it sourced from traditional raised Mayan gardens on site. (They've won awards in the "Farm-to-Hotel" category.)

Not surprisingly, the menu by resident executive chef **Jorge Vallejo** has garnered raves.

Vallejo's **Mexico City** flagship restaurant, **Quintonil**, is internationally acclaimed. He's ranked as Mexico's number one chef and the twelfth top chef in the world by the **World's 50 Best Restaurants** list as of February 2017.

As catchy as the cuisine is at Chablé, it's the spa that's the central focus. It's built around a cenote, with treatment regimens designed to invoke a Mayan journey. A full gym, personal trainers, and temazcal (sweat lodge) are also available.

"The spa and foodie trend is the biggest thing we've seen in a long time. People travel a lot to look for this. They're tired of going to the big hotels. Chablé is going to be on the top of the line in that regard," **Federico Spada** tells Travel Agent.



Chichén Itzá

A travel industry veteran, Spada is the new manager at **La Grupo Habita's La Purificadora Hotel** in **Puebla**. Prior to that, he launched **Mukul Beach, Golf & Spa** on **Nicaragua's Emerald Coast**. Other destinations continue to hit the right note, said Spada.

"I was in Tulum recently and saw that it is still growing in the right way. It still has the little hippy chic places, nice people and the beach. **Playa del Carmen** isn't the same anymore as it was ten years ago. With all the hotels around, you lose a little bit of the Mayan Coast. Travelers today like the concept of wellness combined with a rebirth. Chablé will set a new standard. But so, much of Mexico and especially the Mayan cities, are perfect for that. It's important for agents to experience it so they can advise their clients about what is out there," said Spada.