

Understanding the Port

Progreso is the port for Mérida and the Maya interior — this is the Yucatán, not the Riviera Maya, and it is a different day entirely. The pier is the longest on Earth and ships berth at the far end, so a free shuttle carries you the miles into town. Plan around that bus and the day works.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Ships dock at the seaward end of a causeway several miles long. You cannot walk ashore — a free shuttle runs you into town in about fifteen minutes.

Cash & Currency

The Mexican peso is the currency. Dollars are widely taken but at poor rates; cards work in shops and restaurants. Carry small pesos for vendors and taxis.

Getting Around

Progreso is flat and walkable once ashore; Mérida is about forty minutes out. Keep your watch on SHIP TIME — Yucatán never changes its clocks.

GOOD

Progreso on Foot

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ The malecón promenade and its seafood strip
- ✓ The meteorite museum, seven blocks east
- ✓ A craft market right at the shuttle stop

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Mérida

Best for: City lovers, food, culture

- ✓ Forty minutes to a real colonial city
- ✓ Plaza Grande and a cathedral begun in 1561
- ✓ The best cooking in the Yucatán

Arrange your return before the last shuttle.

BEST

The Maya Ruins

Best for: First timers, history lovers, photographers

- ✓ Uxmal, UNESCO-listed and under two hours out
- ✓ Chichén Itzá, the famous one, further still
- ✓ Dzibilchaltún, the closest ruin at half an hour

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Progreso Town

The shuttle sets you down a couple of blocks from the malecón, a mile of promenade with seafood restaurants on one side and the Gulf on the other. Fair warning: the beach itself is badly eroded and shrinking, so come for the town and the food.

BETTER

Mérida

The Yucatán's capital, and the honest answer to what this port is for. A colonial plaza, a cathedral begun in 1561, the mansions of Paseo de Montejo, and food unlike anywhere else in Mexico. Five or six hours, with margin to spare.

BEST

Chichén Itzá or Uxmal

Chichén Itzá is the famous one and the arithmetic is brutal — roughly two and a quarter hours each way for about ninety minutes on site. Uxmal is UNESCO-listed, an hour closer, and far quieter. Either way it is your whole day.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

The Meteorite Museum

On the malecón and genuinely walkable. The asteroid that ended the dinosaurs landed just off this coast, and there is real meteorite you can hold. Closed Mondays, opens at eleven, tours in Spanish.

A Cenote Swim

The Yucatán's sinkholes are why people go inland. The village cooperatives around Cuzamá are about an hour out and make a comfortable half day in cold, clear water.



The causeway pier running out to the cruise berth



The malecón promenade at Progreso

Key Considerations

Everything here runs on the shuttle. Ships berth miles offshore at the end of the causeway, and a free bus is the only way in and out — about fifteen minutes each way. Here is the rule that catches people: the last bus back leaves roughly an hour before all aboard, not at all aboard. Work backwards from the bus, not the ship, and be at the station ninety minutes before sailing.

About Chichén Itzá. It is around two and a quarter hours each way by coach for about ninety minutes at the ruins — four and a half hours on a bus to buy an hour and a half at the wonder, with the pier shuttle on top at both ends. It fits a long call with no slack at all, and only as a ship-sponsored tour, because the ship waits for its own. If it is a bucket-list item, go. If it is not, Uxmal or Mérida give you far more day.

Two practical notes. Keep your watch on ship time: Yucatán runs on Central Standard Time all year and never changes its clocks, so the gap shifts with the season and your phone will quietly mislead you. And Mexico now charges cruise passengers a small non-resident fee, collected by the line inside your fare — nobody will ask you for it at the pier.



El Castillo at Chichén Itzá — a long day's excursion inland



Mérida's Plaza Grande, about forty minutes from the pier



Green coconuts sold from the back of a car, Progreso

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Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT (PROGRESO)

● Craft market & shuttle stop	Where the bus sets you down
● Malecón & Meteorite Museum	5–15 min walk
~ 20–30 min by taxi	
● Dzibilchaltún	Nearest Maya site; no cenote swim
~ 40 min by taxi	
● Mérida	The colonial capital
~ 1 hour by tour	
● Cuzamá cenotes	Village-run swimming holes
~ 1 hr 45 by tour	
● Uxmal	UNESCO Maya city
~ 2 hr 15 by tour	
● Chichén Itzá	Ship excursion only

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time before you leave the ship.
Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Progreso is a gateway rather than a destination — and the gateway leads somewhere very good.

Walk the malecón, spend the day in Mérida, or give the whole call to the ruins. Just never miss the last shuttle.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

The Longest Pier on Earth. Guinness World Records lists Progreso's pier as the world's longest jetty at 8,019 metres — just over five miles — certified in 2023. The Yucatán's shelf is so shallow it had to reach that far to find deep water.

Built to Last. The original 1937 pier is cited as the first concrete structure built with stainless-steel reinforcement. It still stands, while a neighboring pier built in 1969 with ordinary steel corroded away in the same salt air.

Ground Zero. The asteroid that ended the age of the dinosaurs struck right here. The Chicxulub crater is centered just offshore, near the village of Chicxulub Puerto a few miles east — buried under half a mile of rock, so there is nothing to see. You are simply floating over it.

Found by Accident. The crater was spotted in 1978 by an oil-company geophysicist surveying for Pemex, who noticed a huge arc in his data. Science largely ignored it for more than a decade.

Why the Cenotes Are There. The Yucatán's famous swimming holes are not scattered at random. A great arc of them traces the buried rim of that crater. The asteroid is the reason they exist.