

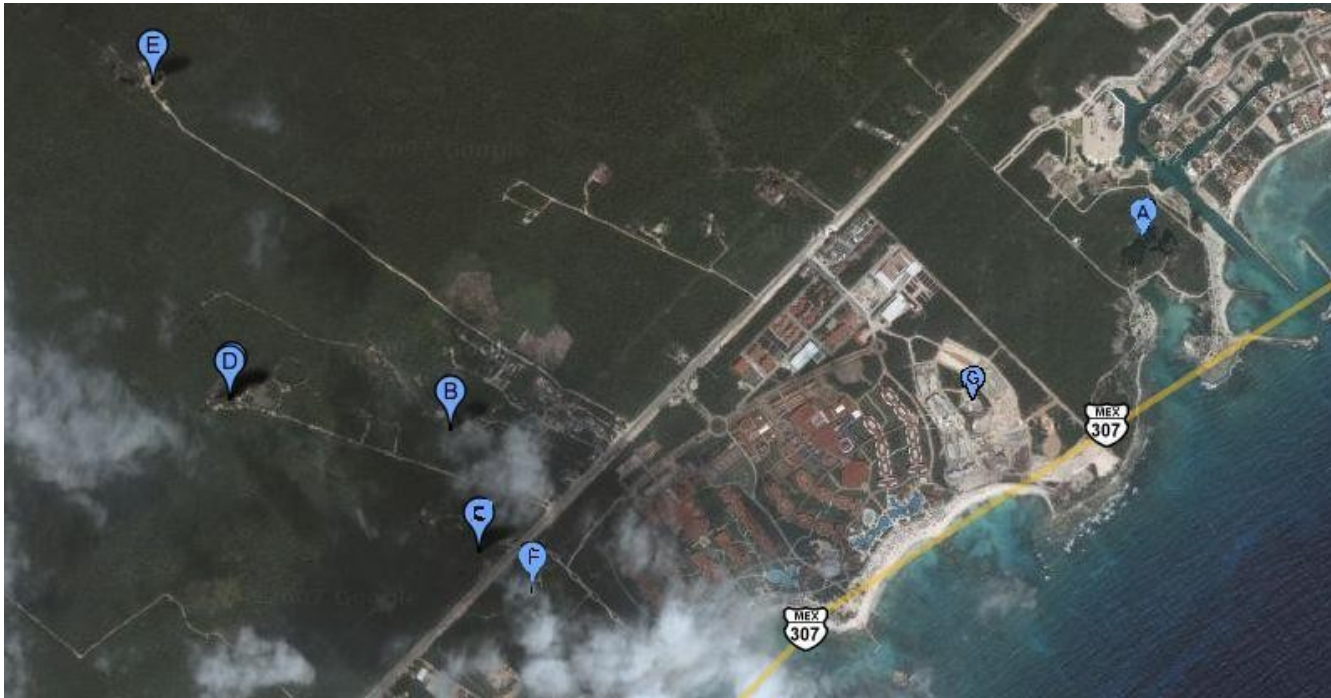
# CENOTES

Before the last ice age, the entire Yucatan peninsula was underwater. When the water levels dropped, the land was made up mostly of fossilized coral and limestone. Over the years falling rain easily eroded the limestone, leaving huge underground caverns and caves filled with fresh water pools. Open pools are created when the ceiling collapses.

**Cenote (say-NOH-tay):** A sinkhole formed by underground water eroding away limestone. Cenotes were the primary source of water in the Yucatan peninsula, and many were considered sacred by the Mayans. The top layer is fresh water, but deeper down there is salt water. The depth of fresh water varies depending on how far from shore the cenote is. In Chikin Ha cenote, the transition is at about 11 meters.

**Grotto:** A natural covered opening in the earth; a cave typically picturesque and rocky and of limited size.

**Halocline:** The transition in a cenote between salt water and fresh water, resulting in strange visual effects.



## **A: Unnamed Cenotes**

About 750m down the beach from the palace.

"The cenote is very pretty and is a wonderful swim, just be careful entering."

It sounds like this one is uncontrolled, and hence free, but there's also no one around to help you if you need it, so don't go alone.

## **B: Cristalino**

About 500 meters (1640 feet) from the beach lobby

Admission: 30 pesos (\$3 dollars) for adults and 15 pesos for children

There is a jump off point, a cave to explore, and a bathroom facility by the entrance.

## **C: Kantun Chi Ecopark (Meaning "Snake over There" in Mayan)**

About 500 meters (1640 feet) from the beach lobby

4 mostly half dome cenotes (Kantun Chi, Zaskaleen, Uchil Ha, Zazil Ha) along a series of light jungle trails. Most remote one has ancient looking Mayan temple next to it.

230 pesos (\$23 dollars) to snorkel in the cenotes

380 pesos (\$38 dollars) for a package including: Equipment (life jacket, snorkel, mask), Guide, Trip around the cenotes, Tour of the grottos, Snorkelling or kayaking across the underground cenotes

## **D: Azul**

About 1000 meters (3280 feet) from the beach lobby

Smaller cenote compared to other ones in the area. They do cut off entrance once the area gets to full. The grounds are well maintained, there is a fun jump off point, and a wooden lounging deck that juts over the cenote. There is a snack shack and bathroom facilities at the entrance as well as snorkel equipment rentals. Cat fish are in abundance

Adults - 50 pesos (\$5 dollars)

Children - 30 pesos (\$30 dollars)

Under 4 years - Free

## **E: Chikin Ha (Meaning "Water from the West" in Mayan)**

About 2000 meters (6562 feet) from the beach lobby.

They do charge admission, but I can't find a price anywhere.

There is an underground air chamber which you can reach by swimming through a tunnel. Outside, there is a footpath that leads you to two other nearby cenotes.

## **F: On-site Cenote**

About 300 meters (984 feet) from the beach lobby

Small cenote on the Barcelo grounds.

## **G: Really on-site Cenote**

A really small cenote on the Palace grounds. Not swimmable, but there are some fish living in it.