

# Cruise ship industry picking up strength in Mexico

Almost eight million cruise ship passengers touched ground in Mexico last year, the highest number in a decade.

Mexican media reported that more than 7.84 million people arrived at Mexican ports on 2,603 cruise ships last year.

The most popular destination was Cozumel in Quintana Roo; with 4.2 million cruise ship passengers or 54% of the total, taking a look at the island off the coast of Playa del Carmen.

“With these results, the leadership of Cozumel in the cruise ship industry in Mexico and Latin America is once again confirmed,” said Alicia Ricalde, Head of the Quintana Roo Port Administration authority. Ricalde made her remarks in an interview with the newspaper in *El Financiero*, referenced as by *Mexico News Daily*. “[As a result] the residents of Quintana Roo have more and better opportunities for economic development.”

Also high on the cruise port list was Mahahual, also in Quintana Roo and Los Cabos. in Baja California Sur, another popular stop for cruise ship passengers, combined with the three account for almost 80% of cruise ship tourists.

In all, cruise ship passengers were responsible for 19% of visitors to Mexico up to November 2018, according to statistics attributed to the Mexican Secretary of Tourism (Sectur).

But despite increasing numbers, cruise ship passengers are not big spenders on the ground in Mexico. While in the country they spent only US\$67 per passenger, well below the US\$909 reported for visitors who arrive by air.

And still the numbers are deceiving. Despite a ten-year record growth, the actual number of cruise ship visitors dropped when compared to 2017, a situation that is attributed to still prevailing concerns about security in Mexico.

Overall, Mexico is the sixth most visited country in the world. The top five in order are France, Spain, the United States, China and Italy.