

WHAT A TRAVEL CONNECTS RETREAT BUDGET LOOKS LIKE

A 20-person leadership retreat, four nights, all-inclusive

You send headcount, dates, nights and what the retreat is for. You get back a per-person figure, a total you can take to whoever approves it, and every assumption written down. This page is that reply for a made-up team, built from prices resorts and suppliers published as of September 25, 2026.

PEOPLE	NIGHTS	TARGET DATES	FLYING FROM
20, private rooms	4, Mon.–Fri.	Apr. 19–23, 2027	FLL · ORD · JFK

THE VALUE OPTION

RIU Palace Riviera Maya

Playa del Carmen

\$1,782 per person

\$35,639 total, all-in

Longer airport run: Playa del Carmen is south of Cancún on the Riviera Maya

Meeting space published by Travel Weekly: 5 rooms, up to 900 people

If people share rooms: \$1,228 per person

THE CLOSER, UPGRADED OPTION

Iberostar Selection Cancún

Cancún Hotel Zone

\$2,176 per person

\$43,528 total, all-in

Shorter airport run to Cancún's Hotel Zone

Convention center on [iberostar.com](https://www.iberostar.com): 4 halls, the largest over 16,000 sq ft

If people share rooms: \$1,416 per person

THE TRADE-OFF, NAMED

The Cancún option costs \$7,889 more in total (\$394 a head). For that you get a shorter airport run and a hotel with a full convention center. If the retreat is mostly working sessions, the difference buys the meeting space. If it's mostly time together, the value option does the job.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ON A REAL ONE

We ask both resorts for a group quote for your actual dates. Group rates for blocks of this size can come in below published prices. We can't promise that they will, so we budget at the published price. There is no planning fee: the resorts pay us a commission when you book, and you pay their price. The reply comes with two call times to pick from.

LINE BY LINE

ITEM	RIU RIVIERA MAYA	IBEROSTAR CANCÚN
Rooms: 20 private rooms × 4 nights, all-inclusive RIU Palace Riviera Maya at \$252/night · Iberostar Selection Cancún at \$333/night (taxes included)	\$20,160	\$26,640
Flights: round trip to Cancún (CUN), 20 people from 3 cities 7 from Fort Lauderdale at \$366 · 7 from Chicago O'Hare at \$555 · 6 from New York JFK at \$486	\$9,363	\$9,363
Airport transfers: 3 private vans, one per arrival city Round trip, 4–7 passengers per van: \$150 to Playa del Carmen, \$95 to the Hotel Zone	\$450	\$285
Group activity: Isla Mujeres catamaran day \$97 per person, includes hotel pickup, food, open bar and the \$20 dock and reef fee	\$1,940	\$1,940
Quintana Roo visitor tax (VISITAX) 285 MXN per visitor, paid once, not included in hotel rates	\$323	\$323
Local sanitation fee (charged per night) Playa del Carmen: 36 MXN per person · Cancún: we used the higher of the published figures	\$163	\$1,020
Contingency (10%)	\$3,240	\$3,957
Total	\$35,639	\$43,528
Per person	\$1,782	\$2,176

ASSUMPTIONS, WRITTEN DOWN

- Room prices are the resorts' published from-prices, not rates for April 2027. Rates for those dates weren't published when we checked.
- RIU publishes a per-person price for two people sharing. For private rooms we doubled it. This is the cautious reading, and the real single rate comes with the group quote.
- Airfares are KAYAK route averages from past bookings, not live fares. Chicago uses the March average because April wasn't published.
- One van per arrival city, on the assumption that each city's group flies together. Every additional arrival time adds a van.
- Dollar amounts for Mexican taxes use 17.64 pesos to the dollar (official DOF rate, September 25, 2026).

NOT IN THIS NUMBER YET

- Meeting room and AV.** Neither resort publishes a price. It comes with the group quote.
- A private group dinner or event.** Meals are included with all-inclusive, but a private buyout isn't.
- Hotel taxes at RIU, if any.** RIU's page doesn't say whether its price includes taxes. Iberostar's does.
- Tips** on the catamaran and for transfer drivers.
- Travel insurance**, if your company requires it.

WHERE THE MONEY USUALLY LEAKS ON A TRIP LIKE THIS

Attrition. If you block 20 rooms and fill 16, the contract can bill you for part of the 4 empty ones, so we get the attrition terms in writing before you sign. **Arrival spread.** People who fly in on eight different flights need eight rides, and every extra ride costs money. **The fifth night.** Adding "one more day while we're there" costs about \$5,040–\$6,660 in rooms alone.

Sources, read September 25, 2026: riu.com (RIU Palace Riviera Maya, Jr. Suite from \$126) · travelweekly.com Meetings & Events (RIU meeting space) · iberostar.com (Iberostar Selection Cancún, from USD 333 per room per night, taxes included; convention center) · kayak.com flight-route pages FLL–CUN, ORD–CUN, JFK–CUN · cancurvans.com (private van rates) · cancunsailing.com (Full Experience Isla Mujeres, \$97 online) · Quadratín Quintana Roo, Dec. 5 2025 (VISITAX 285 MXN, unchanged for 2026) · Reporte Quintana Roo and Benito Juárez municipal revenue law, Art. 149 (sanitation fees) · dolardof.com (DOF exchange rate).
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