



# THE PRE-COLUMBIAN CIVILIZATIONS

MAYA

AZTEC

INCA

# THE MAYAN CIVILIZATION



# Where were the Maya located?



The Maya were located mainly in the Yucatan Peninsula, and stretched to Belize & Guatemala

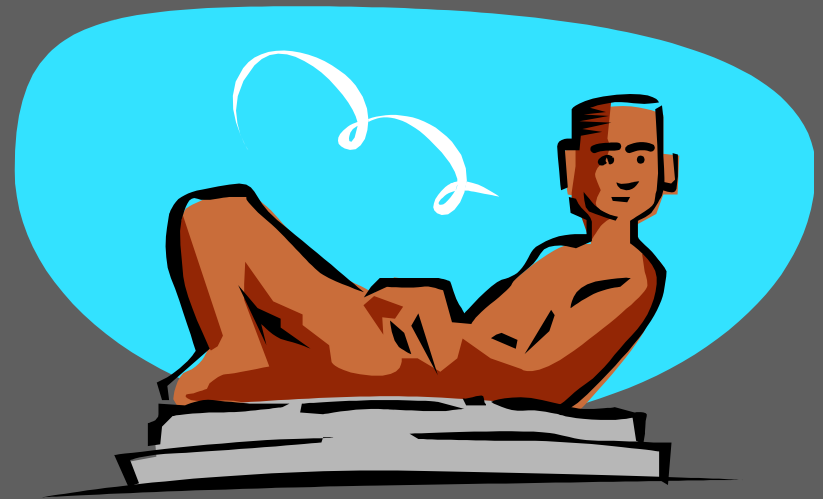
The civilization began around 1000 B.C. and lasted until 1697 A.D.

# What was life like for the Maya?

- ⇒ Mayan people were farmers
- ⇒ Religion played a strong role in society
- ⇒ Priests were the highest people in the society
- ⇒ Mayan Govt. was a Theocracy(ruled by religious leaders)
- ⇒ The Maya worshipped things of nature:
  - Animals, Plants, Sun, Rain

# Accomplishments of the Maya

- ⇒ Had a system of counting (0-20)
- ⇒ Made pyramids and temples
- ⇒ Developed a Theocracy (ruled by religious leaders)
- ⇒ Practiced astrology-developed a 365 day calendar



Tikal was the major city



# Pyramid of the Magician at Uxmal





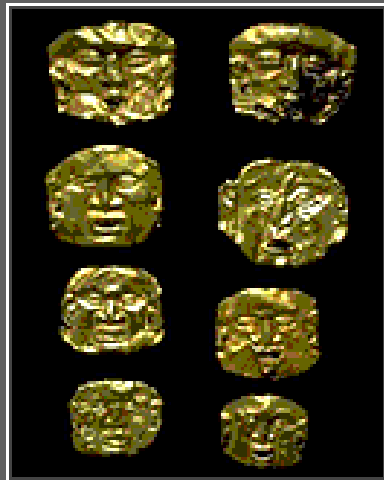
**This is a five terraced Pyramid  
in Tula.**







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# Theocracy:

This is a photo of the Cenote of Sacrifice at the ancient Maya city of Chichén Itzá in Yucatan, Mexico. The priest would throw precious items into the water as a sacrifice to the gods. The items were found when the site was dredged by Edward Thompson in 1904.



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# Mayan Calendar...

This is the Mayan Temple of Kukulcan at Chichen Itza. The Temple of Kukulcan is said to be a physical embodiment of the Mayan Calendar. For instance, there are 91 steps on each of the four sides of the pyramid (totaling 364) plus the top platform giving us 365 to match the days of a solar year. Other representations of time exist within the construction of the pyramid.





# Mayan Mysteries

Some scholars have called them "the Greeks of the New World." All these wonderful things happened while Europe struggled through the Dark Ages. They were also fine artists, goldsmiths, and coppersmiths. They are believed to be some of the earliest astronomers. They understood mathematics and were the first to recognize the need for "zero" in figuring large numbers.

The ancient Mayans were some of the most advanced of all ancient cultures. What happened to them is one of the great mysteries of today. They originated around 2600 B.C. in the area of Mexico known as the Yucatan and began its decline around A.D. 900 for reasons that are still unknown. . Their civilization extended into Guatemala.

They were farmers and architects who built magnificent temples and extravagant pyramids and wondrous observatories, all without metal tools or beasts of burden, or even the wheel. They were able to construct vast cities with an amazingly accurate architectural precision. How they accomplished these feats are a mystery to historians and scholars alike.

# THE AZTECS





# Where were the Aztecs located

- ⇒ The Aztecs were located throughout Mexico
- ⇒ The capital city, Tenochtitlan, now lies below Mexico city
- ⇒ The Aztecs began entering Mexico around 1100 A.D.
- ⇒ By 1400, the empire had over 5 million people
- ⇒ The fall of the Aztecs was around 1522 A.D. By Cortez



# How was Aztec society structured?

## Emperor

Chosen by nobles & priests

## Priests

Performed rituals, gave advice, and ran schools

## Nobles

Served as officials, judges, and governors

## Merchants

Often acted as spies for the empire

## Artisans

Passed skills onto their children

## Farmers

Made up most of the population

Slaves were mostly captives or criminals-many were sacrificed to the Sun god



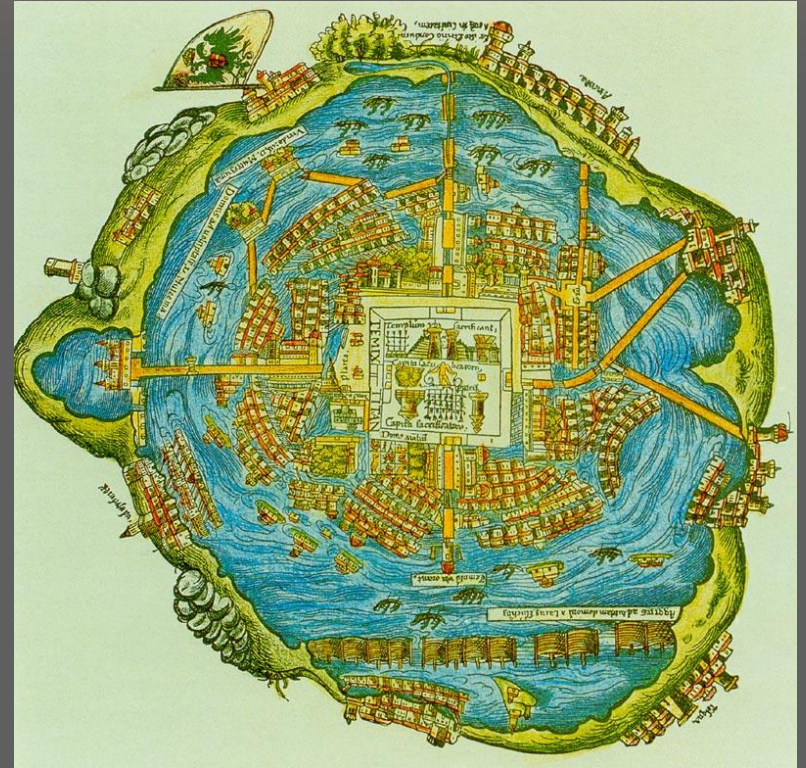
# Human Sacrifices

**Religious theories:** the need to sustain the universe through the spilling of human blood.

**Political theories :** tool for intimidating and controlling subordinate or potentially hostile peoples



# Tenochtitlan



**THE MIGHTY & MAJESTIC CITY OF  
THE AZTECS**

# Tenochtitlan

- ⇒ The city had causeways connecting the city to the mainland, and aqueducts to bring fresh water into the city
- ⇒ The Aztec farmed maize, beans, peppers, cotton, & tobacco





# The legend of Tenochtitlan

- ⇒ Huitzilopochtli (Aztec tribal god) promised to show his people a place to settle and build their great capital, Tenochtitlan. He told them to look for an eagle perched upon a cactus with a serpent in his beak. This would be a sign that they had found their promised land.





# THE INCA





# Where were the Inca located?



- ➔ The INCA were located on the Pacific coast of Peru, in South America

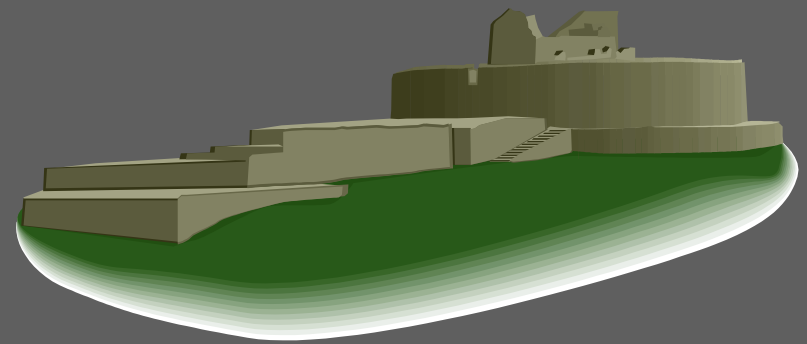
# THE SUPREME RULER



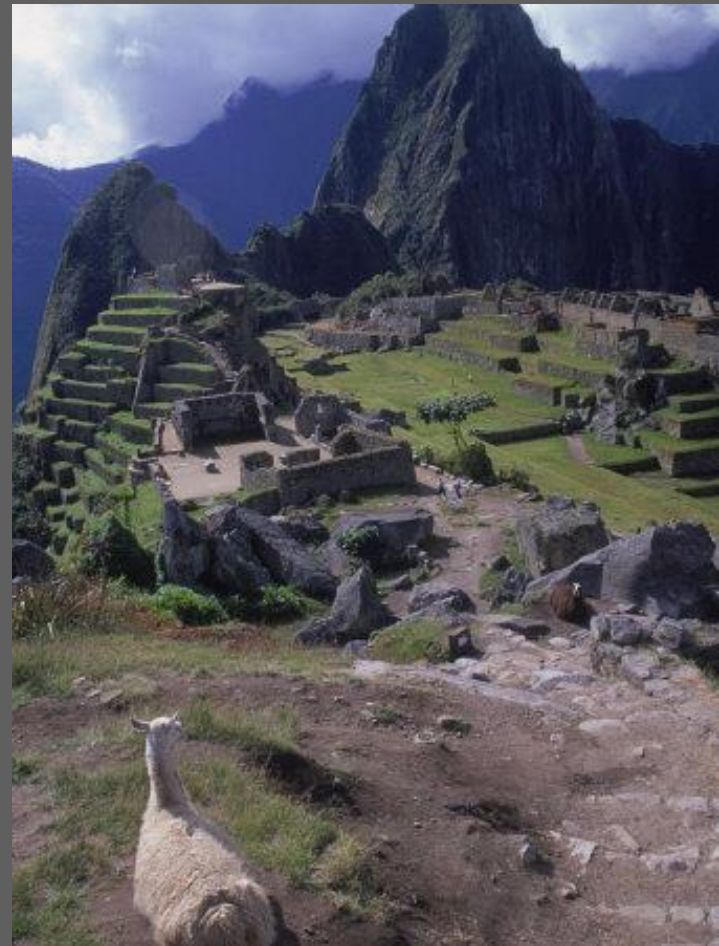
- ⇒ Pachacuti was the first INCA, or “supreme ruler”
- ⇒ He is ranked by many historians to be one of the world’s greatest empire-builders
- ⇒ The INCA was thought to be a descendant of the Sun god

# Cuzco, the holy city

- ⇒ From Cuzco, the emperor ruled more than 10 million people
- ⇒ There was a system of roads, tunnels, and rope bridges that connected the cities of the empire
- ⇒ The Inca were skilled engineers, and built massive temples and forts



# Inca



# Accomplishments of the Inca

They kept track of people and goods using quipus (knotted rope used for counting)

They performed successful brain surgery

They used quinine to treat malaria

They had an elaborate government system set up

<u>Civilization</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Capital city</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>	<u>Random stuff</u>
<b>Maya</b>	Yucatan Peninsula, and stretched to Belize & Guatemala	<b>Tikal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pyramids</li> <li>365 day calendar</li> <li>Counting system using 0-20</li> </ul>	Theocracy (ruled by religious leaders)
<b>Aztec</b>	Mexico	Tenochtitlan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built capital city over lake Texcoco</li> <li>Built aqueducts &amp; causeways</li> </ul>	Human sacrifice Conquered by Cortez
<b>Inca</b>	Peru	Cuzco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System of roads, tunnels, &amp; rope bridges</li> <li>Performed brain surgery</li> </ul>	Pachacuti the Empire Builder