
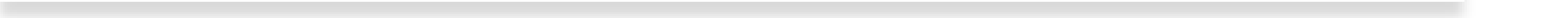


The history of the Maya civilisation (with a little bit of archaeology added!)


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- The Maya civilization was a Mesoamerican civilization that existed from antiquity to the early modern period. It is known by its ancient temples and glyphs (script).
 - The civilization is also noted for its art, architecture, mathematics, calendar, and astronomical system.
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Maya region

- The Maya civilization was located in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador:



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- The Maya civilization prospered for over two thousand years. However, the Maya civilization collapsed over time, likely due to a combination of factors including climate change, warfare, and overpopulation. The last independent Mayan city, Nojpeten, fell to Spanish troops in 1697.

Timescale of Maya

Paleoindian		12,000 - 8000 BC
Archaic		8000 - 2000 BC
Preclassic	<i>Early</i>	2000 - 1000 BC
	<i>Middle</i>	1000 - 400 BC
	<i>Late</i>	400 BC - AD 100
	<i>Terminal</i>	AD 100 - 250
Classic	<i>Early</i>	AD 250 - 600
	<i>Late</i>	AD 600 - 800
	<i>Terminal</i>	AD 800 - 1100
Postclassic		AD 900 - 1500
Contact/Colonial		AD 1519 ----

The Archaic period

This was before 2000 BC, saw the first developments in agriculture and the earliest villages.

The Archaic period of the Maya civilization was a time when hunter-gatherers began to cultivate crops and domesticate animals, and the first villages were established



- Priests observed the movements of the sun, moon, planets, and stars, and developed a complex mathematical and calendrical system.

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- Most Archaic sites are not well preserved or visible, but some major sites have been explored, including Guilá Naquitz and Colha






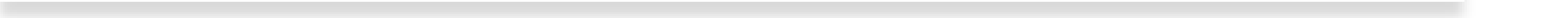
Colha - Belize gained independence from Great Britain on September 21, 1981.

Mesoamerican Preclassic period-
2000 BCE – 250 CE

Preclassic Era or Formative Period



- The Preclassic period (c. 2000 BC to 250 AD) saw the establishment of the first complex societies in the Maya region, and the cultivation of the staple crops of the Maya diet, including maize, beans, squashes, and chili peppers. The first Maya cities developed around 750 BC, and by 500 BC these cities possessed monumental architecture, including large temples with elaborate stucco façades.

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- The Preclassic period was a time of significant change for the Maya, including the rise of cities, states, and large-scale ceremonial architecture. The Maya also developed writing, and many of the most distinctive elements of Mesoamerican civilization, such as the calendar, human sacrifice, and pyramid building, originated during this time.
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- Hieroglyphic writing was being used in the Maya region by the 3rd century BC.



Mayan script – classic period

 CHAN 'sky'	 WINK 'person'	 WITZ 'mountain'	 K'IN 'sun'	 B'ALAM 'jaguar'	 K'AK 'fire'
 BAK 'bone'	 WAY 'spirit'	 JUUN 'book'	 JA' 'water'	 AJAW 'lord'	 MUYAL 'cloud'
 IX 'woman'	 CH'AM 'to grab'	 K'UK' 'quetzal'	 CHAN 'snake'	 CH'UL 'holy'	 CHOK 'to scatter'
 JAAB' 'year'	 YAX 'blue/green'	 PAKAL 'shield'	 TOK 'flint'	 NAJ 'house'	 K'AL 'twenty'

 A	 A	 A	 B	 B	 C	 T	 E	 H
 I	 CA	 K	 L	 L	 M	 N	 O	 O
 PP	 CU	 KU	 X	 X	 U	 U	 Z	 P

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- Gradually, villages began to include central plazas and earthen mounds, occasionally enhanced by masonry. For instance, the site of La Blanca featured a central mound more than seventy-five feet tall and contained a masonry fragment strongly resembling a head in the distinctive Olmec style. Carved stone stele also began to appear during this period, adorned with portraits of rulers
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La Blanca - Guatemala





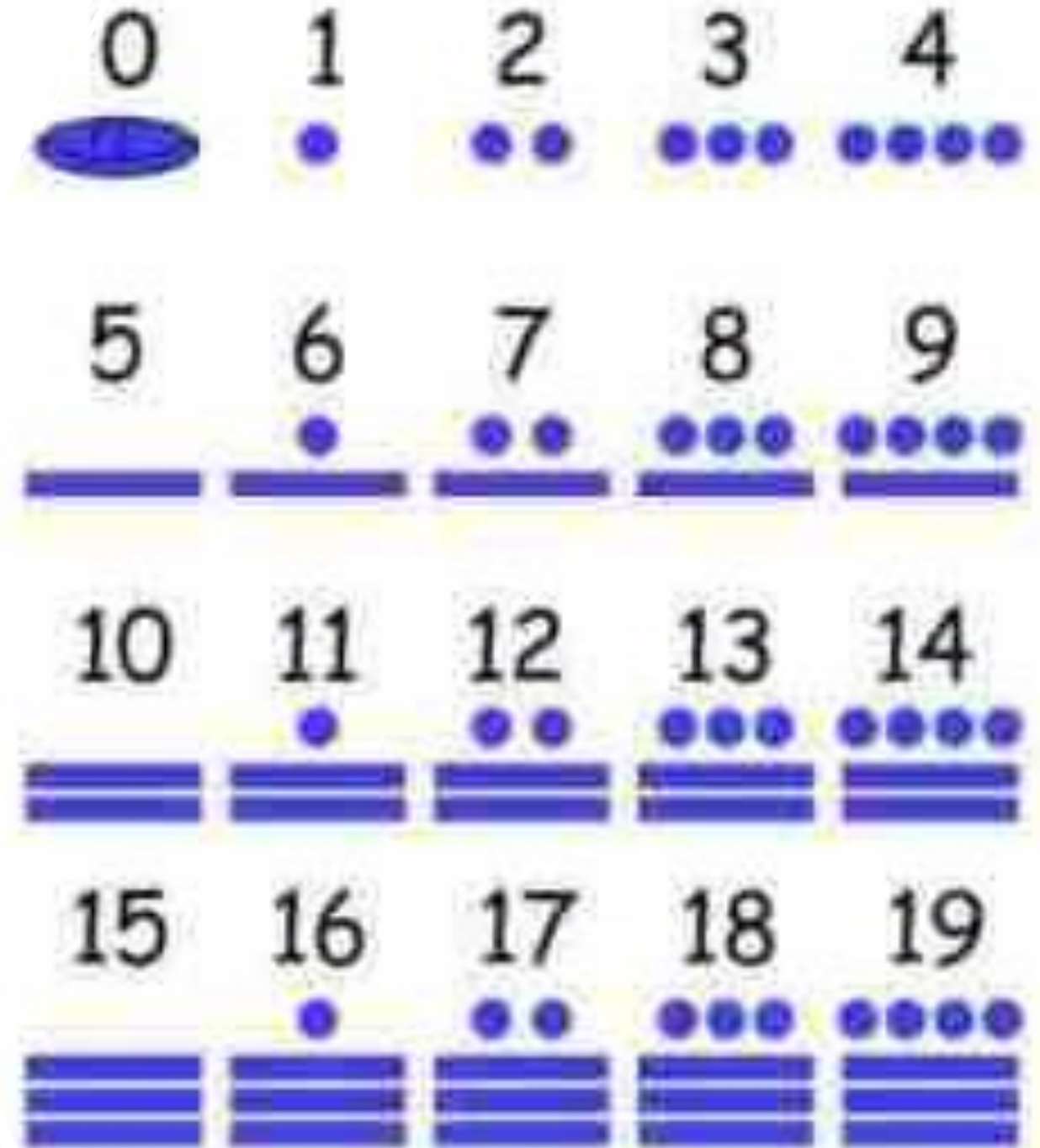
Excavation site at Kaminaljuyu. Complex temples, stairways, and friezes illustrate the acme of this Preclassic city's power and influence.



- The earliest Mayan writing has been found in the pyramidal structure known as Las Pinturas, in San Bartolo, Guatemala. The glyphs date to about 250 B.C

Mayan numbers

- The Maya used a number system with the base number of 20
- A bar represented the number 5. Every 5 numbers they added another bar.



What were their clothes like?

- The clothing worn by the Maya depended on the region they lived in and their social status. The wealthy wore colourful clothing made from animal skins. They also wore feather headdresses and fancy jewelry.





- Commoners wore simpler clothing. The men often wore loincloths while the women wore long skirts. Both men and women would use a blanket called a manta to wrap around their shoulders when it was cold.



What were their homes like?

- The nobles and kings lived inside the city in large palaces made from stone. The commoners lived in huts outside the city near their farms. The huts were usually made from mud, but were sometimes made from stone. They were single room homes with thatched roofs. In many areas the Maya built their huts on top of platforms made from dirt or stone in order to protect them from floods.



Entertainment

- Although much of the Maya life was spent doing hard work, they did enjoy entertainment as well. A lot of their entertainment was centered around religious ceremonies. They played music, danced, and played games such as the Maya ball game.

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- Sometimes the ball games that the Maya played were part of a religious ceremony. The losers were sacrificed to the gods.
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Maya Gods

- The Maya believed in a large number of nature gods. Some gods were considered more important and powerful than others.
- Chaac was the god of rain and lightning. He had a lightning axe that he used to strike the clouds and produce rain and storms.




Afterlife

- The Maya believed in a scary afterlife where most people had to travel through a dark underworld where mean gods would torment them. The only people who started out the afterlife in heaven were women who died in childbirth and people who had been sacrificed to the gods.

Classic period - (c. 250–900 AD)

- The Classic period is largely defined as the period during which the lowland Maya raised dated monuments using the Long Count calendar.

Unit's name	Time period	Glyph
Baktun	144,000 days	
Katun	7,200 days	
Tun	360 days	
Uinal	20 days	
Kin	1 day	



What is the Long Count calendar?

- a non-repeating calendar used by pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures, most notably the Maya, to track the passage of time

The long count calendar

Base: The Long Count calendar used a base-20 and base-18 system.

Counting: The Long Count calendar counted the number of days that had passed since a mythical creation date, which is thought to be August 11, 3114 BCE.

Cycles: The Long Count calendar used cycles that were independent of the solar year. A complete Long Count cycle was 5,125 years long.

Inscriptions: The Long Count calendar was often used on monuments, which also included other information such as lunar phases and the Lords of the Night.

Accuracy: The Long Count calendar was able to be extended to refer to any date in the past or future.

Calendar

- The Maya had two kinds of calendars, a religious calendar called the Tzolk'in and a solar calendar called the Haab'. Every 52 years the two calendars would start on the same day. They would celebrate the New Fire Festival on this day (El Fuego Nuevo). All the fires throughout their households would be put out and they would throw away all their clay utensils. It was a time of renewal and new beginnings.

The solar calendar

- The solar calendar, or Haab', had 18 months of 20 days each. There were five extra "unlucky" days in the 19th month to get to total of 365 days in a year. They numbered the days in the month from 0 to 19.



The religious calendar

- The religious calendar, or Tzolk'in, was a 260-day calendar. This calendar has two cycles, a 20 day cycle and a 13 day cycle. Each day has a name and a number. The name comes from the 20 day cycle and the number from the 13 day cycle.



- The Maya believed that the universe was destroyed and recreated at the start of each Long Count cycle. This belief led to many prophecies about the end of the world, including the phenomenon that occurred in 2012.



the phenomenon that occurred in 2012.

- The 2012 phenomenon was a series of beliefs that the world would end on December 21, 2012, due to the end of a 5,126-year cycle in the Mayan Long Count calendar.



Classic period - (c. 250–900 AD)

The Maya writing system was highly complex, with over 800 unique characters in use during the Classic period.

Maya text is read by starting from the top left and reading horizontally across two blocks, then moving down to the row below.

Early classic period


- During the Early Classic, cities throughout the Maya region were influenced by the great metropolis of Teotihuacan in the distant Valley of Mexico



Teotihuacan

- Teotihuacan is known today as the site of many of the most architecturally significant Mesoamerican pyramids built in the pre-Columbian Americas, namely the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon.



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- Although close to Mexico City, Teotihuacan was not a Mexica (i.e. Aztec) city, and it predates the Aztec Empire by many centuries. At its zenith, perhaps in the first half of the first millennium, Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas, with a population of at least 25,000 but has been estimated at 125,000 or more making it at least the sixth-largest city in the world during its epoch.
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Pyramid of the sun -religious purposes and possibly as a royal tomb:

- the pyramid rises 216 feet (66 metres) above ground level, and it measures approximately 720 by 760 feet (220 by 230 metres) at its base.



- The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan is classified as the world's third largest pyramid coming third to the two Egyptian pyramids of Giza.



Pyramid of the moon

- the Pyramid of the Moon rises to 140 feet (43 metres) and measures 426 by 511 feet (130 by 156 metres) at its base. Its main stairway faces the Avenue of the Dead.
- Used for ritual sacrifices of animals and humans, and as a burial ground for sacrificial victims



Late classic period


- The Late Classic Period of the Maya civilization was a time of cultural, artistic, and religious peak, from 600–900 CE



Classic Maya collapse

the central Maya region suffered major political collapse, marked by the abandonment of cities, the ending of dynasties, and a northward shift in activity.

No universally accepted theory explains this collapse, but it likely had a combination of causes, including endemic internecine warfare, overpopulation resulting in severe environmental degradation, and drought.



Chichen Itza – “At the mouth of the well of the Itza”

- Chichén Itzá was a major focal point in the Northern Maya Lowlands from the Late Classic (c. AD 600–900) through the Terminal Classic (c. AD 800–900) and into the Post-classic Period (900 AD to 1500 AD)



Facts about Chichen Itza

the city covers around four square kilometres.

There were paved roads in Chichén Itzá before Europe.

Chichén Itzá was declared a World UNESCO Heritage Sight in 1988.

It was built to reflect the Mayan astronomical year. Each side has 91 steps with a final step at the top, so there are 365 steps total.

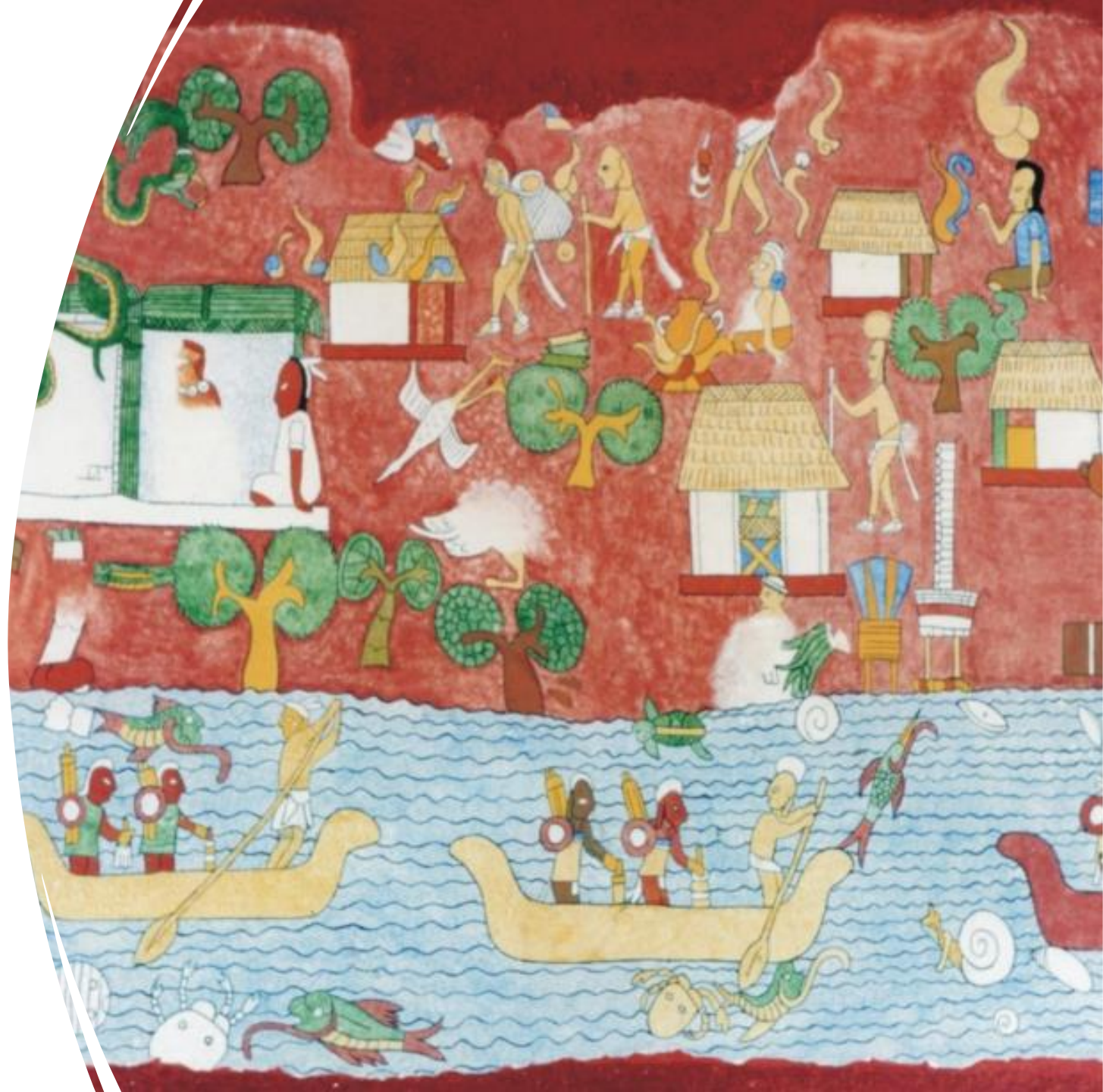
The Pyramid was constructed so that it marks the equinoxes—the two days of the year when there are equal amounts of day and night.

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- 250 AD - After declining for years, Chichen Itza is abandoned. 1283 AD - The city-state of Mayapan becomes the capital city of the Maya civilization. The League of Mayapan is formed to rule the region.

Post classic period - (c. 950–1539 AD)

- Although much reduced, a significant Maya presence remained into the Postclassic period after the abandonment of the major Classic period cities; the population was particularly concentrated near permanent water sources.



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- Post-Classic period lasted from 900 AD until the Spanish Conquest.



Mayapan

Mayapan was an important Postclassic city in the northern Yucatán Peninsula.



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- Mayapan was abandoned around 1448, after a period of political, social and environmental turbulence that in many ways echoed the Classic period collapse in the southern Maya region. The abandonment of the city was followed by a period of prolonged warfare, disease and natural disasters in the Yucatán Peninsula, which ended only shortly before Spanish contact in 1511.
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Maya today

- Today, in remote parts of Guatemala and Chiapas, similar familial configurations, uses of the 260-day Maya calendar, and agricultural practices continue to shape families of descendants. Millions of Mayan-language speakers inhabit their ancestral lands and keep these languages and traditions alive.



- Today, their descendants, known collectively as the Maya, number well over 6 million individuals and speak more than twenty-eight surviving Mayan languages,



Population today



- **Total population c. More than 8 million (2018)**
- **Regions with significant populations**
- **Parts of modern-day Guatemala, Mexico, United States, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador**
- **Guatemala 7,140,503 (2018)**
- **Mexico 3,803,508 (2022)**
- **United States 500,000 (2011)**
- **Belize 30,107 (2010)**
- **El Salvador 600,000 (2017)**
- **Honduras 33,256 (2013)**

- Today, descendants of the Maya still live in the region, with nearly 40% of Guatemalans being of Mayan ancestry

