

What is Mayan Civilization?

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Maya Civilization Latest News

Archaeologists recently unearthed the remains of a Maya city nearly 3,000 years old in northern Guatemala, with pyramids and monuments that point to its significance as an important ceremonial site.

About Maya Civilization

- The term “Maya” refers to both a modern-day group of people who live across the globe and their ancestors who built an ancient civilization that stretched across much of Central America.
- The Maya are probably the **best-known of the classical civilizations of Mesoamerica.**
- Before the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Central America, the Maya possessed one of the greatest civilizations of the Western Hemisphere.
- **Originating in the Yucatán peninsula around 2600 B.C., they rose to prominence around A.D. 250** in present-day **southern Mexico, Guatemala, northern Belize, and western Honduras.**
- Building on the inherited inventions and ideas of earlier civilizations, the Maya **developed astronomy, calendrical systems, and hieroglyphic writing** (a system that employs **characters in the form of**

pictures).

- The Mayans **developed a precise and sophisticated calendar** that **followed the movement of the sun, moon, and stars**. The Mayan calendar is so precise that it even **includes a leap day adjustment** to keep the calendar synchronized with the solar year.
- The Mayans created a system of hieroglyphic writing that includes more than **800 different glyphs**. This writing was **used to record the history, astronomy, mathematics**, and religion of the Maya culture.
- The Maya were noted as well for elaborate and **highly decorated ceremonial architecture**, including **temple-pyramids, palaces, and observatories**, all **built without metal tools**.
- They were also **skilled farmers**, clearing large sections of tropical rain forest and, where groundwater was scarce, **building sizable underground reservoirs** for the storage of rainwater.
- The Maya were equally **skilled as weavers and potters**, and cleared routes through jungles and swamps to foster extensive trade networks with distant peoples.
- The Maya **made paper** from the inner bark of wild fig trees and **wrote their hieroglyphs on books** made from this paper. Those books are **called codices**.
- The Maya also **developed** an elaborate and beautiful **tradition of sculpture and relief carving**.
- Their **society** consisted of many **independent states**, each with a rural farming community and **large urban sites built around ceremonial centers**.
- At its height, Mayan civilization consisted of more than 40 cities, each with a population between 5,000 and 50,000.
- The **peak Mayan population** may have reached **two million people**, **most** of whom were **settled in the lowlands of what is now Guatemala**.
- **After 900 CE**, however, the Classic Maya civilization **declined precipitously**, leaving the great cities and ceremonial centres vacant and overgrown with jungle vegetation.
- The **Maya peoples never disappeared**, neither at the time of the Classic period decline nor **with the arrival of the Spanish conquerors** and the subsequent Spanish colonization of the Americas.
- The Maya **remain in contemporary Mesoamerican societies**, and **maintain a distinctive set of traditions and beliefs**, combined with more recent practices such as the almost total **adoption of Roman Catholicism**.

Maya Civilization FAQs

Q1: Where was the Maya civilization located?

Ans: Present-day southern Mexico, Guatemala, northern Belize, and western Honduras.

Q2: Is Mayan still existing today?

Ans: Maya people and many aspects of their culture very much still exist today.

Q3: Around what year did the Maya civilization begin to rise to prominence?

Ans: AD 250

Source: [CNN](#)

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