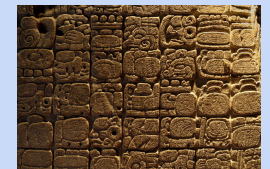


AMERICA - History

Timeline

Overview

Date	
Approx 2000 BC	The Maya first developed their civilisation (the Pre-classic period).
250 - 900 AD	Classic Period
200 AD	Cities become large and powerful
900 AD	Major cities of Palanque, Tikla and Copan abandoned
900 - 1542	Post-Classic Period
1524 - 1697	Spanish Conquest: invasion of the Maya civilisation. Most written texts were destroyed.
1839	Explorer John Lloyd Stevens visits the first 'Lost in the Jungle' city



The Maya civilization developed in the Maya Region, an area that today comprises southeastern Mexico, all of Guatemala and Belize, and the western parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The Mayan Empire reached the peak of its power and influence around the sixth century A.D. They excelled at agriculture, pottery, writing, calendars and mathematics, and left behind an astonishing amount of impressive architecture and symbolic artwork. Most of the great stone cities of the Maya were abandoned by A.D. 900, with the Spanish Conquest finally taking over remaining Maya locations.

Additional vocabulary

GLYPHS: symbols used in writing
CODICES: Mayan books
CACAO: seeds used to make chocolate
SCRIBE: responsible for writing books
NOBLE: formed part of the ruling class
CHICHEN ITZA: the most famous Mayan pyramid
SACRIFICE: bloodthirsty ritual where those killed went to the afterlife

Glossary and key terms

The Maya civilisation began in an area called Mesoamerica . This huge area is made up of Mexico and part of Central America.	The Maya were experts at reading the stars and even built their cities as a map of the sky.	They were inspired by the creatures of the forest and shared many legends about animals, plants and nature spirits.	Warfare and trade were important aspects of Maya society and so was art and architecture.
Maya society was very complex with hundreds of cities, commoners, a middle class, nobles and the king and his royal court.	The Maya built large cities such as Tikal (which they called <i>Yax Mutal</i>) and Palenque.	The Maya came up with the most well-developed system of writing in Mesoamerica, dating back to 300 BC.	Ball games would be played to settle arguments between different cities.
The Maya built many temples, palaces, causeways, schools and marketplaces, cut from stone, with roofs constructed from thatch. Houses had just one room.	Mayan society was formed of a number of city states each with their own ruler.	Food was produced by hunting, foraging and farming. Crops included:maize, squash, beans and chili peppers, avocado, pineapple. Deer, armadillo, monkey, guinea pig, turtle and iguana were hunted. Fish, lobsters and shrimps were caught from the sea.	Maya were the first people to grow the cocoa plant for food and was a gift from the gods. Cocoa beans were used at ceremonial sacrifices to the gods and chocolate was drunk at weddings.Cocoa beans were ground and mixed with chili peppers, honey and cornmeal.