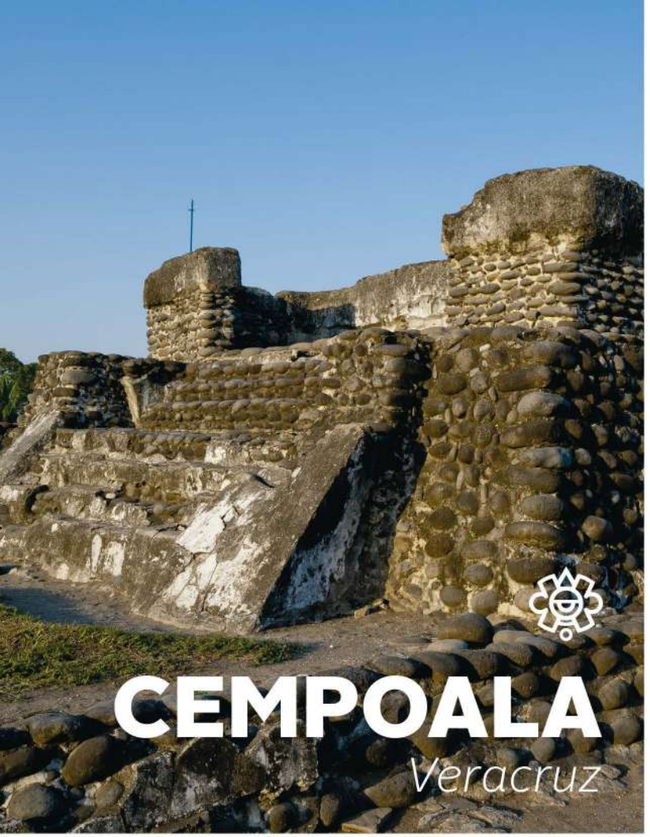


CEMPOALA
Veracruz

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Considered one of the most important pre-Hispanic settlements in central Veracruz, it was the eastern gateway for the conquest of Mexico. The inhabitants of the region of Cempoala and Quiahuixtlan were the ***earliest allies*** *of Hernán Cortés in 1519.*

Among the cultural elements that distinguished the site are its ***walled systems****; the use of rounded river cobbles brought from the Actopan River, 1500 meters to the southwest; the mortar used in constructions made of mollusk shells, which were burnt, ground up, and combined with sand and water to form a mixture known as stucco. Another characteristic was the city's water management via channels that carried water by gravity from the river to their homes and cultivated fields. This is one of the contributions that influenced settlements in Postclassic Mesoamerica.*

GET READY TO EXPLORE

Water Temple Platform

Pre-Hispanic building discovered in 1972, where more than 1700 small clay figurines that represented their gods were found, including images of the Sun God, Tonatiuh.

Moon Temple Platform

Temple dedicated to eagle and jaguar warriors, it has a throne-like structure at the top, where these warriors were awarded their status. An interesting aspect of the architecture of this platform is the round shape of the back part, similar to the building of the Wind God, dedicated to Ehecatl and his brother Xolotl, who was represented with a dog or coyote head.

Sacrificial Stone

The place where children, men, and women were sacrificed. Their chests were cut open with obsidian or flint knives to extract the heart and blood to be offered to their gods. The people believed this was how they fed the gods, who in turn would heed their prayers.





PLACE NAME	It is a Nahuatl word that means "twenty waters" or "abundance of water" (*Cempoalli-20 and Atl-water*).
CULTURE	It is the result of the ethnic plurality of groups displaced from the highlands (Nahuas and Totonacs) with coastal peoples.
PERIOD	Post-Toltec
DATES	AD 1200 to 1519



HOW TO GET THERE

Take the 3-km paved road that branches off from Federal Highway 180 Veracruz-Cardel-Nautla. It is in the municipality of Villa Úrsulo Galván.

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ADMISSION

According to the Federal Fees Act, admission is free for children under 13, students and teachers with a valid ID, seniors, retirees, pensioners, and INAH personnel and researchers.

HOURS

Every day of the year from 9 am to 5 pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

For the use of any device to make videos, visitors must pay the fee stipulated by the Ministry of Public Finance. Non-professional photography, without the use of tripods, is free of charge.

TEXTS
Archaeologists: Fco. Javier Andrade Domínguez, Lucina Martínez Ultrera, José Antonio Contreras Ramírez.

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MAIN ATTRACTION

Main Temple Platform

It is one of the main platforms in walled system IV, composed of a wall crowned by stepped frets surrounding the ceremonial center. Its importance resides not only in its dimensions, but also in the historical events that took place there. Hernán Cortés ordered it be cleaned and painted white, destroying the figurines that represented their gods. He had a cross and an image of the Virgin Mary put in their place for Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo to hold mass in Latin there.



ARCHITECTURE

A series of architectural elements characterize the ancient city of Cempoala, such as the use of river cobblestones in the construction of platforms. Stone stepped frets and clay arrowhead-shaped finials top off cornices creating distinctive profiles.



Cempoala was the eastern gateway for the conquest of Mexico.



ESSENTIALS

- A *New Fire Altar*
- B *Temple of Death*
- C *F-shaped Platform*
- D *Water Temple*
- E *Moon Temple*
- F *Sacrificial Stone*

1 Entrance
2 Museum
3 Sun Temple or Great Pyramid
4 Main Temple
5 Chicomacatl Throne
6 Temple of the Chimneys
7 Circle of Gladiators

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

- *It was the most important settlement in the lower Actopan River basin, because it produced more than two harvests annually, as a result of its irrigation-based agriculture and its superb strategic location.*
- *Every twenty days the people held an outdoor market, which concentrated products and merchandise for regional exchange.*
- *The port of Veracruz was as important in pre-Hispanic times as it is today. It was the place where all products and merchandise were redistributed from the coast to the Highlands and from central to north and south Veracruz. This situation prevailed until Hernán Cortés settled in La Antigua in 1524.*



HIGHLIGHTS

1968 — In 1968 a tomb was found in the Platform of the Temple of Death that contained an image of Mixtecacihuatl (Mictlan-place of death and cihuatl-woman), which means "Goddess of Dead Women."

18 — The Goddess of Dead Women was associated with eighteen human skulls that came from children, men, and women.

6 — The first six steps and the lower tier of the Platform of the Temple of Death have survived with their original wall ornaments.

1460 — Archaeologists found 1460 skeletons that represent the number of four 365-day solar years in the Platform of the Temple of the Little Faces.

AND DON'T MISS . . .

- Year round the Cempoala region is full of activities, such as patron saint celebrations from February 2 in Chalahuite, where Our Lady of Candlemas, the patron saint of the community, is feted. This is followed by the patron saint's day of Cempoala on March 19, when Saint Joseph of the Mountain is celebrated. Carnival is a major celebration in Veracruz, Coyolillo, and Cardel.