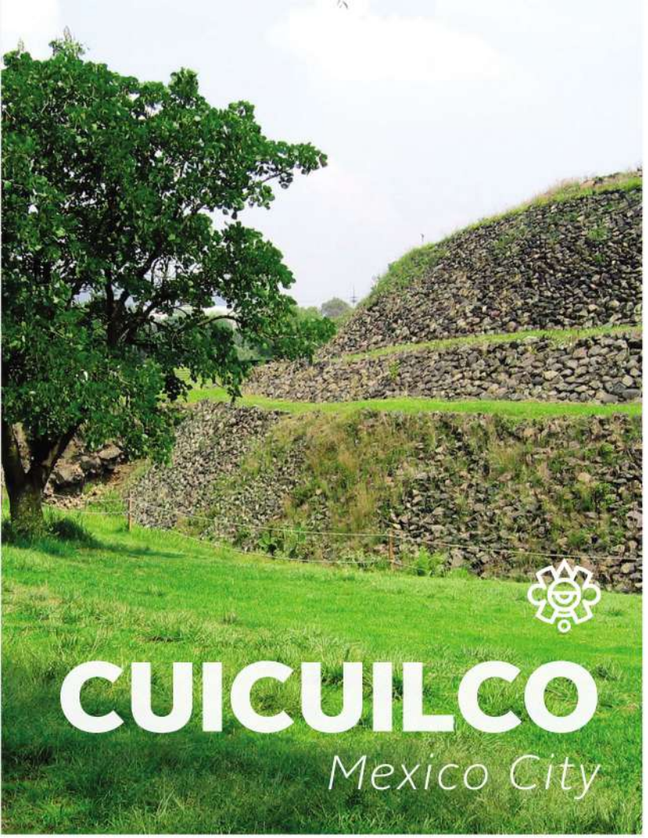


CUICUILCO

Mexico City

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

*Although the identity of Cuicuilco's former inhabitants is unkown, it is known that both Otomi and Nahuatl groups inhabited the **Basin of Mexico** at that time, so it is likely that either of these two ethnic groups were its founders. It was one of the most important populations of the Preclassic (1500 BC to AD 250) in the Basin of Mexico, as it showed **monumental** architecture for the first time, which was only established in settlements with regional capital features.*

*The presence of monumental architecture was not only an important feature in Cuicuilco, it was also remarkable for this shape. Both the **Great Base** (Main Pyramid) and the **Tenantongo Mound** (in the Tlalpan Forest) were built in a **semicircular** shape, that is, as truncated cones. This type of architecture was not observed in any other community of the time, which made it unique in its kind. Other smaller buildings also had this form (**Cuicuilco "C" and Peña Pobre Mound**).*

*Between 200 B.C. and A.D. 250 it had its main peak, when it had an extension of **400 hectares** and a population of around **20,000 inhabitants**, according to some estimations. At this time, the settlement had ritual buildings, platforms of governing groups, important waterworks, agricultural spaces and housing units for villagers, the latter, around the main core. It is likely to be the head of a series of smaller settlements around it, and to control not only the resources of the region, but also **access routes** to the Morelos and Toluca valleys, as well as the roads to the Southeast.*

*Today we only have a small part of archaeological evidence of what Cuicuilco was in a space of about 60 hectares, as it was covered by lava from the Xitle volcano. This event from around A.D. 250 favored the abandonment and decay of this Preclassic village. In this space we can still see some of its preserved buildings, among them: The Great Base or Main Pyramid, the Stela, Structure E-1 and Kiva (Cuicuilco "A"), Structures II, VI, VIII and IX (Cuicuilco "B"), the Peña Pobre Mound and the Preclassic Channel (Cuicuilco "D"), in addition to the Tenantongo Mound (Tlalpan Forest). Structures I, III, IV, V and VII (Cuicuilco "B") and a **circular construction** in Cuicuilco C are among the buildings that were also known to have also been part of Cuicuilco (now destroyed).*

GETTING THERE

The entrance to the archaeological zone, in its sector open to the public, is located on Insurgentes Sur Avenue, in front of the Villa Olímpica Housing Unit. It can be reached through the Metrobús, at the Perisur or Villa Olímpica stations.

ADMISSIONS

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Law of Rights: Free entrance for children under 13, students and teachers with current ID cards, senior citizens, retirees and pensioners, as well as workers and researchers of INAH.

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Sunday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PHOTOGRAPHS

A professional license is required for professional cameras and tripods.
The use of video cameras is paid in accordance with the Federal Law of Rights.

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CULTURA
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INAH

DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

Cuicuilco "A"

In this section, apparently the most important of the settlement, some of the main religious activities of the site were carried out in its time of splendor. Some outstanding archaeological evidence has been found there and other important aspects have been developed recently, which are listed below in order of significance:

Great Base or Main Pyramid

This building, the main one of the settlement, has a semicircular shape. It is formed by five superposed structures in the form of truncated cones and the top would be accessed through ramps located to the east and west . At the top and near the center of the building, a succession of oval-shaped altars has been discovered, built with various materials such as boulders and sludge for cementing, or only perfectly compacted soil; some of them were covered with a layer of red pigment, which may have been, cinnabar. In the last structure we can see the remains of what was a platform with a small temple, which has not been explored to this day.

Kiva

This structure is located on the south side of the the Great Base east ramp. It is formed by a row of large basalt slabs embedded on the floor, in a circular shape and with an access to the southwest. On the interior faces of the same one can see traces of paint with undefined strokes of red color.



Cuicuilco is one of the most noteworthy and ancient examples of what would become the large towns with regional capital features in later times in Mesoamerica.



Building E-1

It has a squared floor, with walls in slope. It has a an unusual staircase whose steps are of little hight and great footprints facing the East. It appears to have two extensions and was mutilated during the excavations of 1968, although it has not been fully explored, in a nearby rift, the archaeologist Florencia Müller found a Teotihuacan offering with two stone figurines, a sartal of beads and fragments of a Globular pot. There are likely remains of another structure in front of this one, which would make a small square.

The Stela

This andesite (igneous rock) monolith is about 3.90 meters long. Its shape is similar to a "stalagmite" and on its north side several engravings are seen, among them: 16 circles arranged in two vertical rows (eight on each side), rhomboidal designs and finally, near the top, a small circular hollow. It is located south of the Great Base.

Site Museum

It is located about 40 meters south of the Gran Base. Both the current building and the museography date back to the 1970s and artifacts such as ceramics, lithic and shell are displayed in there, as well as human remains discovered around the various sections of the site (mainly in Cuicuilco "B").



TOPONYM	"Place for singing and dancing"
CULTURE	Otomi or Nahuas
PERIOD	Preclassic
TIMESPAN	800 B.C. - A.D. 250



OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

Great Base or Main Pyramid

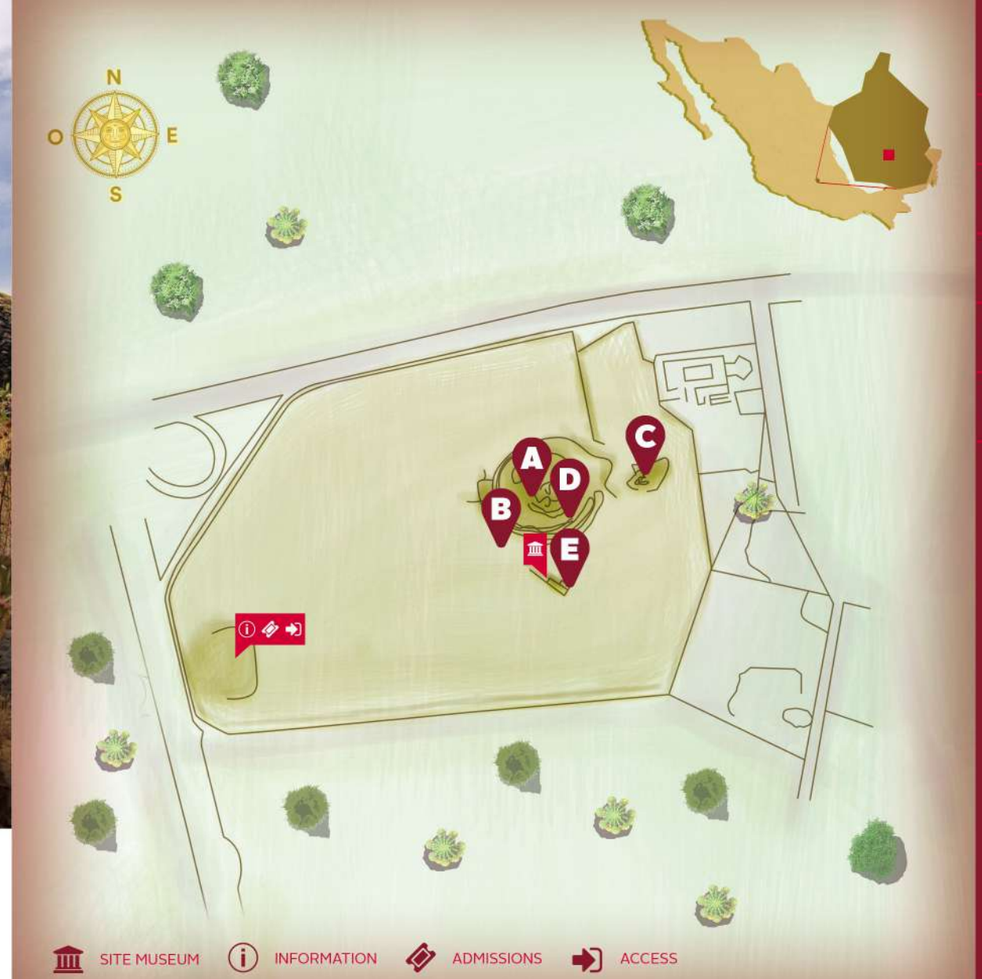
Located at the center of the space known as Cuicuilco "A", this truncated cone-shaped structure is one of the earliest and most important early constructions at the Mexico Basin. With 110 meters in diameter and 22 meters high, this building, built approximately 2700 years ago, is made up of a compacted soil core and, in the last of its eight construction stages, of basalt without tilling.

The significant extension of the Great Base summit suggests that it was used by large groups of people in various ceremonies and that access to it was made by two large ramps located one to the east and one to the west of the structure.

The Great Base or Main Pyramid of Cuicuilco is considered to be one of the first Mesoamerican buildings conceived as a calendar as well, since from its summit, you can watch the sunrise during the spring equinox, just behind the Papayo volcano.

ARCHITECTURE

One of its most outstanding traits is its Main Pyramid or Great Base, not only because of its antiquity (2700 years) but also because of its form. In the Basin of Mexico, there is no history of Preclassic ceremonial buildings (1500 BC to AD 250) in the shape of a truncated cone, whose core is exclusively made out of land. Likewise, its stone cladding (late feature of the monument) makes it unique.





MUST-SEE

- A *Great Base or Main Pyramid*
- B *The Kiva*
- C *Building E-1*
- D *The Stela*
- E *Site Museum*

WHERE TO SEE THE MAIN PYRAMID OR GREAT BASE?
It is located at the center of the archaeological site's main section known as Cuicuilco "A".

DID YOU KNOW...?

- *It was the first large community within the Basin of Mexico where monumental architecture was displayed.*
- *Due to its dimensions, it could be considered as the precursor of Mexico City.*
- *One of its most important deities was the Fire God or Huehuetéotl.*
- *It was likely to be in competition with Teotihuacan at the beginning of the Christian era, due to the control of exchange routes and natural resources.*
- *It was abandoned as a result of the Xitle volcano eruption around A.D. 250, but it it hand a lifespan of about 1000 years.*

SOME FIGURES

20,000 During its golden age it probably had a population of 20,000 inhabitants.

400 Cuicuilco's settlement extension is thought to be of approximately 400 hectares.

7 There are still 7 monumental buildings.

250 It was abandoned in A.D. 250 due to the Xitle volcano eruption, which covered most of the settlement with lava.

YOU CAN'T MISS...

- The center of Tlalpan is only a few minutes away, a Magical Neighborhood in Mexico City where you must take a walk. It starts at the Plaza de la Constitución, around it are the portals of San Agustín where you can have a drink, a few steps away is the Porfirian style Casa Frissac, that today is an art gallery. Do not forget the Mercado La Paz, with 110 years of existence, where everything is delicious to taste and take out. You can also pay a visit to the Temple and Convent of San Agustín, a jewel of the 16th century, but don't remain outside, because the treasures are inside.
- The most important festivals in Tlalpan are on **August 28th**, the day of its patron Saint Augustine, and in **March** they celebrate the Gastronomic Cultural Festival; you may refer to the exact dates in tlalpan.gob.mx