EK' BALAM

Yucatán



BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

Ek´Balam was populated from the Middle Preclassic period (300 BC - AD 300) and continued so until the arrival of the Spaniards; its apogee was during the Late Classic (AD 770-896), reaching a wide development with very classic Mayan features. It has elements of the most outstanding sites, such as three walls, five ***sak be'oob*** *or Mayan roads, carved stelae and a ball game. The kingdom of* ***Talol*** *achieved great power thanks to King* ***Ukit Kan Lek Tok'*** *and to a lesser extent by those who succeeded him on the throne. He maintained his mastery by means of weapons, appropriating the work force and resources of the settlements under his sway, since its inhabitants would be insufficient for the works undertaken, such as the royal palace we now call the Acropolis, with unique features, large volume and complex architectural distribution, as well as numerous enclosures, which keep its history and that of its successors in paintings and reliefs made on different surfaces.*



The influence of the ***Talol kingdom*** *spread to the outskirts and even to Chichen Itzá, which in its early development stages embraced the techniques and materials used in mural paintings and stucco modellings, as well as in its early pottery, elements which have clear features created in Ek' Balam.*

TOPONYM	"Bright star jaguar" from ek = bright star and balam = jaguar
CULTURE	Mayan
PERIOD	Late-terminal classic
TIMESPAN	AD 7¨70- 896 (according to the glyphic engravings found).

GETTING THERE

Either by the Kantunil-Cancún highway or the freeway (via Valladolid), you have to take the road to Tizimín and a few kilometers after the Temozón village, you'll find a signposted junction that leads to the archaeological zone. It's 162 km from Merida.

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 8 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
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

INAH

DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

There are five pre-Hispanic roads, located in the direction of the cardinal points. **Sak be 2**, one of the two on the south side, is the largest and runs into **Structure 18**, which is a main access to the **Walled Enclosure**, and was so in pre-Hispanic times.

Completely surrounding the central hub of the site are two walls, protecting the main structures of the North and South plazas; the **Third Wall** connects the main buildings.





There are three larger buildings in the South Plaza, the **Oval Palace** or Structure 16; **The Twins** or Structure 17, and Structure 10. In the middle of them is the **Platform of the Stelae**.

In the middle of the two plazas is the **Ball Game**, with several constructive stages, one of them with Puuc decoration.

The largest and oldest buildings are in the **North Plaza**. **Structures 2 and 3**, which haven't been explored, and the **Acropolis** or Royal Palace.

The zoomorphic facades of Ek' Balam are unique throughout the Mayan world.

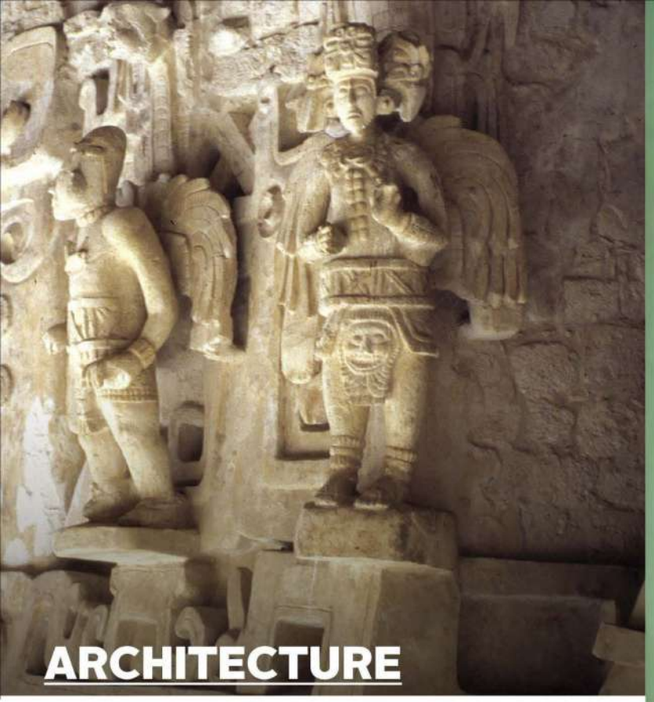


OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

The Acropolis or Structure 1

160 meters long and 60 meters wide, it is the largest of Ek' Balam; it is also 32 meters high, but could have been up to 40 meters. It has **6 superimposed levels**, distributed on one central body and two east and west wings, in which there are plazas with several constructions. The main access is a wide staircase, although there are many other accesses. The enclosures show different architectural features and a decoration with stucco modeling and paintings, representing warriors, deities, mythical beings, celestial bodies, animals, plants and very colorful geometric figures; while the main zoomorphic facade, the **Ukit Kan Lek Tok' mausoleum**, was never painted.





ARCHITECTURE

This site combines several architectural styles of the Mayan area, such as Petén, with large bases on sloping panels in structure 10, the Twins and the Acropolis.

The Chenes style is spectacular in the zoomorphic facades of the Acropolis. The Puuc style can be seen in the decoration of two venues on the the Ball Game's north side. The East Coast style is in the miniature shrines of the Oval Palace, Structure 10, and on the platforms and altars at the center of the plazas. There are also specific elements, which combined with the aforementioned, create a fusion which makes this site unique, such as its ornamental elements and stepped slopes of the Ball Game and the Acropolis. Unlike other sites where elements and architectural shapes are repeated, each structure in Ek' Balam is different from the rest, and although some details are replicated, each structure remains unique.





MUST-SEE

- A *Stela 1*
- B *The Acropolis or Structure 1*

1 Sakbé 1
2 Sakbé 2
3 Walls
4 Oval Palace
5 Arc
6 Structure 18
7 The Twins
8 Nun Palace
9 South Plaza
10 Ball Game
11 Structure 2
12 North Plaza
13 Structure 3
14 Structure 4
15 West Plaza
16 East Plaza



DID YOU KNOW...?

- *The Acropolis is among the largest constructions in Mesoamerica.*
- *The Ukit Kan Lek Tok' Mausoleum has a unique facade throughout the Mayan Area.*
- *The Acropolis was the royal palace and more than 70 enclosures have been found in just half of the building.*
- *The names of five of the rulers of Talol's kingdom are known.*
- *The mortuary offering of King Ukit Kan Lek Tok' is one of the richest in the Mayan Area.*

SOME FIGURES

5 Thanks to its glyphic engravings, many historical data and the names of 5 of its rulers are known.

The main zoomorphic facade, located on the Fourth Level of the Acropolis, was called Sak Xok Naah, "the white house of reading", according to a hieroglyphic engraving found there.

YOU CAN'T MISS...

- The numerous cenotes of the area: the cenote XCanche' is located within Ek' Balam; the cenote Zaci is in the center of Valladolid, and near the city you can visit the cenotes X'keken and Sambula.
- The colonial city of Valladolid, 27 km away from Ek' Balam, preserves many old buildings and churches, in the center and in the old neighborhoods. The church of San Servasio, in the main square, and the convent of Sisal, in the neighborhood of the same name, are specially important to visit. Several festivities are celebrated in Valladolid, such as the Candelaria, from January 26th to February 3rd; the February carnival; the "First spark of the Revolution" on June 3rd and 4th; the guilds and processions in October and Hanal Pixan in November.
- The abundant and tasty typical food, like the poc chuc, the lomitos, the escabeche oriental, the cochinita pibil, the relleno negro and several meals like its famous sausage, the panuchos and salbutes, turkey broths, different types of tamales, such as the chachacuaj, the "espelón" bread (a typical tamal of the area) and the pibiwaj. Typical sweets such as yuca fritters, melada pumpkin and many others.