

LA VENTA

Tabasco



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The archaeological site of La Venta represents one of the peak stages of Olmec civilization (1700 to 300 BC). The principal occupation at La Venta spanned at least eight centuries (1200 to 400 BC).

Constructions intended for civic-ceremonial, administrative, and residential purposes were built on a natural elevation covering a minimum ***extension of 200 hectares****. Monumental earthen architecture was constructed along a north-south axis, giving rise to avenues, channels, and plazas. The islets that surrounded the ancient city were inhabited.*

La Venta played a key role in the ***cultural history*** *of the first millennium before Christ, which included the far-flung exchange of raw materials, goods, and ideas with Central Mexico, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Guatemala. The influence of La Venta has been recognized through sculptural style at sites in Guatemala, El Salvador, Veracruz, Morelos, Guerrero, and Chiapas.*



PLACE NAME	According to oral history, the name of the site is derived from the sale of tropical woods at the end of the nineteenth century, when the locals referred to the place as "La Venta" (The Sale). The pre-Hispanic name is unknown.
CULTURE	Olmec
PERIOD	Middle Preclassic
DATES	1200 to 400 BC

HOW TO GET THERE

Take Federal Highway 180(Villahermosa-Coatzacoalcos), passing Km 46 to the turnoff to Villa La Venta. Continue 5 km on this road to the Site Museum.

HOURS

Monday to Sunday from 8 am to 5 pm.

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.

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.

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Complex C

It consists of a basal platform on which a tamped down earthen pyramidal platform was built with six stelae and two altars on its south side.

The Great Plaza

A central public space in the ancient Olmec city, it measured 42,000 square meters and a number of sculptures, a stela, and a colossal head were exhibited there.

Stirling Acropolis

To the east of the Great Plaza, it is an enormous platform more than 300 m long with vestiges of water channels worked in stone.



GET READY TO EXPLORE

Complex A

It was a ceremonial precinct of the ancient Olmec city with restricted access to the most sacred part of the center. Today its architecture has been dramatically altered as a result of recent anthropogenic reasons.



MAIN ATTRACTION

Complex C

The site's central and preeminent architectural complex, it consists of a basal platform on which a 30-meter earthen pyramid was built. It has inset corners and what might have been a stairway on the south side. This platform, which dates to approximately 400 BC, is the oldest monumental pyramid known in Mesoamerica.

ARCHITECTURE

One of the distinctive features of La Venta is its earthen architecture. It was composed of compacted clays and sand, or a combination of both.

In some cases basalt or andesite blocks were used to delimit the base of the building; in others, limestone slabs served as internal buttresses in sloping sides of pyramidal buildings. Only two stepped platforms were constructed with adobe blocks.

Perishable materials—such as wood posts, wattle-and-daub walls (reeds covered with mud), palm-leaf roofs, and tamped dirt floors—were used in domestic constructions. These structures usually had an oval layout.

WHERE TO SEE LA VENTA ARCHITECTURE

Building C-1, Stirling Acropolis and Complexes B and D

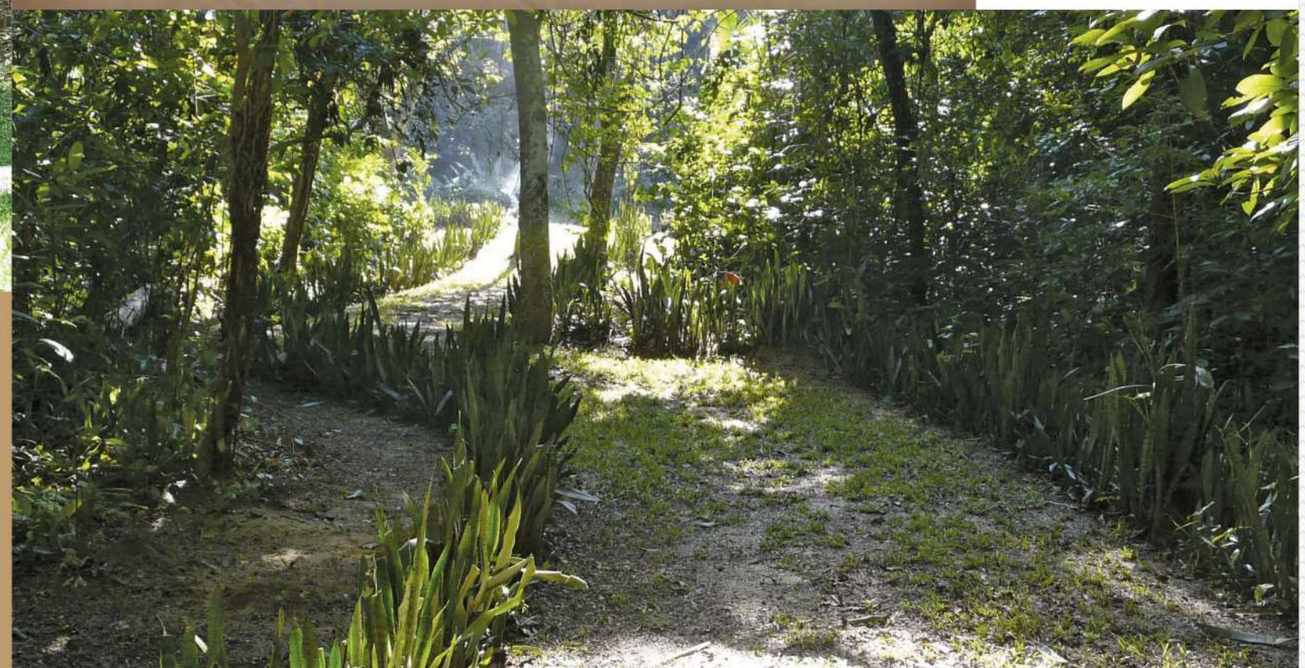


La Venta is the only archaeological site in Tabasco that is covered by a Declaratory Decree published in the Mexican Federal Register (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*) on November 30, 1988, protecting more than 100 hectares. Since 2012 it has been overseen under a management plan.



ESSENTIALS:

- A — *Complex A*
- B — *Complex B*
- C — *Complex C*
- D — *Stirling Acropolis*
- E — *Great Plaza*
- F — *Ecological Trail (part if Complex D)*



DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

- *The replicas in the archaeological zone make this the only Olmec site in the Gulf Coast region where visitors can experience the relationship between architecture and sculpture, while the original carvings are on exhibit in the Site Museum.*
- *The ancient Olmec city displays the first planned layout in monumental architecture in Mesoamerica.*
- *The "Massive Offerings" in La Venta Complex A are unique. Tons of serpentine blocks were buried as an offering to Mother Earth; they date to 700 BC.*
- *The Olmecs of La Venta imported jade from Guatemala, more than 600 km away, and basalt from the Tuxtlas mountains in Veracruz, more than 100 km away.*
- *More than 200 basalt columns delimited the north sector of Complex A.*

HIGHLIGHTS

5 — Five massive offerings found in Complex A, which contained thousands of tons of serpentine imported from Oaxaca.

3 — Three colossal stone heads delimited the north sector of the ancient Olmec city.

Almost a hundred sculptures carved in diverse types of stone have been discovered at La Venta.

30 — Thirty offerings containing close to 3000 objects were uncovered in Complex A, including jewelry and celts works in jade and other types of green stone.

4 — Four sculptural groups have been identified at La Venta, composed of 18 monumental stone sculptures.

AND DON'T MISS . . .

- The La Venta Site Museum offers a comprehensive panorama of the archaeology of this ancient Olmec city, where you can see more than 200 original artifacts, including more than a dozen monumental sculptures.
- A dawn or dusk visit to the island of El Pajaral in the coastal lagoon of El Carmen to see the region's wide range of birds, with a stop to enjoy the beaches of Sánchez Magallanes.