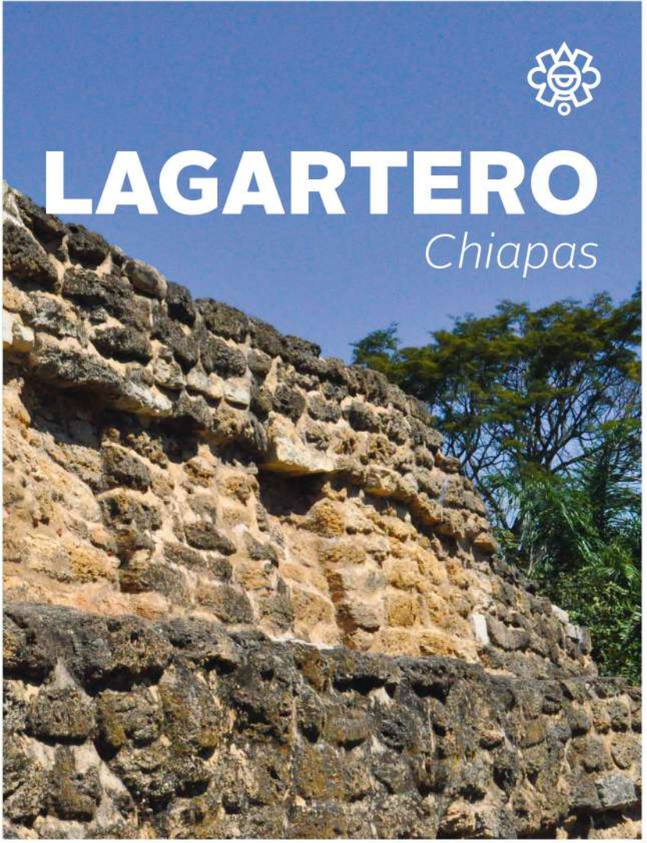


LAGARTERO
Chiapas

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

The pre-Hispanic Lagartero inhabitants occupied the islands and the wetland river area known as ***the Lagartero Marsh****. Because of water abundance and lowland jungle vegetation, activities such as fishing were carried out, as well as deer and rabbit hunting, but the main activity was corn and cotton farming. Other products like* ***cocoa*** *were brought from the coast of Chiapas, whereas the* ***obsidian*** *that was used to produce knives and blades was imported from Central Mexico and Guatemala.*

The zone containing more ceremonial and civic monuments is the Limonal. According to some researchers, Lagartero inhabitants built some ducts with stone in order to prevent flooding and to direct the water stream towards the cultivation fields at the surrounding areas. Hundreds of ceramic fragments were recovered, as well as remnants of animals thus evincing an ***"end of cycle"*** *ceremony, i.e. the end of a year and the beginning of a new one (A.D. 800 and 900).*

DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

Along the route from the last vehicular spot, you may appreciate small and low elevations comprising the pre-Hispanic hills that perhaps are a testimony to the houses and workshops from this period. You will also watch important trees like the sapodilla, gumbo limbo and some palm trees whose leaves are used as roofing for contemporary houses in some places. In this site coyol trees are found, whose fruit is transformed into sweets and during the season you may see the tree known as Mother of Cocoa and its pink flowers.





TOPONYM	Taken from the name of the Lagartero river. Lizards inhabit the surrounding swamp.
CULTURE	Mayan
PERIOD	Late Classic and Early Post-Classic
TIMESPAN	From A.D. 300 to A.D. 1200-1400

GETTING THERE

Parting from Comitán, take the federal 190 highway heading for the Guatemala border. At kilometer 59, before the Chamic village, there is a detour leading to the Cristobal Colón peasant community. From this village, the distance to the archeological site is 1 kilometer and a half. You can get there on foot or by car. The last 300 meters are exclusively for pedestrians through wooden bridges. There is no access fee to enter the archeological site.

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 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The use of any video-shooting device must be paid in accordance with the authorized provisions of the Ministry of Finance; taking non-professional photographs, without a tripod, has no cost.

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CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

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OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

Guajil Pyramid

The Guajil pyramid is known by this name because of the tree found on its northeast corner. It is formed by five stepped and column bodies. It is possible to access it through a large uninterrupted staircase leading to what it once was a temple that had a roof made of perishable material. On the last upper bodies, some designs resembling an inverted T can be seen and its interpretation indicates that it may be the God of Wind representation. It is the only building to which the visitor may access to enjoy a magnificent view of the marsh. On the upper part of the pyramid you may see landscapes such as the ceiba and, by using binoculars, the mojonera (in white) that serves as the border limit between Mexico and Guatemala.

ARCHITECTURE

The central pre-Hispanic settlement is located on Limonal island, where the main civic and ceremonial center are found. It has by 15 main constructions around open and closed squares or, in some cases, small courtyards surrounded by low hills. A Ball Game may be also observed at the side structures.

The buildings are made of tiered bodies built with a slight inclination ending in a thick ledge or in staircases flanked by balustrades. Only in two buildings on the last bodies the construction of tucked elements representing the inverted T may be observed. According to some researchers, the latter may represent IK, the wind god. Another building has tucked elements on its walls which project a light and shadow composition. Sedimentary stones are predominant rendering it fragile and erodible. Because of this and in order to preserve the buildings, the access to them is restricted.

WHERE CAN THE ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS BE SEEN?
The relevant architectural features may be seen at the Guajil Pyramid (the only one in which a access to its upper side is allowed) and at the pyramid known as the God of Wind.



MUST-SEE

- A *Pyramid of the God of the Wind*
- B *Guagil Pyramid*
- C *Pyramid of the Vessels*
- D *Pyramid of the Tombs*

1 Access
2 Great Ceiba

DID YOU KNOW...?

- *Based on the period during which the archeological site was occupied and the correlation with the linguistics history, it seems that its inhabitants spoke Jakalteko.*
- *The figurines were made in mould and they accurately represented the designs and embroideries on the huipils worn by women as well as the headdress type that distinguished them.*
- *Lizard head representations made of copper have been found as well as an earflap made of amber.*
- *In the 16th century, Thomas Gage walked nearby without realizing the presence of such an important pre-Hispanic settlement. In the 19th century, John Lloyd Stephens also crossed the Lagartero river but was not aware of this archeological site.*



Lagartero is an example of landscape adaptation and modification in the pre-Hispanic period.



YOU CAN'T MISS...

- After touring the archeological site, you may take a walk or a bath on different recreational centers on the Lagos de Colón touristic center. If you want to enjoy the waterfall you have to walk around 1 kilometer from the center of the peasant community. There are several houses offering accommodation and food or cabins at the Ribera de Colón collective.
- On your way back you may visit La Trinitaria village where first 17th century temple was built. Inside this temple the image of the Eternal Father is placed. Every year at the end of May or in early June several tojolabal communities celebrate the traditional admission of candles and flowers to honor this saint. In this village, traditional sweets and ruck sacks are made.
- You may complete your visit at the Comitán Archeological Museum where some Lagartero figurines are exhibited.



SOME FIGURES

500	More than 500 figurine fragments have been retrieved from the site.
500 mil	500,000 ceramic fragments were recovered from the ritual landfill. 10,000 of them are polychrome.
100	100 dog representations made by molding.
60	60 percent of the retrieved figurines correspond to feminine representations.
50	50 burials from the Limonal area have already been explored.
8 1/2	More than 8 ½ hectares are guarded by the INAH.
1	1 complete stela retrieved in the archeological context.

