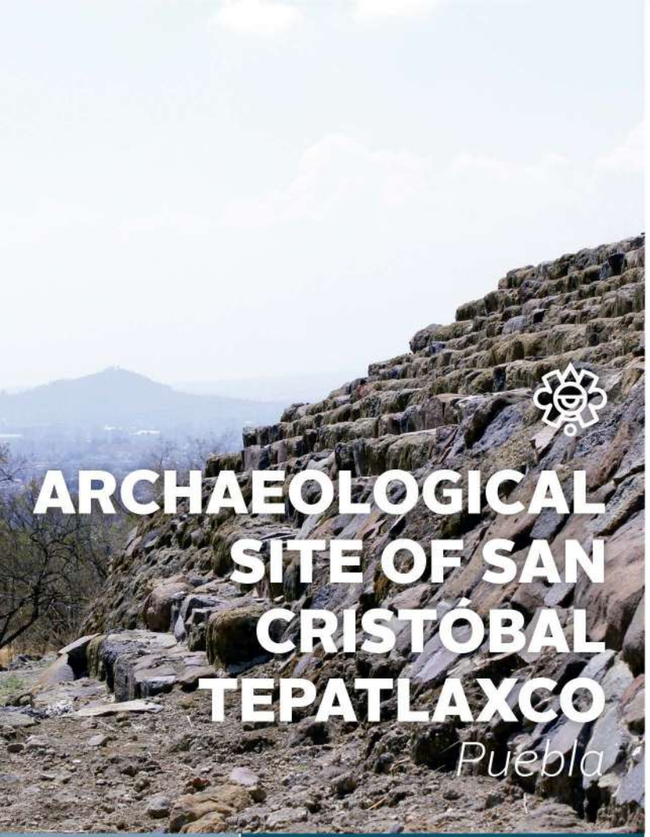


ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF SAN CRISTÓBAL TEPATLAXCO

Puebla

PLACE NAME	The archaeological site gets its name from the nearby town. The toponym Tepatlaxco comes from the Nahuatl language and has two possible meanings: 1) *tecpan-* (palace), *tlach-* (ballcourt), and–co (place suffix), which could be translated as "In the place of the palace ballcourt"; 2) *tepa* (stone wall), *-tla* (abundance suffix), *ix* (face), and -co (place suffix), which could be translated as "Place of much rocky ground or many stone enclosures."
CULTURE	Archaeological evidence indicates the site pertained to populations with a local cultural traditional, but not under
PERIOD	Olmec influence as stated in the past. The site was probably contemporary with settlements in the Tlaxcala block and the Puebla-Tlaxcala Block, mainly with those of ancient Huejotzingo, from the Middle Preclassic and Protoclassic.
DATES	The site has occupation dating to between 800 BC and AD 100.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The local cultural tradition of Tepatlaxco seems to have developed early representations of Tlaloc, the storm god. It is interesting to note the degree of strategic planning in establishing the settlement near the Atoyac River, with defensive concerns underlying its location on the slopes of a hill between two ravines, and the planned layout of its ceremonial areas. These factors suggest the prominent role played by an established, well-organized priestly class in selecting and building the center. Furthermore, evidence of trade contacts with West Mexico suggest the site's importance at its peak.

The site might have been superseded by other larger ceremonial centers, such as Xochitécatl and Tlalancaleca "La Pedrera," which could explain its limited development as a result of its location between these other settlements. Later, its inhabitants abandoned the site, without leaving any indication of the language spoken there.

GET READY TO EXPLORE

Notice the distribution of the structures that formed the core of this ancient settlement. You can see the site is situated on the slopes of Totolqueme Hill, nestled in an enclosure formed by the ravine of El Lindero to the west and that of San Miguel to the east. The site offers a sweeping panorama of the lands around the site: the volcanoes Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl, the mountain La Malinche, the former Hacienda of Chautla, the archaeological site of Xochitécatl, as well as Mendocinas and Totolqueme hills. Finally, the archaeological site embodies the convergence of culture and nature, where visitors can see ancient architectural remains and local flora and fauna characteristic of the region.





The archaeological site of Tepatlaxco is considered cultural heritage of both Mexico and the state of Puebla. The site is also noteworthy for its natural riches and attractive scenery.

HOW TO GET THERE

The site is located on the southern slope of Totolqueme Hill at the junction of San Cristóbal Tepatlaxco, Puebla. It can be reached by México-Puebla federal highway, No. 190, taking the turnoff at the town of the same name, which is ahead of the municipality of San Martín Texmelucan, or by the old crossing of the train tracks and the parallel road that goes to the highway of "las Válvulas." Approximate time: 15 minutes.

ADMISSION

Free admission. Guided tours free of charge, Fridays to Tuesdays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. For school group tours, an appointment is needed.

HOURS

Wednesday to sunday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

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

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MAIN ATTRACTION

Mound A

When you enter the site from the town of San Cristóbal Tepatlaxco you can see the great hill known as Totolqueme to the north and at the summit, a prominent mound that must have served as an astronomical observatory. In the archaeological site, three major platforms dominate the core: Mound A, which measures 36 m at the base by 9 m in height, might have served as a "palace" as alluded to in the site's place name. Remains of a fragmented floor of burned mud and stone were found at the top of this pyramidal platform. An empty cist was found here, measuring 2 m in length by 1.20 m in width, and 80 cm deep. Beside it stands the East Talud (sloping wall), with a base measuring about 60 m by 9 m in height. Another major structure is Mound 5, which seems to be superimposed on the Talud.

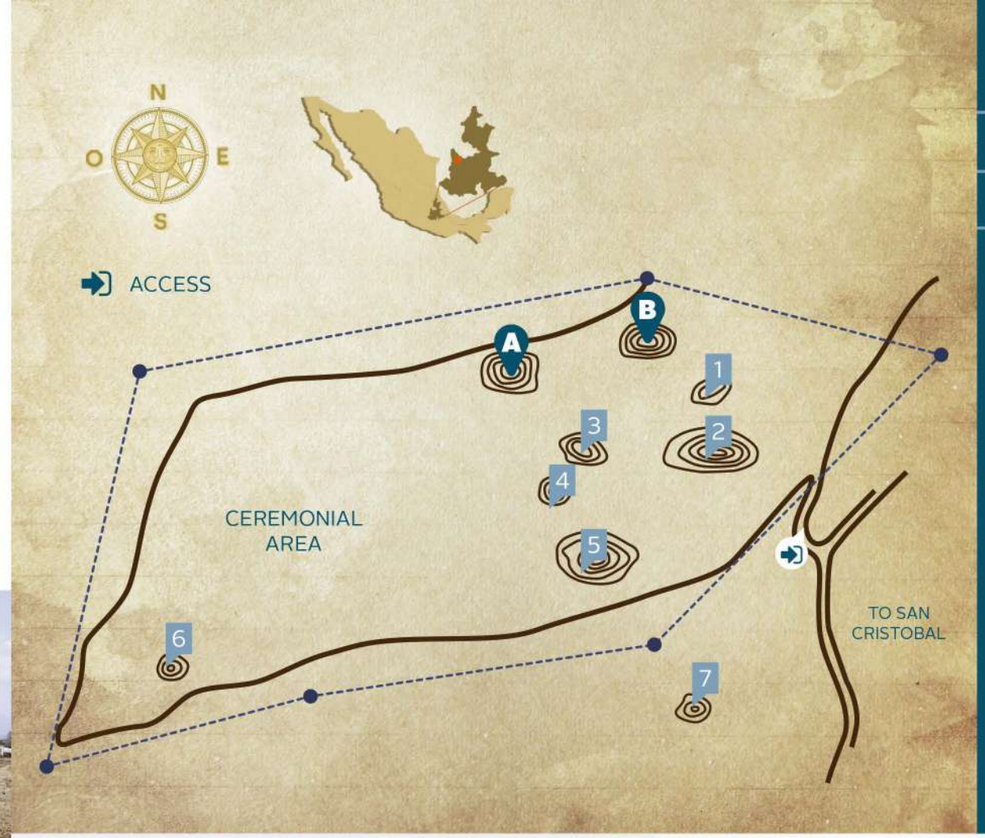


ARCHITECTURE

The ceremonial zone is composed of nine platforms ranging from 2.5 m to 9.0 m in height. It is believed they served residential and ceremonial functions. Sloped terraces on a different level from the ravines were probably planned to avoid flooding, while also serving social, religious, and commercial purposes.

The inhabitants used a variety of construction materials, including limestone blocks, river stones, slabs, mud, terracotta, and some type of mortar. Some of its innovations seem to have been the use of wall surfacing resembling stucco that covered the pyramidal platforms, and mud floors such as those found on the top of Mound A, terraces, and patios.





ESSENTIALS:

- A Mound A
- B Mound B
- 1 Mound C
- 2 Mound D
- 3 Mound E
- 4 Mound F
- 5 Mound G
- 6 Mound H
- 7 Mound I



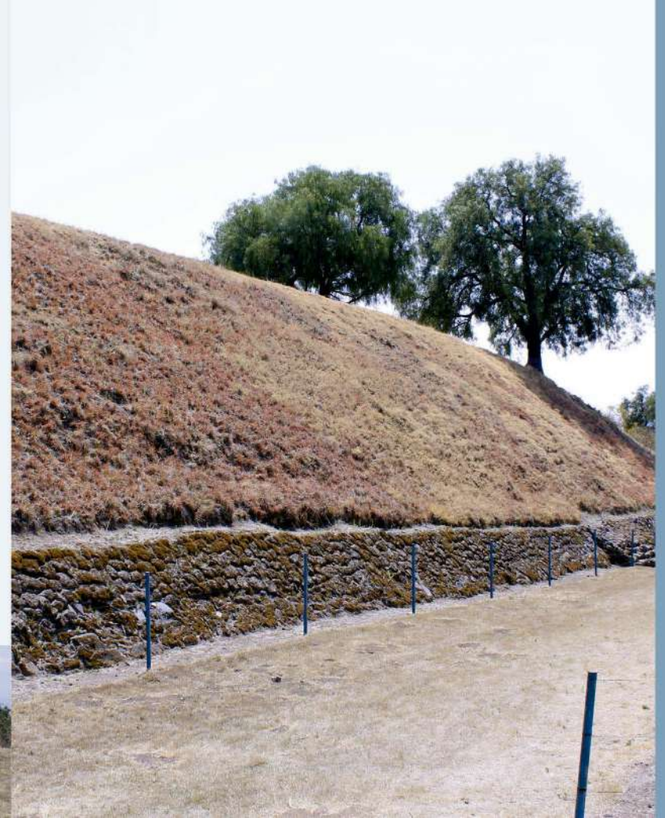
AND WHILE YOU'RE THERE

- Try to identify the structures forming the ancient settlement.
- Visualize the extension of the ceremonial zone.
- Find the walls of the "ballcourt" referred to in the site's place name.
- Stand in the passage between Mound A and the East Talud, looking southward, you can see Mendocinas Hill and to the north, Totolqueme Hill.
- If you stand at the middle of Mound A, above the East Talud and clap your hands, you can hear the echo as the sound reverberates off the platform.

AND DON'T MISS . . .

- Attending the annual celebration of the day of Santa Cruz (the Holy Cross) on the summit of Totolqueme Hill.
- Going to the town's annual fair on July 25.
- Seeing the traditional dances performed in February in the nearby town of San Matías Tlalancaleca.
- Tasting the region's delicious *chiles en nogada*, stuffed Pueblan peppers in a creamy nut sauce, in August and September.
- If you like adventure, outdoor activities, and culture, climb to the top of Totolqueme Hill, where you can see the magnificent landscapes of the Valley of Puebla to the south and the state of Tlaxcala to the north. Don't forget to visit Mound A, the East Talud, and Mound B, the largest structures at the site. Note the defensive location of the ceremonial zone, protected by the surrounding ravines. Delight in the symbiosis of nature and culture and how they have coexisted in the context of Tepatlaxco since ancestral times.





DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

- *The archaeological site of Tepatlaxco was explored in 1980 by archaeologists Rosalba Delgadillo and Andrés Santana.*
- *The site is better known to locals as "Los Cerritos" for the number of mounds enclosed in the protected core of the ceremonial area.*
- *Before archaeologists uncovered this archaeological site, locals believed there was an "enchanted church" buried here, because as legend would have it, the tolling of bells could be heard on this site.*
- *In 2006 near the zone, remains were found of what was believed to be the mammoth species **Mammuthus columbi**, preserved because it was embedded in a stone wall on the edge of the ravine. However, given the complexity of access and anthropogenic damage, the fossil remains have disappeared.*
- *A number of legends surround the archaeological site, such as that of the doors of time, the golden bird, and the wolf's den, among others.*
- *Every year to celebrate the day of Santa Cruz (the Holy Cross) in May, locals climb to the top of the hill to the Mound of Totolqueme, where there is a large cross and a Christ.*