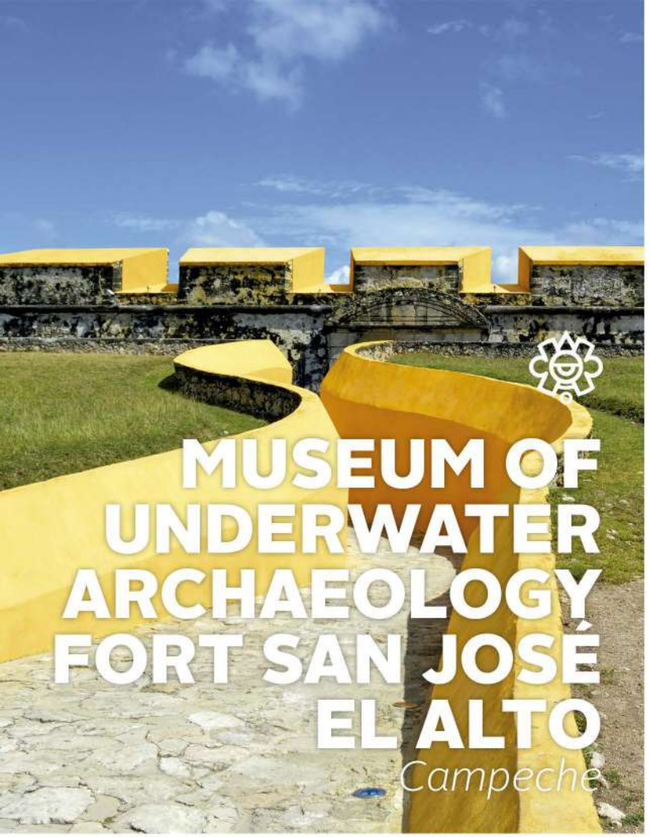


MUSEUM OF UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY FORT SAN JOSÉ EL ALTO

Campeche

/ MAIN ATTRACTION

Pieces of gold and precious stones

This is one of the museum's most important collections, including gold objects, emeralds, and other precious stones, as well as *macuquina* (milled) silver coins recovered in the explorations of the wreckage of the ship *Ancla Macuca* in Scorpion Reef, Yucatán, in the Gulf of Mexico.

The craftsmanship of the pieces evokes Asian influence and attests to the globalization of New Spain during viceregal times. The circumnavigation driven by Spain's powerful Armada connected Europe with the Americas and Asia, as well as the other viceroyalties of the Spanish Crown.

Where to see them

Gallery 5.



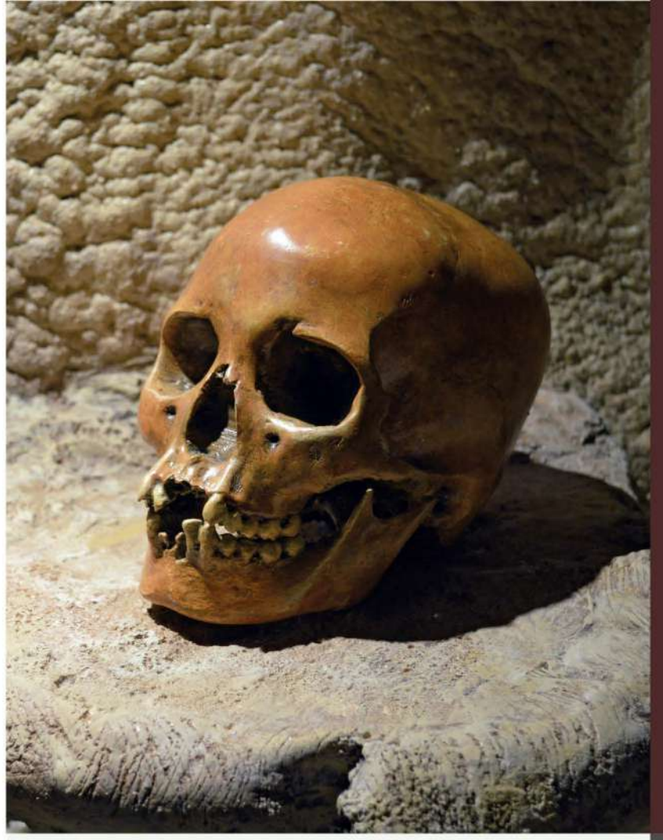
/ HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The stronghold of San José el Alto was built in the late eighteenth century. According to an inscription on its facade, it was completed on August 9, 1792. It is the work of José Sabido de Vargas, who occupied the post of the King's Lieutenant between 1784 and 1793. Years later, this redoubt appears in a plan of 1799 by Juan José de León where it is clear that it covers an area of 1,828.79 meters.

In the mid-nineteenth century, as the troops of the Centralist army sent by Antonio López de Santa Anna approached to lay siege to Campeche, during the separation of Yucatán from Mexico in 1842, the partial demolition of San José el Alto was ordered, rendering it and the battery of San Matías inoperative.

More than a century later, in 1971 and 1988 the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the State Government of Campeche did intervention work on Fort San José el Alto. Roofs were reconstructed and walls consolidated. Later, the building was used as a storeroom for pre-Hispanic and colonial material from archaeological research conducted by the Campeche INAH Center. Between 1995 and 2017 the building housed the Museum of Ships and Arms.





/ HOW TO GET THERE

In the city of Campeche, you can take public transport—a taxi or city bus—to the museum using the route to the Bellavista neighborhood that passes in front of the museum.

/$ ADMISSION

According to the Federal Fees Act, admission is free for students, teachers, and seniors with a valid ID; children under 13 and people with a disability.

Sundays: Free admission for Mexican citizens and foreign residents.

/ SERVICES

Cultural events, guided tours, workshops, and restrooms.

/ HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday
10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

/ PHOTOGRAPHY

For the use of any device to make videos, visitors must pay the stipulated fee. Non-professional photography, without the use of tripods, is free of charge, and must be done without a flash.

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/ COLLECTIONS

The six galleries of this museum submerge us in rich visual, auditory, and emotional experiences offered by aquatic spaces. We can appreciate the wonders of the cultural heritage underwater off the coasts of the Yucatán Peninsula, from the major prehistoric findings identified in subaquatic caves, the remains of Maya culture, and their relationship to water recovered in cenotes; the main shipwrecks identified during the four decades related to navigation during the viceregal period, to end with the foremost discoveries on steam-powered navigation and parallel technological developments.

/ The museum has the declaratory judgment of Good Practice of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, aimed at promoting the protection of this patrimony through the appropriation and display of this material.



/ HIGHLIGHTS

- 211 — A total of 211 pieces were found in the *Ancla Macuca* wreckage in Scorpion Reef.
- Naia was the first woman found in the Americas; she lived 13,000 years ago.
- The building housing the museum was known as The Castle of the Three Stones.
- "Chocolatera" type vessels from underwater archaeological contexts date to the Late Preclassic period (400 BC–AD 200).
- Gallery 2 features models of Ice Age megafauna bone remains.

/GALLERIES

Gallery1: Introduction to Underwater Archaeology

This gallery explains Underwater Archaeology as a discipline responsible for researching ancient societies through the compilation of data and specialized studies of objects, human or animal remains submerged in seas, rivers, lakes, lagoons, springs, swamps, marshes, tidewaters, cenotes, underwater caves, semi-flooded caverns, crater lakes, and lands lost to the sea.

Likewise and didactically it shows show subaquatic cultural patrimony is located, protected, studied, and preserved, highlighting the importance of multidisciplinary work, the application of technology, and the participation of cave-diving, speleologists, fishermen, and ejido-holders (autonomous farming groups using government-owned land).

Gallery 2: Submerged Origins

Throughout this immersion gallery, visitors can explore a submerged cave and how it was formed in Mexican territory more than 165 million years ago. The explanation also describes the transformation of the Yucatán Peninsula and the paleo-environment, until the Ice Age (40,000 to 10,000 years ago).

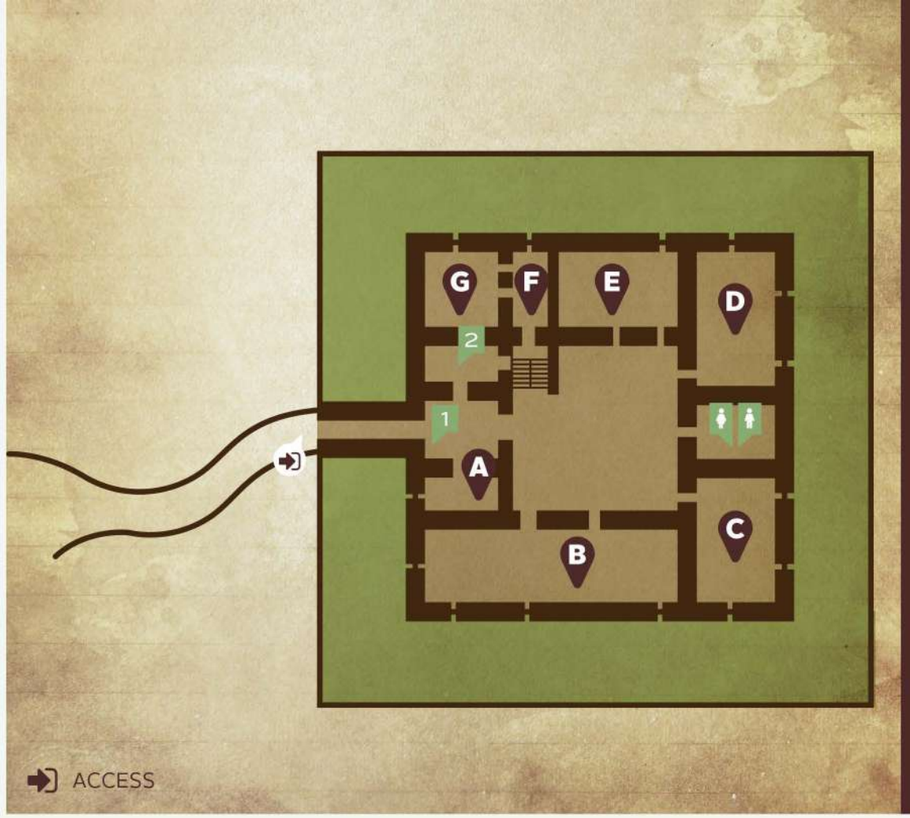
It highlights the re-creation of fauna from the Late Pleistocene on a real scale, such as the skull of a gomphothere (elephant ancestor), the skull of a saber-toothed tiger, and the representation of the skeleton of a sloth, three of the thirteen species found in the Hoyo Negro cave, Tulum, Quintana Roo, which along with the history told by Naia, the oldest woman found in the Americas, introduce visitors to the world of prehistory, today a submerged realm.

Gallery 3: Maya Navigators

Pieces are on display from diverse subaquatic archaeological contexts immersed in continental waters and coastal zones, linked to Maya culture, which offer material evidence of the relationship between divine concepts, such as water, the womb of the earth, and the underworld as a sacred place of death, life, and rebirth. The display showcases discoveries made in underwater archaeological contexts of San Manuel cenote, in the municipality of Tizimín, as well as in cenotes in the municipalities of Homún and Chemax, Yucatán. In these sacred spaces, "chocolatera" type pitchers were identified in these sacred spaces, corresponding to the Late Preclassic period (400 BC to AD 200), similar to those found at land sites in Belize and Guatemala, associated with burials or mortuary deposits.

The Mayas are considered people of the sea par excellence. Like many other cultures, they recognized navigation as the fastest, most efficient, and most feasible means of transport. Thanks to this activity, Maya culture developed continuously and with interconnectivity with diverse regions. Since 1200 BC, the Mayas had broad knowledge of currents, winds, and tides, as well as the dangers of the sea. From the gulf of Honduras to Tabasco, on board dugout canoes propelled by paddles and sails, they engaged in coastal and riverine trade, transporting merchandise such as dried fish, crustaceans, cacao, honey, salt, animal pelts, as well as sumptuary items, religious and political ideas, and even news and diseases.

To accomplish this feat they constructed elaborate port infrastructure, building docks, ports, storage places, ship-yards, zones for sanitary areas, and places for veneration. They took advantage of and transformed the landscape, creating systems for maritime signage, including lighthou-ses, and marked watchtowers that indicated the areas of risk for sailing vessels (shallow waters and reefs), as well as anchorage sites. It highlights the island of Jaina as one of the principal ports north of Campeche. In this gallery, one of the most important offerings recovered from this island is exhibited.



ESSENTIALS:

- A *Gallery 1*
- B *Gallery 2*
- C *Gallery 3*
- D *Gallery 4*
- E *Gallery 5*
- F *Gallery 5B*
- G *Gallery 6*

1 Lobby
2 Service area

Gallery 4: Wreckage and Navigational Instruments

The European navigators who came to the New World brought with them the technological baggage acquired over the millennia that made it possible to cross the Atlantic on wind-borne vessels like caravels (fifteenth century) and on board galleons (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), among many other types of ships.

This gallery features diverse instruments: compass, astrolabe, sextant, and leads (from diverse wreckage sites in the area known as the Sonda de Campeche and around the Yucatán Peninsula), objects that served in navigation, starting in the fifteenth century, high seas voyages, in other words, sailing far from the coasts without any other point of reference than the daytime and nighttime stars. As a result of these inventions, sailors could determine their position at sea, the direction to follow, know the nature of the seabed to avoid accidents, as well as the proper use of winds and currents. Two pieces from the sixteenth century stand out in this gallery, a bronze half culverin from the Cayo Nuevo I wreckage, considered the oldest cannon of its kind in the Western hemisphere, and an ebony tiller recovered at Río Seco or Viejo, Palizada, Campeche.

Gallery 5: Treasures from Scorpion Reef

One of the Museum's most important collections, it displays objects made of gold, emeralds, and other precious stones, as well as *macuquina* (milled) silver coins recovered in explorations of the wreckage identified by underwater archaeologists as the ship the *Ancla Macuca* found in Scorpion Reef, Yucatán, on the Gulf of Mexico.

This collection is composed of 211 pieces of gold, emeralds, amethyst, a ruby, and red coral, considered part of the cargo of precious metalwork that was being used during the voyage in the production of jewelry, including tools and gold leaf as a raw material.

The elements were for the daily life of a sector of European society and among the pieces were rings, pendants, cufflinks, buttons, toothpicks, chains, as well as pieces connected to the Catholic liturgy: appliqués for garments, medals, rosaries (cold and red coral), reliquaries and crosses.

The display spotlights the importance of elements of the ship, such as the lead covering of the hull, bronze nails and bolts. All the diagnostic artifacts studied in their archaeological contexts were analyzed by experts in diverse disciplines, using an array of laboratory and archaeometric techniques that made it possible to identify the wreckage of *Ancla Macuca* as a Spanish sailing vessel from the first half of the eighteenth century.

Gallery 5B

In this small gallery visitors can see examples of light weaponry, such as the blunderbuss, muskets, and rifles, as well as war munitions used on board ships, both for long-distance attacks and in face-to-face combat.

Similarly, a wide range of elements can be viewed, such as the diverse types of ballest in the bilge of ships, objects recovered in the wreckage of the eighteenth-century *El Pesquero* and Carron, in addition to vessels, remains of iron hoops for barrels and their spigots from wreckage from the Scorpion Reef, as shown in the storage of cargo on board ships.

Gallery 6: Technological Development at Sea

This gallery highlights the technological changes that took place with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. It displays diverse elements of naval architecture from underwater archaeological contexts where the technology, through the use of the steam engine, replaced sails, spotlighting the history of steam-powered packet boats: RMS *Forth*, RMS *Tweed* (Scorpion Reef), *La Unión* (Sisal), and *Calderas* (Banco Chinchorro atoll reef). Also on display are pieces used in daily life from subaquatic archaeological contexts identified in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Veracruz, including a vast collection of various types of bottles made of glass, ceramic, fine china, pewter flatware—used by passengers on board these ships—as well as part of a microscope recovered in the vicinity of Isla Aguada, Campeche.

Also on display are scale models of a tender boat with five sails, a caravel used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a nineteenth-century three-mast schooner, a twentieth-century diesel-powered dredger, and the beautiful Golden Hind, an English galleon best known for its circumnavigation of the globe between 1577 and 1580, captained by corsair Sir Francis Drake.