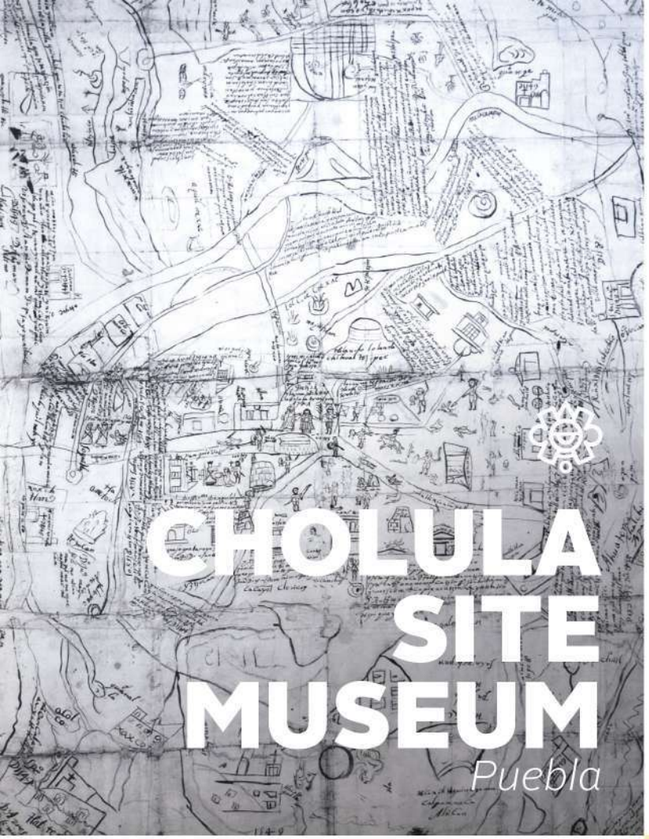


CHOLULA SITE MUSEUM

Puebla

/ HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Cholula Site Museum is located on the north side of the Great Pyramid and it was originally built after two long excavation seasons in the zone. The first, from September 1931 to 1956, focused primarily on the exploration in the interior of the Great Pyramid via tunnels. The second season, from 1965 to late 1972, revealed the south and west sides of the great platform. Its objective was to show visitors the excavation results from these two long seasons and to facilitate comprehension of the site by including a model showing that what looks like a hill was actually the result of different construction stages encasing earlier phases.

After remaining virtually unchanged for almost thirty years, in 1998 the exhibition galleries were restructured. The space was conditioned to include a replica of the site's murals and the number of pieces on display was augmented by adding vessels and offerings from salvage archaeology conducted in recent years in the urban zones of San Pedro and San Andrés Cholula. Also photos in addition to captions in Spanish and English were added.

Later, in 2007, Dr. Francisco González-Hermosillo, a researcher in the Department of Historical Studies of INAH, included replicas of the Codex of Cholula and graphic material from colonial times, such as the "Stoning" Manuscript that gives visitors a broader view of everyday life in the early years of the colonial period.



/ HOW TO GET THERE

The archaeological zone of Cholula is eight kilometers (almost five miles) west of the city of Puebla, the state capital. From Puebla, take the short route or the Quetzalcoatl route or else the Puebla-Mexico federal highway. Another option is to take the recently inaugurated tourism train that leaves Puebla and arrives in the former railroad station, at the northwest corner of the Great Pyramid. The Site Museum is next to the north wall of the Great Pyramid, near the entrance to the tunnels and the ticket office entrance to the site.

/ SERVICES

Information in Spanish and English, guided tours accredited by the Ministry of Tourism, restrooms, and site guards.

/$ ADMISSION

According to the Federal Fees Act, admission is free for students, teachers, and seniors with a valid ID, children under 13 and disabled people.
Sundays: free admission for Mexicans and foreign residents.

/ PHOTOGRAPHY

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

/ HOURS

Monday to Sunday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

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CULTURA
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/ MAIN ATTRACTION

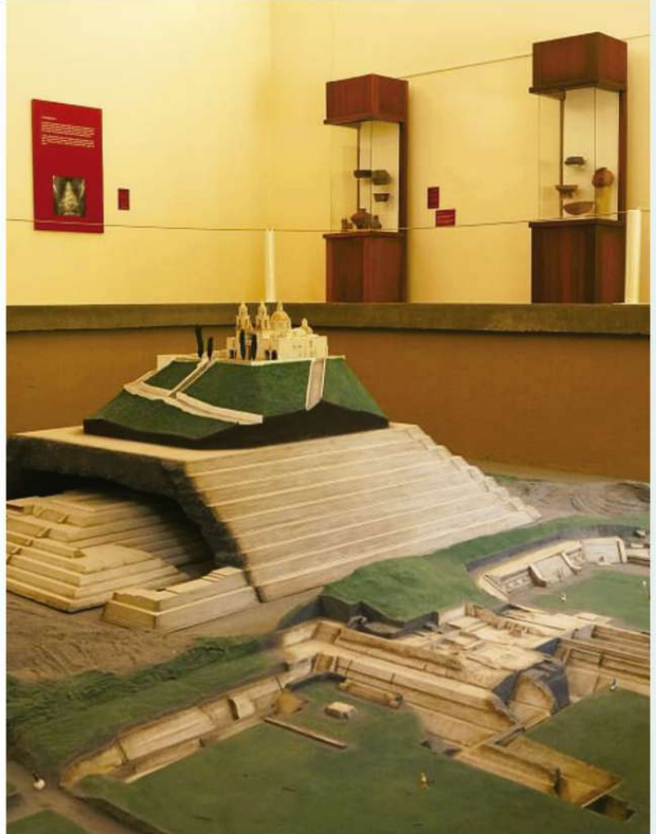
Great Pyramid Model

As part of the Site Museum's display, an architectural model shows the construction phases of the Great Pyramid, part of which can be seen by entering the tunnels that crisscross the interior of the monument. For a clearer understanding of the pyramid, visitors should start with the museum and then go through the tunnels.

Another one of the museum's attractions is the scale replica of a fragment of the mural known as The Drinkers and another of The Grasshoppers.

Where to see it?

The model of the pyramid is in Room 1 and the mural replicas are in Room 3.



/ HIGHLIGHTS

- The base of the Cholula pyramid is the largest in the world
- 8 km — To explore the Great Pyramid, about eight kilometers (almost 5 miles) of tunnels had to be excavated, following the contour of the different buildings
- Renowned for its polychrome pottery
- It is considered a sacred and commercial city of great importance in Mesoamerica





/ COLLECTIONS

The exhibition displays some of the materials recovered from the archaeological zone, the Great Pyramid interior, the Patio of the Altars, as well as in the San Pedro and San Andrés Cholula area from the supervision of construction work or other salvage archaeological projects conducted before residents built housing.

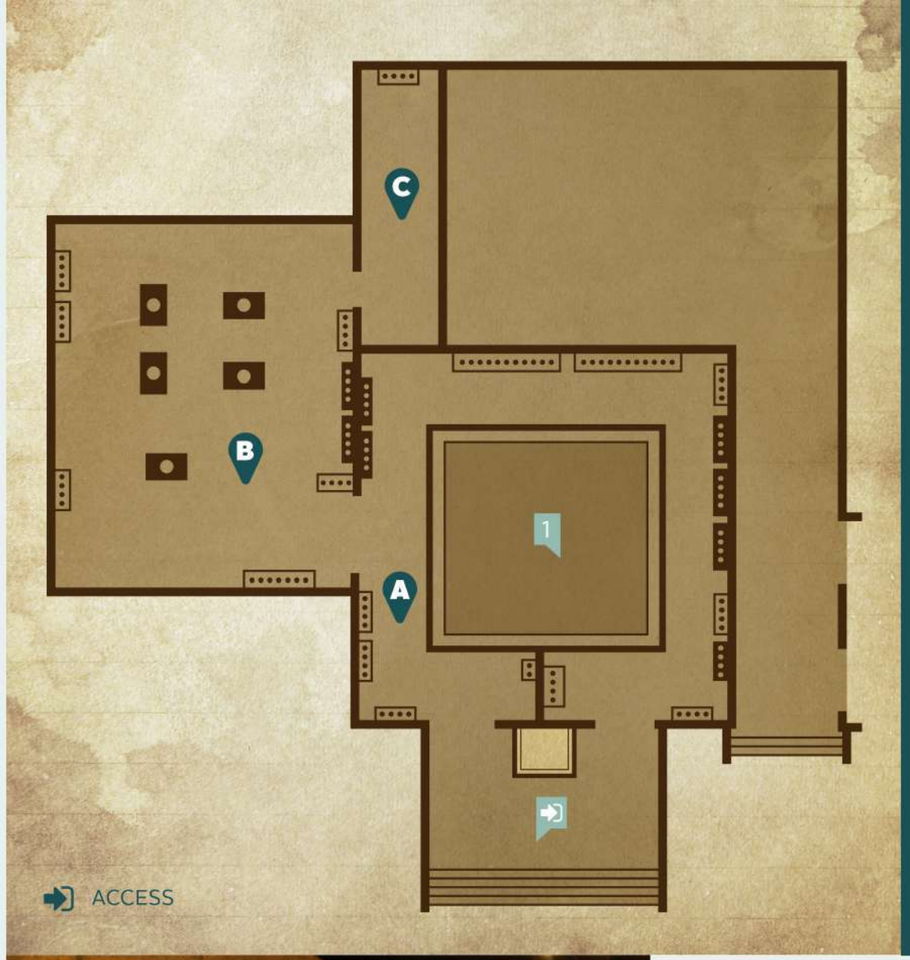
/EXHIBITIONS

The single-story museum houses three rooms. The entrance is at the south end of Room 1, featuring the model of the Great Pyramid in the center of the space. Note the different construction phases and the *adosada* or added platforms in the model, which makes it easier to understand the structure's architectural development when visitors enter the tunnels crisscrossing the pyramid. It is worth bearing in mind it was necessary to excavate about eight kilometers (almost 5 miles) of tunnels, following the contour of the different building stages to obtain the archaeological data to create the model. In the space surrounding the model, introductory captions accompany photos of the early excavation work and display cases exhibit the oldest materials from the Late Preclassic (500 to 0 BC) and part of the Classic (AD 0 to 450), when Cholula emerged as a sacred city, contemporary with Teotihuacan, but with its own distinctive architecture and layout of space.

The visit continues on the east, north, and west wall of the room until you reach the door to Room 2. Walking to the east end to reach the northeast corner takes you to the entrance to Room 3, which contains the mural replicas; it is easy to identify because on the tunnel that serves as an entrance is an example of the murals on the buildings framing the late construction phases of the Patio of the Altars.

Room 3 or the Mural Room displays a scale copy of a six by two meter (19½ by 6½ ft.) section of the Mural of the Drinkers and a fragment of the Mural of the Grasshoppers, two of the oldest paintings (done around the second century AD) on site. In addition, a display case has part of the offering and personal ornaments from a burial discovered in the fill that covered the building, where the Mural of the Drinkers was found. The pottery vessels in the offering are similar to those used by the figures portrayed in the mural.

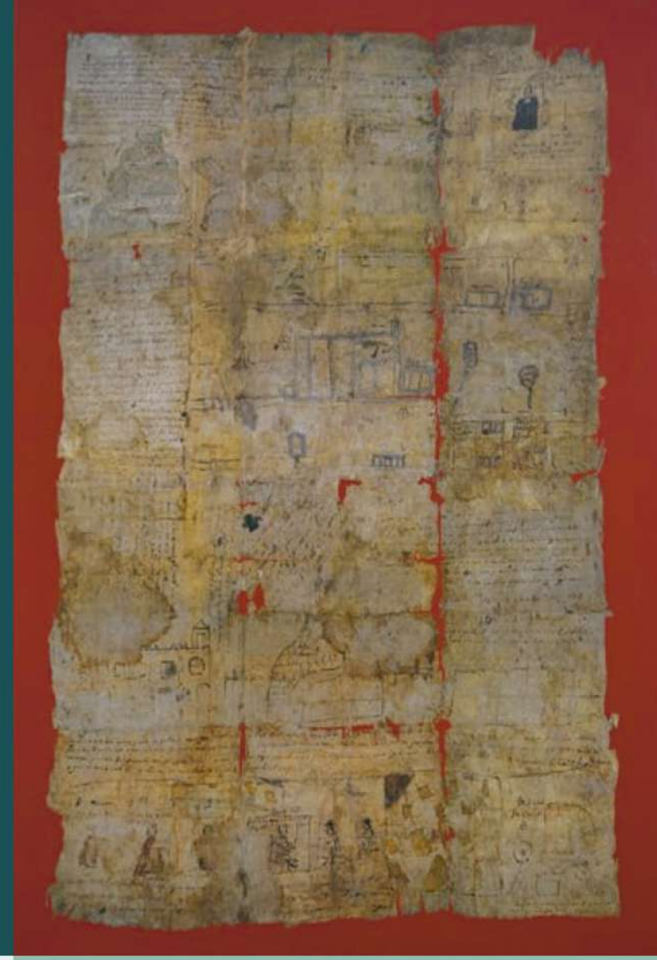
The cultural materials from Cholula III, IIIA and IV phases of the Classic period are exhibited on the east wall of Room 2. The north and west walls have display cases with objects from the Epiclassic (AD 800 to 900) and Postclassic (AD 900 to 1521), chronologically arranged. The colonial period (1521 to 1600) is represented on the center and south wall of the hall, including the copies of the later seventeenth-century Codex of Cholula and the "Stoning" Manuscript.

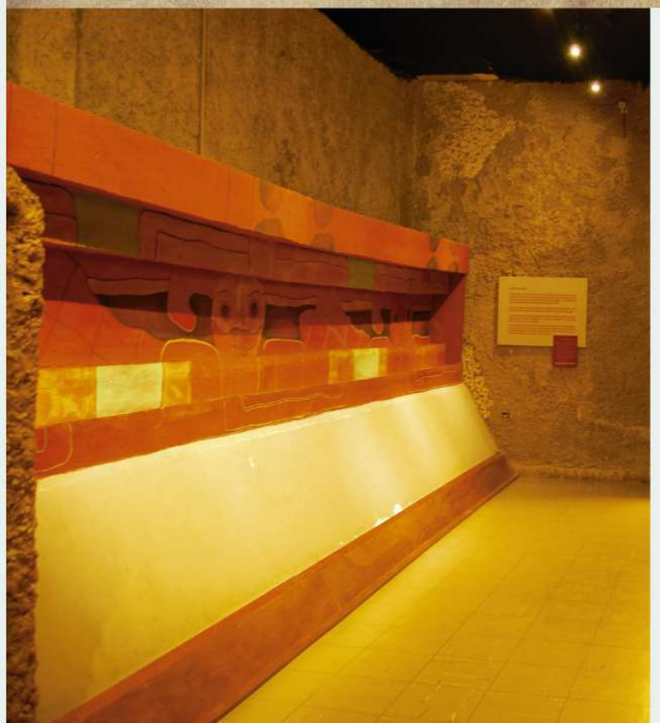


ESSENTIALS

- A *Room 1*
- B *Room 2*
- C *Room 3*

1 Architectural model





In the center of this room, there are examples of Cholula's famed polychrome lacquer pottery, noteworthy for their bright colors and design, as well as a display case with pieces of pottery that were found at the site, but that come from other regions, based on their shapes, decoration, and paste. These materials constitute undeniable proof of the commercial and religious ties that Cholula had with diverse coeval cities.

A display case in the passageway between Rooms 1 and 2 showcases pieces and objects from the time of contact, attesting to the coexistence and merging of indigenous and Spanish cultures. The museum exit is in the southwest part of Room 1. Before leaving the museum, we can see that, as shown in the model, we find that Baron Alexander von Humboldt compared the first tier of the Great Pyramid with the pyramids of Egypt, Mycerinus, and Teotihuacan, and he reported it as measuring 439 meters (1440 ft.), making it the largest pyramidal base in the world.

/ Evidence suggests that the sacred city of Cholula had commercial, political, and religious ties with other cities and coeval settlements, including some of their future rulers. Before assuming power, rulers had to visit the sanctuary city to undergo a nose-piercing ceremony to be accepted as leaders in their communities.

