

CUICUILCO SITE MUSEUM

Mexico City

/ MAIN ATTRACTION

Huehueteotl Sculpture

This sculpture of Huehueteotl or the Old Fire God was recently added to the museum's permanent exhibition. Carved from andesite, it represents a hunchbacked elderly man seated with crossed legs. On his head he holds a brazier, which is decorated on the sides with a series of diamond shapes, symbolizing fire, separated by vertical bars. Chronologically, this sculpture dates to the late Preclassic and Early Classic, AD 150–250.

Where to see it?

Room 3.

/ HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Today we know that Cuicuilco might be one of the earliest cities in the Basin of Mexico and the first major civic religious center in the Mexican highlands. This important site arose in the Preclassic period (800 BC to AD 280) and is now part of the urban sprawl of Mexico City. Cuicuilco was destroyed and abandoned after the eruption of Mount Xitle in about AD 250 triggered migrations and the resettlement of the Basin of Mexico population.

In 1939 Eduardo Noguera, who directed research in the area, opened the archaeological zone of Cuicuilco to the public. When Noguera left the zone in 1949, he left records on the construction of a museum-camp built in 1948 by architect Luis MacGregor.

The Cuicuilco Site Museum was officially inaugurated in 1970. Today it has four permanent exhibition halls and a temporary exhibition space.







/ COLLECTIONS

The subjects included in its display are: Mesoamerica, the Neo-Volcanic Axis, flora and fauna, other Preclassic groups; chronologies, physical type, costume, daily activities, imported objects and raw materials; tools, implements, and technologies, map of the site's location in pre-Hispanic times, religion and sculpture, rites and layout of mortuary remains; everyday life through figurines and other objects. Also on exhibit is Jorge González Camarena's painting *The Eruption of Xitle* from 1947, along with aerial photos of the zone and explorations conducted in the 1920s.

/ HOW TO GET THERE

The archaeological zone and museum are on Avenida Insurgentes (no number) near the intersection with the Periférico in the Tlalpan Delegación (Borough). The easiest way to get there is to take Line 1 of the Metrobus towards El Caminero or La Joya, and get off at the Perisur or Villa Olímpica stop, the latter of which is the closest.

/ HOURS

Monday to Sunday. The museum is open 7 days a week, from 9:00 am to 4:45 pm. Guided tours are only given on Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

/ SERVICES

Guided tours in Spanish (prior reservation required). Workshops (see the INAH website). Parking, restrooms, and the sale of mini-guides are available in the archaeological zone. (All services are free of charge.)

/$ 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. Sunday: free admission for Mexicans and foreign residents.

/ PHOTOGRAPHY

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

www.inah.gob.mx
www.difusion.inah.gob.mx
@inah_mx
Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia

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TEXTS
Ramón López Valenzuela

TRANSLATION
Debra Emy Nagao Ogawa

PRODUCTION
Head of Promotion of the National Dissemination Office, INAH

PHOTOS
Miguel Ángel Morales Arroyo
Ramón López Valenzuela

DESIGN
César Enríquez

CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

INAH

/EXHIBITIONS

- Room 1

  Explanations of Mesoamerica, the Neo-Volcanic Axis, local flora and fauna, and other Preclassic sites set the stage and introduce visitors to the museum.

- Room 2

  It displays chronologies, physical types of the people and cranial deformation, clothing, foodways, and pottery through texts, images, and archaeological pieces.

- Room 3

  On exhibit are tools, imported goods, and pieces related to the city's religion.

- Room 4

  The display includes a stone sculpture and the representation of a truncated cone-shaped tomb to convey the ancient veneration of the dead. In the display case, figurines evoke daily life and social stratification. Photos show the start of archaeological exploration of the Main Platform in 1923. Finally, Jorge González Camarena's painting *The Eruption of Xitle* of 1947 depicts the cause of the city's demise.





ACCESS

ESSENTIALS

- A *Room 1*
- B *Room 2*
- C *Room 3*
- D *Room 4*

1 Vestibule
2 Book Shop
3 Temporary Exhibitions Space
4 Truncated-Cone Tomb



/ HIGHLIGHTS

It is one of the oldest museums in Mexico, for it has been seventy years since it was opened.

1947 It displays an original painting by Jorge González Camarena, *The Eruption of Xitle* of 1947.

It is surrounded by one of Mexico City's nature reserves.

A Preclassic burial is on display within in the mock of a truncated cone-shaped tomb, a burial system typical of Cuicuilco.





/ Cuicuilco is one of the foremost archaeological zones from the Preclassic in the Central Highlands for its monumental architecture.

