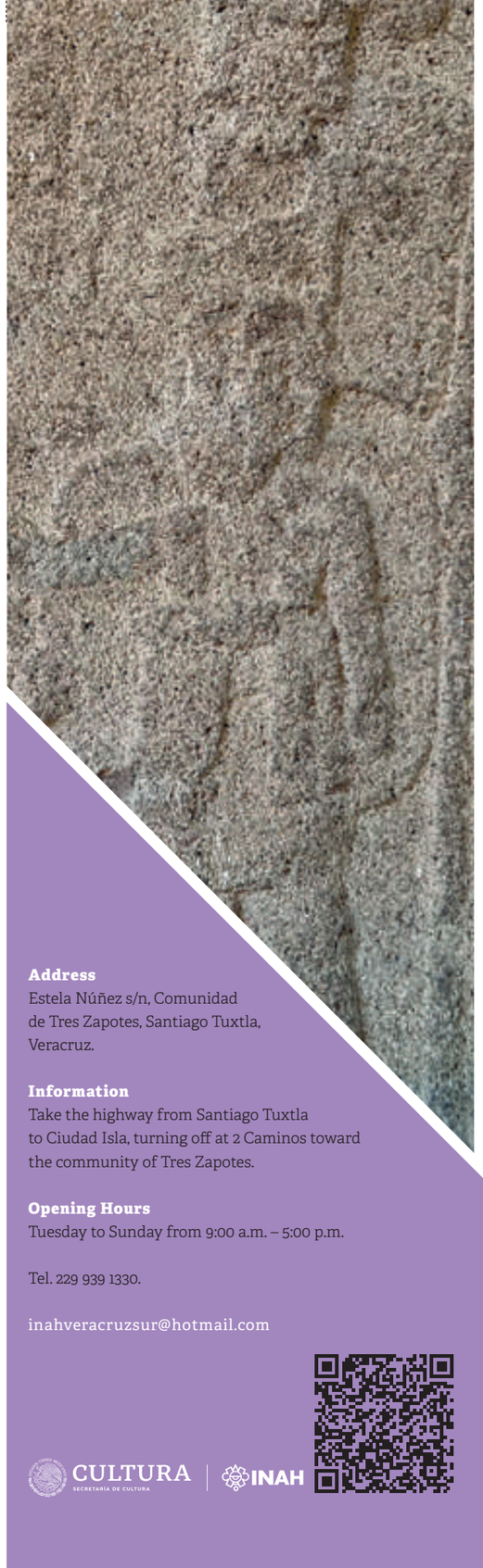


SETTING OF TRES ZAPOTES

Most of the settlement is concentrated on the west bank of the Hueyapan stream, on the plain and a terrace of sedimentary and volcanic deposits. Stratigraphic studies show that the community of Tres Zapotes was affected by one or several volcanic eruptions from the San Martín volcano. They settled on terraces to protect themselves from flooding.

MOTHER CULTURE

- This area continued to be occupied until 900 A.D., in what is known as the Classic period. It was formed of three main groups of earth mounds, distributed over an area of approximately 2 kilometers.
- The archeological zone became important in 1862, when explorer José M. Melgar y Serrano wrote a report on the finding of the first colossal Olmec head in a journal published by the Mexican Geographic Society. This head was found by a farmer in 1853, initiating the research and study of monumental art from the so-called mother culture.
- The word Olmec comes from Nahuatl and means “inhabitants of the land of rubber.”



Address
Estela Núñez s/n, Comunidad de Tres Zapotes, Santiago Tuxtla, Veracruz.

Information
Take the highway from Santiago Tuxtla to Ciudad Isla, turning off at 2 Caminos toward the community of Tres Zapotes.

Opening Hours
Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tel. 229 939 1330.

inahveracruzsur@hotmail.com

CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA
INAH

IMPORTANCE OF THE CULTURE

Many achievements have been attributed to the Olmecs, above all in art (important elements being the use of precious stones such as jade and serpentinite) and architecture. They also used the Panama rubber tree to make latex balls, as well as making great strides in the areas of religion, art, science, economic, and politics. The Olmecs believed almost every animal to be a god, relating them with natural elements.

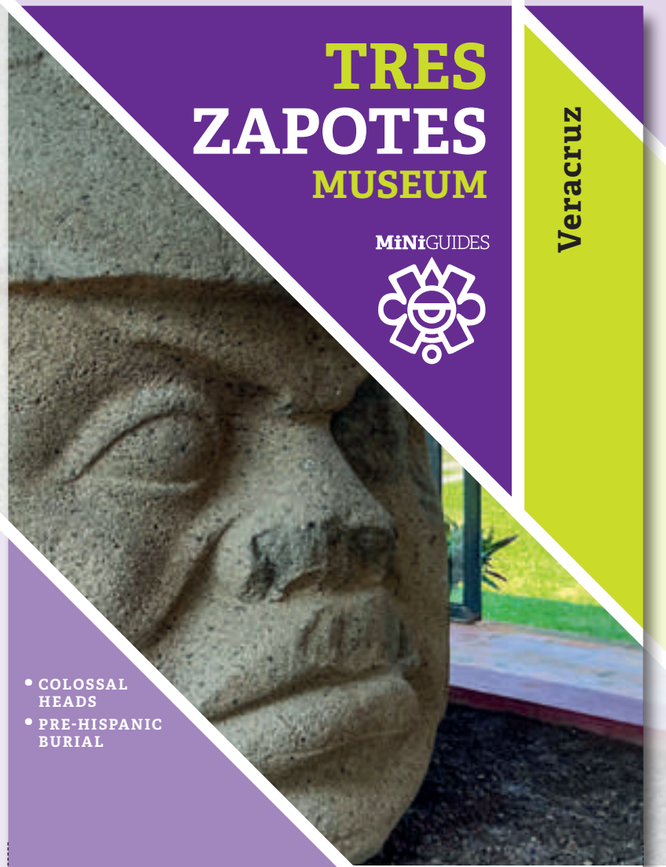




TRES ZAPOTES MUSEUM

MiNiGUIDES

Veracruz



- COLOSSAL HEADS
- PRE-HISPANIC BURIAL

THE OLMEC CULTURE

Once considered the first culture, there are currently few archeologists who maintain that the Olmecs were the mother culture of Mesoamerica.

The Olmec timeline runs from the Early Preclassic (1700-900 B.C.) to the Middle Preclassic (900-400 B.C.). They flourished on the Gulf of Mexico coast in the south of Veracruz and the northwest of Tabasco and at sites in the highlands and on the Pacific coast, extending their influence as far as Central America.

EVOLUTION OF THE MUSEUM

The first museum design was provided by architect Jorge Agostini and consisted of roofed and open modules without walls or windows. This building was remodeled in 2007, with a design that better favored preservation of the stone collection, placing roofs on the open areas and installing large windows.

New museum signs were created by specialists, the collection on display was increased, and a scale model of the pre-Hispanic city was designed in perfect alignment with the site, which can be visited at any time of the year.

The archeological zone is famous for having 1 of the 17 colossal Olmec heads, the stela with one of the oldest long-count calendar inscriptions, and for being one of the three most important Olmec sites on the Gulf coast.

YOUR MUSEUM MINI GUIDE

Colossal Importance

This museum holds one of the stelas with the oldest calendar inscriptions in Mesoamerica, the first colossal head discovered, and other relics of these extraordinary sculptors and goldsmiths from the first civilization.





Monumental Stela
Stela A is the largest, at 5.31 meters tall. It is the only one made of volcanic breccia; nearly all of them are made of basalt.



Altar Trio

There are three monuments that formed part of an altar. The monument to duality shows a skull and a toad, with a head and some arms; the head appears to be wearing a mask.

Monument to Duality
Skull representing night, with a toad on the other side representing day.









Scale model of the archeological zone of Tres Zapotes





Monuments F and G are spikes topped by (human or feline) heads and arms.



Head
This is either an unfinished work or possibly an Olmec head wearing a mask.





Burials from the Classic Period

Burials from the Classic period are shown beneath a glass floor.



Gallery 2

Here, we find pieces from the Classic period, including axes and beads from necklaces and bracelets made of serpentinite (this green stone was highly prized).

Gallery 1 – Preclassic Period

These monumental pieces are of note:

- Stela D
- Stela A
- Monument G
- Hueyapan Head or Monument A
- Monument 44
- Stela C
- Burial

The sculptural collection on display includes a colossal head known as the Hueyapan Head or Monument A. Stela C, the museum's most important piece, includes the full calendar count and shows the date 32 B.C., considered one of the oldest dates in the Americas. To be precise, it is August 14, 32 B.C. in our calendar.

Stela D
Monument D in Gallery 1 is a striking stela depicting 4 figures in an initiation ceremony, which was discovered in Tres Zapotes in 1925.

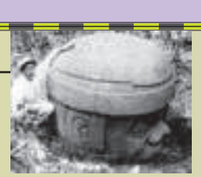
NOT TO BE MISSED

1. Gallery 1 for the Preclassic period includes this site museum's colossal Hueyapan Head or Monument A. The Hueyapan Head stands 1.47 meters tall and has a slightly square shape.
2. Effectively being the first Olmec head discovered, its discovery revealed Olmec monumental art to the world.

IMPORTANT MOMENTS

100 A.D. to 900 A.D.
This area was occupied until what is known as the Classic period.

1862
The archeological zone became important when explorer José M. Melgar y Serrano published the finding of the first colossal Olmec head, discovered by a farmer.



1939
Archeologist Matthew Stirling discovered the lower half of Stela C in Tres Zapotes.



1975
Inauguration of the Tres Zapotes site museum.

1990s
Three human burials were discovered by archeologist Christopher A. Pool from the University of Kentucky. Two of them were children and one was an adult.

2007
The museum was remodeled with a beautiful mural on its facade, including the open mouth of a jaguar at the entrance.

