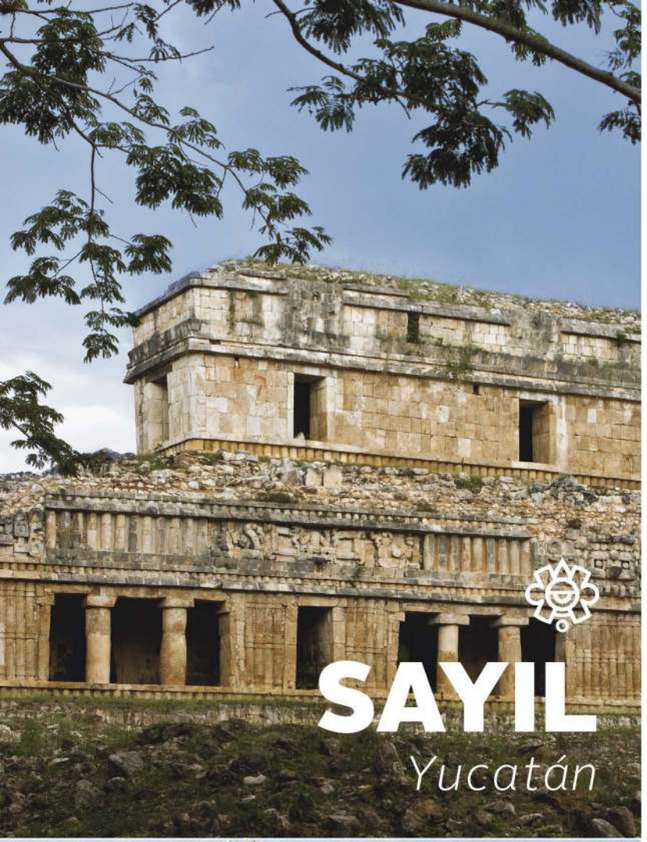


SAYIL
Yucatán

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

The city of Sayil was built in a valley of agriculturally suitable lands near the end of the Late Classic and Early Terminal Classic period (800 AD to 950 AD). It is estimated that it streched over 5 square kilometers (1.9 square miles) and that, between the ***8th and 10th*** *centuries AD (Its period of occupation) held a population of 10,000 inhabitants. Archaeological evidence suggests that its inhabitants first settled on a site known as Chaak II, located a few kilometers from the Palacio Norte (North Palace), where there is one of the few sources of fresh water in the region:* ***Chaak Cave****.*

The fact that the ancient Mayas preferred to settle in the valley (where the soil was more fertile), than where they had access to the water, tells us how important ***agriculture*** *was for its inhabitants, who farmed in plots, in city fields and in the adjacent valleys.*

Stelae *were erected depicting important lords, probably the rulers of the city. However, archaeological evidence also suggests that they ruled, at least in part, by sharing political and religious power with other lineages.*



TOPONYM	"Place of the leafcutter ants"
CULTURE	Maya
PERIOD	Classic
TIMESPAN	800 AD - 1000 AD

GETTING THERE

From Merida take road 261 towards Campeche, until you reach the junction of State highway 31 (road to Puuc route).

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Sunday, 8am to 5pm.

ADMISSIONS

The cost of admission is the one established by the Federal Law of Rights. Free admission for children under 13 years of age, students and teachers with valid credential, senior citizens, retirees, pensioners, disabled, as well as workers and researchers of the INAH.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A permit is required for professional cameras and tripod use. The use of video cameras costs is the one established by the Federal Law of Rights.

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

TEXTS
José Huchim
Lourdes Toscano

TRANSLATION
Victoria Padilla Bernal

PRODUCTION
Head of Comunications of the National office of Broadcasting, INAH

PHOTOGRAPHS
©CPTM/Foto:
Ricardo Espinosa-reo
Sergio Autrey / Raíces
Carlos Blanco / Raíces
Guillermo Aldana / Raíces

DESIGN
Latex / Manuel Cózar

CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

INAH



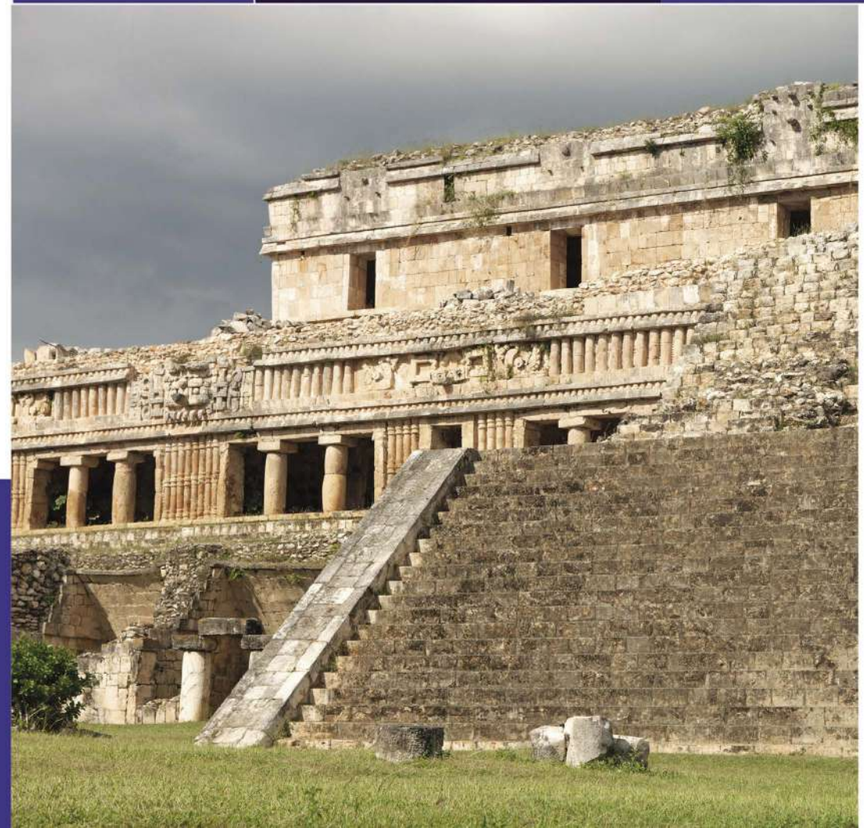
DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

Stela 9 or Nohochkep

Stela 9, also known as the Nohochkep, is located a few meters south of El Mirador. Although eroded in its upper part, it depicts a naked man with a phallus of excessive proportions, possibly related to rituals of fertility and abundance.

Is worth noting that, for the Mayas not only the fertility of farmland was important, but also the fertility of men and women, as a large number of children means a greater work force.

The city of Sayil is located on the fertile lands of the valley. A city where the skill of Mayan architects can be seen in its elaborate three-storey palace.



OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

Gran Palacio or Palacio Norte (Great Palace or North Palace)

The North Palace is an impressive multi-room building located at the north end of the settlement. It was built over several periods, yet the Maya managed to keep it unified by reproducing the porticos, entrances, false corridors, columns and mascarons with snake motifs found on the second level. This solution has been considered a tenet of architectural design. The columns are the most outstanding element of the entire building, as they are not only present in the porticos, but are found throughout the palace in the form of reeds. Thanks to all these considerations, Sayil's builders managed to create harmony between the different stages of construction.

The palace was the center of the political, administrative and religious activity of the city, though the existence of a kitchen in the northwest corner indicates that the building also served as a dwelling for the rulers.

ARCHITECTURE

The city comprises of several important groups of masonry structures connected by stone roads following a north-south axis of almost a kilometer and a half (approximately 0.9 miles). Between the groups there were palm and stick houses. Among these are large tracts of fertile land, which must have been used for crops for local consumption. This is why the Puuc cities were considered true garden cities.

Although Sayil's architects had great design achievements, construction techniques and materials are of lower quality than those of neighboring sites such as Labná, Kabah and even Xlapak.





MUST-SEE

- A *Great Palace*
- B *Mirador Complex*
- C *South Palace*

1 Temple of the Hieroglyphic Door Jambs
2 Stela 9

VANTAGE POINT
The extensive tropical forest that surrounds Sayil does not allow a good view of the building. However, from the esplanade that extends to the south of the Great Palace we have the best view.



DID YOU KNOW...?

- *In 1914, when Inspector Juan Martinez Hernandez visited the site, he found a Mr. Gregorio Caamal living in the rooms of the second level of the Palace.*
- *In the 1980s, El Mirador and its surrounding buildings were thought to be the city's marketplace, but soil chemistry refuted this hypothesis.*
- *Its inhabitants possibly lived in stone houses and not in houses made of perishable materials like in most sites.*
- *A buried patio was found inside the Palace of Sayil.*
- *In the rooms of the lower levels of the palace there are niches that reproduce, on a smaller scale, the columned porticos.*

SOME KEY NUMBERS

70 Its range of influence is estimated at more than 70 square kilometers (approximately 27 square miles).

10,000 The population reached 10,000 in its core and 7,000 in the periphery.

200 It was occupied for 200 years, which makes it one of the cities that were inhabited for least time in the Puuc region.

100 To assemble the masks of the Great Palace, the Maya used more than 100 pieces.

YOU CAN'T MISS...

- While traveling the Puuc route, do not miss the chance to visit the town of Santa Elena. One of the main attractions of the village is its 16th century church, where you will find a museum that holds the only mummies ever found in the region.
- *Los Ceibos* pottery workshop, located in Muna, makes excellent crafts and reproductions of archaeological pieces, and its owners have helped recover the pre-Columbian tradition of polychrome pottery.