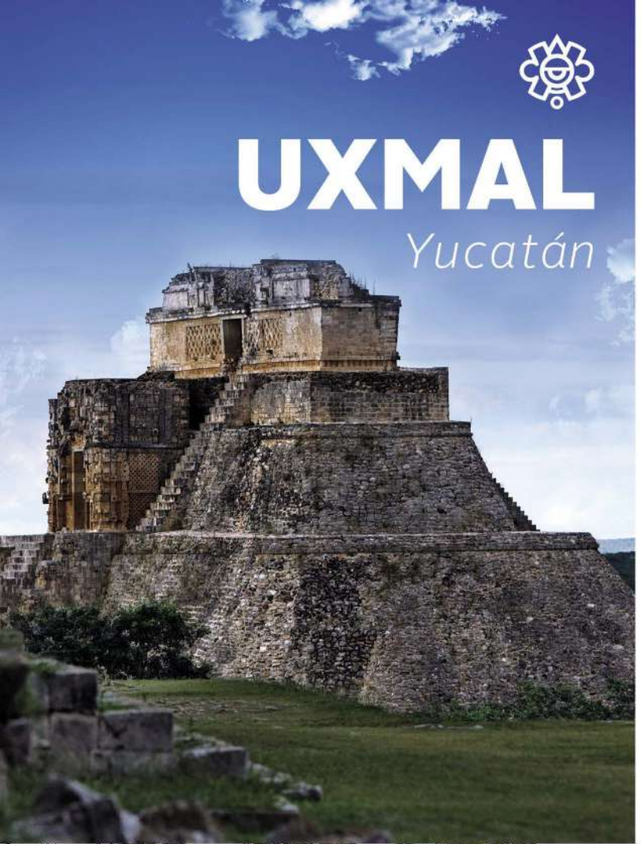


UXMAL

Yucatán

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

Like in the case of many pre-Columbian cities, the current conformation of Uxmal is the result of a long period of occupation that dates back to 800 BC. However, the first groups of ***monumental architecture*** *found are dated around 400 AD. These show the undeniable mark of the Guatemalan Petén tradition. This can be seen in the Northern Group and the Great Pyramid.*

Between the years 750 and 900 AD the city reached its peak and became the capital of a vast region known as ***Puuc****. Its power can be seen in an extensive architectural program that, unlike Petén, keeps within the human scale and is characterized by elaborate stone mosaics that decorated its buildings.*

Commercial relations with other regions of Mesoamerica intensified during this period, as materials like obsidian, from the Center of Mexico and from Guatemala and turquoise from the southwest of the United States of America were found.

Around 874 AD, the city was conquered by the people of Chichén Itzá, who built a new administrative center in the southwest area of the site; however, it did not compare to the majestic arrangements of the Late Classic period. Likewise, they remodeled the facades of the main buildings, like in the case of the ***Cuadrángulo de las Monjas*** *(the Nunnery Quadrangle) and incorporated their own icons, like the mask of Tláloc and the bicephalic snake.*

The Itzaes built only a few monumental groups. In contrast, domestic structures built with the stones of earlier buildings –possibly from the removed facades– flourished. These structures are located both inside and outside the walled area.

TOPONYM	"The three times built or occupied" or "the place abundantly harvested." The Kak'nal glyph, possibly the emblem of the city, is interpreted as "Place of fire" or "House of fire."
CULTURE	Maya
PERIOD	Classic
TIMESPAN	800 BC 1100 AD

GETTING THERE

The site is located 62 kilometers (approximately 38.5 miles) southwest of the city of Mérida, Yucatán, and can be reached by federal highway number 261.

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Sunday, from 8am to 5pm.

ADMISSIONS

The cost of admission is the one established annually by the Federal Law of Rights. Credit and debit cards are accepted. 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

For the use of any recording device there is a fee authorized by the Ministry of Finance. The taking of non-professional photographs, without a tripod, has no cost.

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CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

INAH



DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

Towards the northeast side of the steps of the **Great Platform** is a group of masonry buildings arranged in an L shape, the most important one is located to the north, its hierarchy visibly established by its large size and its position at the highest elevation. Inside it there is a vault lid where the Maya depicted a deity in the form of a red bird.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of this group is that its architectural style and organization indicate that it was not built by people native to the city of Uxmal. A more detailed exam reveals cylindrical columns that frame the entries to the interior of the enclosures. These columns are made with multiple rectangular pieces and were more commonly found in the region of the Chenes, northeast of Campeche.





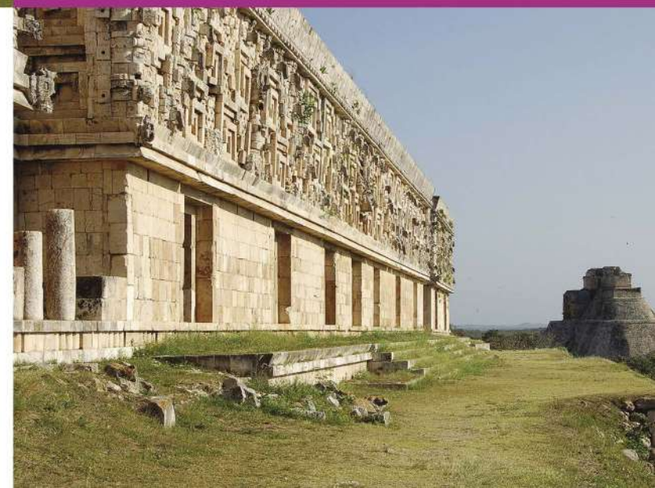
OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

The Governor's Palace

From the top of a huge platform system, this grand building dominates all of Uxmal (and Puuc). Many consider it the most extraordinary example of pre-Columbian architecture in America.

Its facade is notable due to its delicate work of carved stone comparable to filigree, showing lattices, Chaac masks and depictions of rulers. However, the most notorious aspect is that the whole palace is oriented so that it can record the apparent movement of the planet Venus, and those declinations of the Sun that mark the solstices.

Visiting Uxmal, capital of the country of the hills, is like traveling in time back to the years of splendor of one of the most incredible Mayan cities in history.



ARCHITECTURE

The urban configuration of the settlement is defined by a wall 5 kilometers (approximately 3.2 miles) long and 1.70 meters (approximately 5.5 feet) high. This wall surrounds the city in order to protect the administrative center, where several palace-type structures are concentrated; the Governor's Palace being the most notable one. There are also configurations that have a central courtyard, known as quadrangle. Among these are: Las Monjas, Los Pájaros, El Cementerio and El Palomar. And, of course, there has to be pyramidal temples dedicated to religious worship, such as: the Adivino (the Pyramid of the Dwarf), the South Temple and the Casa de la Vieja.

The term Puuc inevitably evokes the elaborate stone mosaics that the Mayas used in the buildings of Uxmal, a superlative example of this architectural feature. Among the most frequent designs there are: lattices, frets, columns, snakes, birds, masks of Chaak, masks of Tláloc, jaguars, owls, human figures, and even huts.

However, the greatest contribution of the Puuc architecture was its construction system, thanks to which the Maya were able to create larger vaults, changing the interaction of man with his built environment by allowing the everyday use of buildings.

WHERE CAN I SEE THE CITY?

One of the best lookouts of the site is located in the great platform of the Governor's Palace, either next to the Casa de las Tortugas (House of the Turtles) or higher in the north door of the Palace. From there you can see the northern sector of the site and impressive buildings such as the Ballcourt, The Nunnery Quadrangle and the Pyramid of the Dwarf. Also, from the north building of The Nunnery Quadrangle you can see the Governor's Palace and the pyramid of the Guacamaya.





MUST-SEE

- A *The Governor's Palace*
- B *The Nunnery Quadrangle*
- C *Pyramid of the Dwarf*

1 North Group
2 Northeast Group
3 Platform
4 Ballcourt
5 Cemetery Group
6 El Palomar
7 West Group
8 South Temple
9 The Great Pyramid
10 Chimez Temple
11 La Casa de la Vieja



DID YOU KNOW...?

- *According to the legend of the dwarf of Uxmal, the Pyramid of the Dwarf was built in a single night.*
- *To avoid the displeasure of the Empress Carlota, several phallic decorations were removed from various structures of the site before her visit.*
- *The Nunnery Quadrangle represents a gigantic timeline of the Mayan universe.*
- *According to hieroglyphic inscriptions, the Governor's House, Ballcourt and Nunnery Quadrangle were built during the reign of Lord Chaak.*
- *All palace-type structures have a chultun (open cistern).*

SOME KEY NUMBERS

15 The archaeological site stretches for 15 square kilometers.

30,000 It had 30,000 inhabitants at its highest peak.

20,000 The Grand Governor's Platform covers an area of 20,000 square meters (approximately 215,278 square feet), akin to that of the Zócalo of Mexico City.

150 For the city to survive, it depended on more than a dozen artificial lakes and over 150 chultunes.

150 In the vicinity of the Governor's Palace, more than 150 species of medicinal plants have been found; they were likely cultivated by the ancient Mayas.

YOU CAN'T MISS...

- While walking the Puuc route, do not miss the chance to visit the town of Santa Elena. One of the main attractions of this 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 vessels.