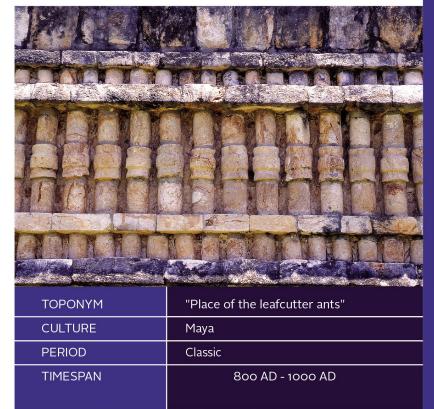


BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

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.





From Merida take road

261 towards Campeche,

State highway 31 (road

() OPENING HOURS

until you reach the

junction of

to Puuc route).

Monday to Sunday,

8am to 5pm.

the Federal Law of

Rights. Free admission

years of age, students

and teachers with valid

researchers of the INAH.

credential, senior

for children under 13



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

citizens, retirees, oensioners, disabled, as www.inah.gob.mx well as workers and www.difusion.inah.gob.mx

@inah_mx

finstituto 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





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.

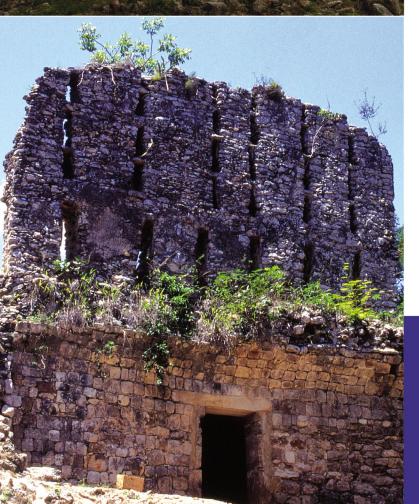


OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

Q 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.

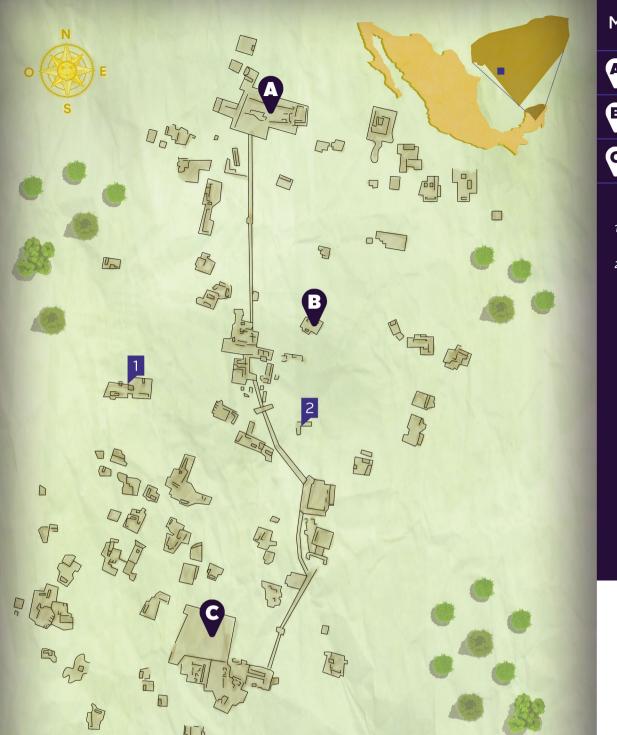


ARCHITECTURE

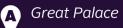
The city comprises of several important groups of masonry structures connected by stone roads following a north-south axis of almost a kilometer and a half (approximately 0.9 miles). Between the groups there were palm and stick houses. Among these are large tracts of fertile land, which must have been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

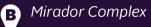
Although Sayil's architects had great design achievements, construction techniques and materials are of lower quality than those of neighboring sites such as Labná, Kabah and even Xlapak.













- Temple of the Hieroglyphic Door Jambs
- 2 Stela 9

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



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



The population reached 10,000 in its core and 7,000 in 10.000 the periphery.



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



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

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.

