

# MAYA ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM FORT SAN MIGUEL

Campeche

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Seven Years' War made Spain declare war on England. The situation in the Yucatán Peninsula grew particularly tense. As the peninsula closing off the other end of the Gulf of Mexico, its strategic location made it a target for English attacks.

Therefore, in 1777 the governor of the port of San Francisco de Campeche, Antonio Olivier, wrote to the king of Spain that the settlement was impossible to defend from England's expansionist ambitions. Engineer and infantry brigadier Agustín Crame presented the Spanish Crown with a plan for the construction of six military forts that included Fort San Miguel, which was built on the hill of Buenavista, southwest of the city.

Construction was completed in 1779 and included the coastal batteries of San Luis and San Fernando, bastions that served to prevent a possible enemy landing and to block inland incursions south of the city. The work was supervised by the king's lieutenant, Leandro Poblaciones.

Later it remained under the control of the then Ministry of War. It was abandoned for a while and in 1963 rehabilitation work was begun and in 1965 it was inaugurated as the Museum of Ships and Seamanship Fort San Miguel. In 1975 the museum was converted into the Museum of Archaeology. Later, in 1999, a new curatorial approach and installation enriched the collection with pieces from diverse archaeological zones throughout the state of Campeche. It was reopened as the Maya Archaeological Museum Fort San Miguel.



### HOW TO GET THERE

From the city of Campeche, take Avenida Escénica, on the coastal avenue or boardwalk toward Lerma.

### SERVICES

Parking, restrooms, guided tours, publications and reproductions available for sale.

### 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.

### ADMISSION

\$55.00 (pesos). Free admission on Sundays \*, also for seniors over 60, children under 13, retirees and pensioners, teachers and students, people with disabilities, INAH personnel.

### HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm  
Entrance permitted only until 5:30 pm

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CULTURA  
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA



INAH

## MAIN ATTRACTION

Tomb of Jaguar Claw

This mortuary complex, which dates to the late seventh century, consisted of a vaulted chamber and an antechamber with the bodies of an adolescent and a young woman, companions to the tomb's main occupant, the ruler of Calakmul, Jaguar Claw. The lord's corpse rested at the back of the main chamber on a decorated litter, with another companion buried with him. His body had been wrapped in cloth and a feline pelt as a mummy bundle, accompanied by massive strands of jadeite and Spondylus shell beads, ceramics bearing the lord's name, and a spectacular jadeite mask.

This group of pieces comes from one of the most elaborate tombs found to date in the Maya region. The tomb's distinctive features have led archaeologists to believe that Jaguar Claw, one of the most powerful leaders of the Serpent Head kingdom, played a key role in planning his final resting place.

Where to see the tomb?

Room V



## COLLECTIONS

It has two major collections: the first includes the jadeite mosaic masks from the tombs of the great lords of Calakmul; the second is the collection of funerary figurines from the island of Jaina. Other major pieces include the lidded iguana vessel and the bowl with lid in the shape of the head of the Black Jaguar or Night Sun, both from the archaeological zone of Becan, and pieces evoking the complex world of religious ideas expressed in Maya iconography. The drum-shaped stone sculpture from the House of the Itzáes or Edzná shows a queen related to the Serpent Head kingdom (Calakmul). Also on display is the enigmatic Stela 9 carved from a semi-schist block of volcanic origin found at the archaeological zone of Calakmul and the altar from the nearby site of Uxul, whose inscriptions make this piece one of the most important sources of Maya writing from the cultural region known as the Petén.

## SIEGES

- 1824 Troops marching from Mérida, opposing Campeche's declaration of war against Spain.
- 1840 Troops marching from Mérida, in opposition to the relief from troops in the war of Texas.
- 1842 Besieged by General Antonio López de Santa Anna, it was turned into his headquarters during the military intervention that was meant to impose centralism by force.
- 1848 During de Caste war, maya rebels came closer non belligerently.
- 1857 Troops marching from Mérida against Campeche's emancipation from Yucatán.
- 1864 Fought against Yucatecan troops allied with the French, in favor of the Empire.
- 1867 Liberal troops claimed it for the Republic.

# /EXHIBITIONS

## ● I. The Maya World

This space has a chronological chart showing Maya occupation in time and space from 1500 BC to AD 1500. Stucco sculptures representing the physical features of the ancient Maya are on display, as well as customs to promote elongated heads (cranial deformation) and crossed eyes, considered features of beauty.

## ● II. Diversity

Maya trade is represented through commercial goods such as pottery, Codex-style vessels, plates, stamps, and other pieces made of diverse materials, such as alabaster, jade, and volcanic stone from other regions of Mesoamerica. One piece alludes to wooden boats used by the ancient Mayas to sail on rivers, lakes, and seas for trade. On land, merchants traveled on extensive road networks used for commercial activities.

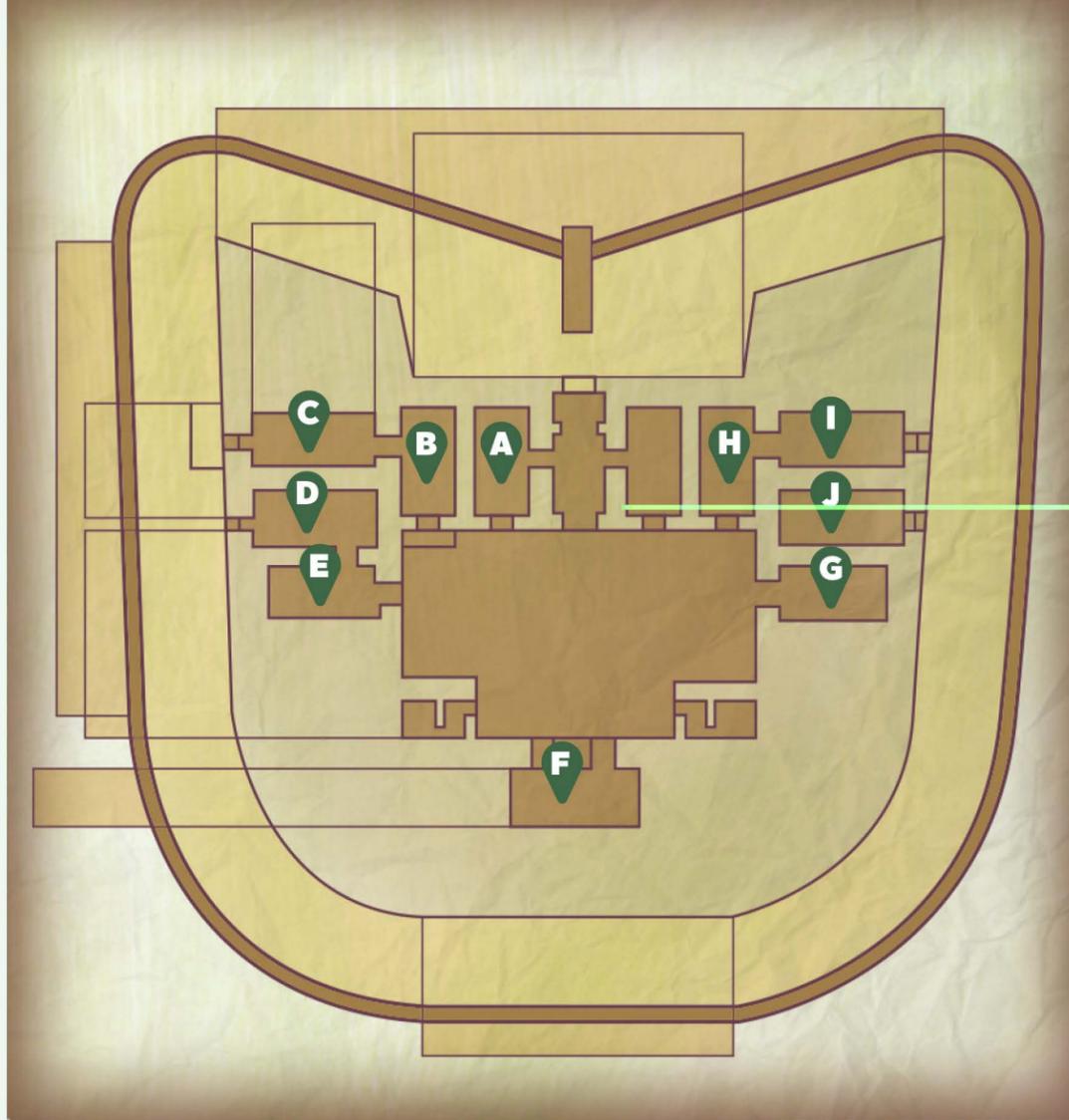
## ● III. City Life

Here limestone architectural elements are exhibited, such as stelae, columns, drums, and lintels, which speak of the sophistication of Maya builders and the construction materials and colors they used in their cities.

The display suggests the stark difference between magnificent ceremonial centers and the simple dwellings of the lowest ranking members of society, who no doubt participated in the construction of massive pre-Hispanic cities.



/Fort San Miguel is one of the most emblematic examples of viceregal military architecture and it houses an impressive collection of the foremost archaeological pieces of Pre-Columbian Maya culture from Campeche.



## ESSENTIALS

- A** I. The Maya World
- B** II. Diversity
- C** III. City Life
- D** IV. Jaina, the House of Water
- E** V. Calakmul, Transcending Death
- F** VI. The Gods
- G** VII. Time
- H** VIII. Power and Warfare
- I** IX. The Cycle of Life
- J** X. Campeche Archaeology



## ● VI. The Gods

Religion played an important role in Maya society. Natural elements were deified and depicted with animal characteristics in codices and architectural features. The people communed with the gods through ceremonies involving the use of incense burners and vessels with images of animals such as monkeys and vultures, in addition to musical instruments such as clay flutes and the *tunkul*, a hollowed out trunk used as a percussion instrument, producing harmonious sounds to please the gods.

## ● VII. Time

This gallery presents a chart explaining Maya calendars used in pre-Hispanic times to mark the seasons of the year, calculate astronomical events, and schedule religious rites. The Mayas recorded time simultaneously with two calendars that together formed the Calendar Round constituting a 52-year century or cycle. The 260-day calendar was sacred and divinatory in nature, while the 365-day calendar was based on the sun's movement and served to mark civil events.

## ● VIII. Power and Warfare

This room explains warfare among the ancient Mayas and the importance of warriors, as well as war captures and slaves in Maya society. Sculptures, figurines from Jaina, and other lithic pieces used as weapons or as ritual implements are on display here.

## ● IX. The Cycle of Life

This space presents an overview of life among the ancient Mayas, with figures of men and women at different stages of life, animals that were part of their natural and domestic surroundings, skulls that show customs such as dental and cranial modification for status and beauty; and tools to make food, such as grinding stones. We can also see the impressive basalt stela from Calakmul, representing a lavishly dressed man and woman.

## ● X. Campeche Archaeology

This room has a temporary exhibition of pottery from diverse regions of Mesoamerica that display shared deities and myths, although represented with different characteristics and known by different names. The pieces are from various regions in ancient Mexico where civilization or high culture developed prior to the arrival of Europeans to the New World. Noteworthy is the stela from Bilinkok, Campeche, a piece of limestone that shows a synthesis of the life-death cycle through the representation of a skeleton with a phallus.

## ● IV. Jaina, House in the Water

This gallery shows major aspects of the island of Jaina, such as its figurines, which reflect Maya society through myriad representations: children, adults, elders, of both genders and diverse social ranks. Similarly, the reconstruction of a burial in a clay vessel illustrates the funerary customs of the site. The figurines also reveal details of personal ornament, such as seashell jewelry, and ritual instruments, such as obsidian eccentrics.

## ● V. Calakmul, Transcending Death

This room speaks of Maya funerary customs from Calakmul, with the representation of the tomb of Jaguar Claw, an important dignitary from this Maya city, and his companion. Both bodies were dressed in lavish attire with pieces of jade and shell, and other ritual elements such as pottery vessels and cups, and stingray spines for autosacrifice.

