



Majowie
(Polish)

Maya
(Romanian)

Maja
(Slovenian)

Maya
(Spanish)

Maya
(Portuguese)

Majai
(Lithuanian)

The Mayans
(English)

Маяа
(Mongolian)



Mayo
(Czech)

Майя
(Russian)

Maya
(Swedish)

Maya
(German)

Maya
(French)

Mezoamerica

The ancient Maya civilisation lived between 2000 BCE* to around 1500 AD*.

They lived in Mezoamerica.

Now it is Southern Mexico and Central America.



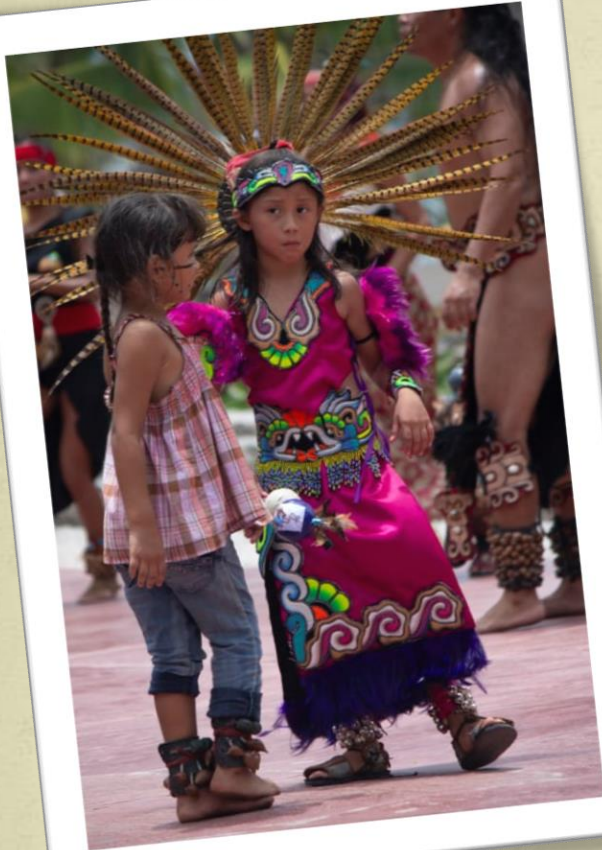
*BCE - is short for Before the Common (or Current) Era

*AD - anno Domini - means "in [the] year of [the] Lord"

Modern Mayans

The modern Mayans still live within their old empire, which consists of the countries of Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Southern Mexico.

Although they were conquered by the Spaniards during the 16th century, the Mayan's culture, traditions and beliefs remained the same as their ancestors'.



The Maya area

Belize

Guatemala



El Salvador

Honduras

Southern Mexico

The Mayas

Calendar

Counting time was very important to the Maya. In order to do that, they created calendars and used them to record movements of sun, moon, stars and planets.

They had two types of calendars. One of them was for religion and had 260 days a year, and the other one for farming with 365 days a year...



Hieroglyphs and Codices

The ancient Maya were writing books, but they did not use an alphabet. Instead they were using a system of hieroglyphs.



The Maya were making books from the bark of fig trees.

They called the books codices (singular *codex*).

The Maya scribes were writing about history or gods.



Fig tree

Farming

The ancient Maya were great farmers. They grew avocados, beans, chilli, squash and corn.

Corn was a very important part of the Mayans diet.

For example, they were eating flat bread made of corn, which today we call tortillas.



corn



corn tortillas

Chocolate

cacao tree

cocoa

bitter

cacao beans



chocolaty

unsweetened

chocolate drink

cacao

The Maya's favourite and very precious drink was chocolate drink.

It was a long process to prepare such a delicious beverage.



cacao beans

First, they had to collect cacao beans from cacao trees. Then, they dried the beans, roasted them, removed the shells and milled into paste. The Maya often mixed the paste with different kind of spices, for instance, chilli peppers.



chilli peppers



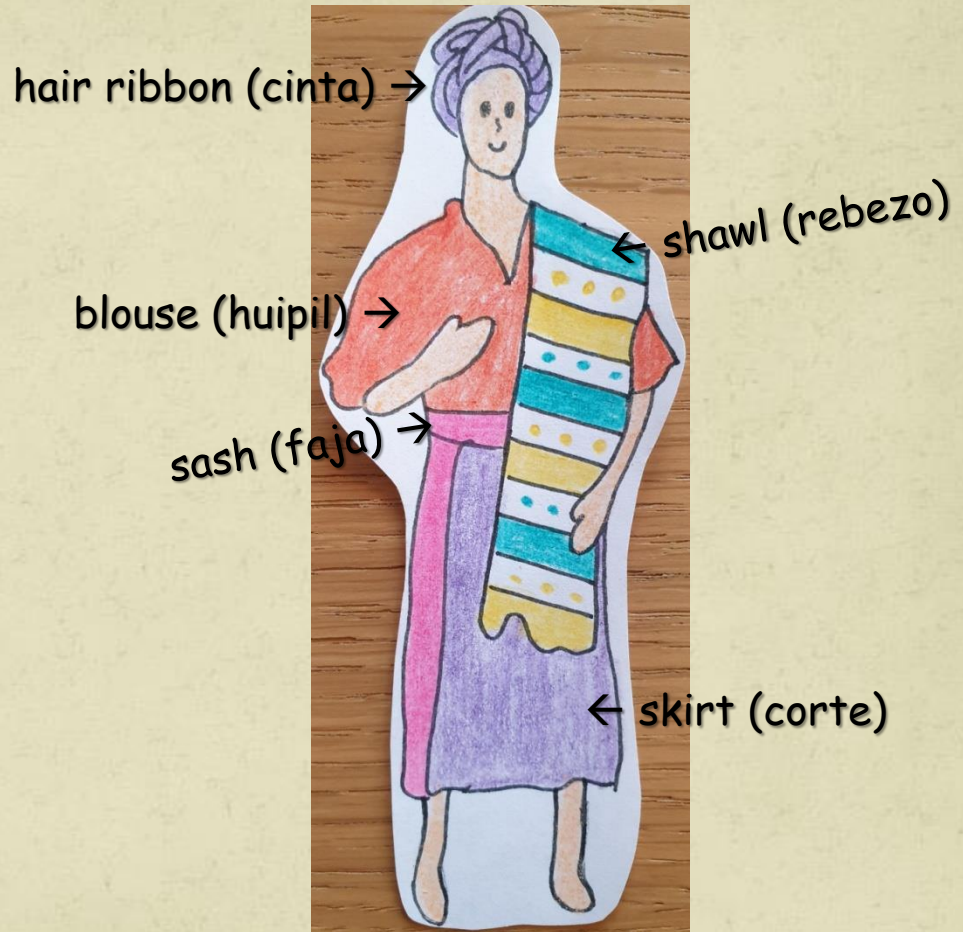
The Maya Fashion



The ancient Maya women

Women wore loose and colourful clothes that they could wrap around them. They had blouses called *huipil* and long skirts - *corte*.

The Maya women also added a woven belt or sash. It was a long and very colourful scarf.



The ancient Maya men

Men might wear loincloths wrapped around the body and between legs.

These loincloths were about ten feet long and ten inches wide.

Rich Maya people had their loincloths decorated with feathers.



The Maya warriors



The warriors wore feathered headdresses, often bright or dark to camouflage.

Most of the warriors clothes were colourful and decorated, some of them even had masks on during a war.

The Maya warriors often wore skins of dangerous animals, such as jaguars.

Mayan Masks



The ancient Maya wore masks on many different occasions.

They used masks whilst at war, not only to protect themselves but also to intimidate their opponents.



The Maya also wore masks during weddings and birth ceremonies.

The masks were very colourful and often portrayed animals or gods.



Some masks were used to decorate the Mayan dead kings' faces.

This mask is an example of a mask made of pieces of jade
(hard, green stone) with seashells eyes.



The Mayan gods

Xaman Ek
(god of travelers)

Kinich Ahau
(the sun god)

Itzmana
(a creator god)

Maize God

The ancient Maya believed in a great number of different gods. Their gods were associated with every aspects of their life. They worshipped gods of life and death, youth, thunder, ball game, pregnant women, infant, wild nature, agriculture and many, many more.

Yum Cimil
(god of death)

Ix Chel
(goddess of medicine)

Chaac
(god of rain)

Yum Kaax
(god of forests)

Ek Chuah
(god of war)



The Mayan pyramids

The Mayan are well known for their stately and tall pyramids.

There were two types of pyramids.

The first one had a temple on top, where religious ceremonies were held.

The second type was a sacred pyramid, and each served a different god. The pyramids had very steep steps to make the journey to the top more difficult.

