

The aztec



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The Aztec

The Aztec was a culture that dominated the Valley of Mexico in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. All the Nahuatl-speaking peoples in the Valley of Mexico were Aztecs, while the culture that dominated the area called the Tenochca. At the time of the European conquest, they called themselves either " Tenochca" or " Toltec," which was the name assumed by the bearers of the Classic Mesoamerican culture. Sadly, the many of the Aztec didn't survive after the arrival of the Europeans. But during the earlier years, the Aztec became one of the most advanced civilizations because of their religion, war, and agriculture.

In the Aztec religion, they performed human sacrifices for the gods daily. Sacrifice was one of the main events in the Aztec religion. They believed that the people being sacrificed, were their messengers to the gods. In basic ceremonies, slaves or victims of war were used to sacrifice. But in more important ceremonies, people of higher rank, especially warriors, volunteered themselves. Since there were many gods, the sacrifice depended on what god they were worshiping. Sometimes, the death was drowning, burning, or beheading. In a course of a year, the death toll was about several thousands. Human sacrifices were offerings to the sun and earth so that food would grow.

The Aztecs respected their gods very much. They put their greatest efforts into making strong, beautiful temples to please their gods. Their arts had a part in their religion. They drew pictures that told about their gods. They recorded religious events with hieroglyphics and even number symbols. The Aztecs worshipped about 1, 000 gods! But they worshipped the sun god the

most. Religious ceremonies took place in a temple called a teocalli. This temple had sacred pools for ceremonial cleansing, gardens, living quarters for a priest, and racks to hold the skulls of victims. Religion played a great part in Aztec life.

Although religion was an important motivator in Aztec life, farming was the common activity. Much of Aztec life was built around farming, which was extremely necessary to keep up with the growing population. Since the land that the Aztecs farmed was not fertile enough to grow enough food to support the population, the Aztecs were forced to invent methods to increase productivity. These methods included irrigation, fertilizer, and even building terraces on hills that were previously not farmable. The truly original idea, however, was chinampas. Chinampas were floating gardens built on swamps. The process of making chinampas was a relatively simple one. First, canals were built through the marshes and swamps. Then, the mud from the canals was placed on mats, which were made from weeds and straw. Then, trees were planted at the corners. When these trees took root, they secured the chinampa firmly in place. Once the floating island was secure and useable, the Aztecs used it to plant their principal crop, corn. They also grew various vegetables, such as avocados, beans, chili peppers, squash, and tomatoes. Unfortunately, the Aztecs had no animals or machines to help them work the land. In fact, they didn't even have plows. Therefore, it was even more necessary to have soft land. Luckily for the Aztecs, the chinampas were soft enough that it was possible to plant crops with nothing but pointed sticks. War was another important subject of the Aztec civilization. The only guarantee way to be independent was to have a strong army. War to the

Aztec was an ecological and psychological necessity. Battles or wars were created as much to obtain prisoners as to gain land. Since the Aztec were constantly in battle, some thought that they were unfitted for peaceful life. The Aztec believed that their destiny was to conquer and they felt that they were chosen in a religious as well as a military sense. War soon became an art of worship for the Aztec.

The Aztecs were very advanced people in their time, along with the Maya and Inca. What if you lived in the time of the Aztecs? How would you react? Many things have yet to be discovered about the Aztec, but would you go back to know how it feels?