Chichen Itza

By Rafael, Yr.6
Chichen Itza was a large pre-Columbian built by the Maya people of the Terminal Classical period. It is located in Tinum Municipality, Yucatán state, Mexico. It was a Major focal point in the Northern Maya Lowlands and was one of the largest Maya cities. It was also possible to have been one of the mythical great cities, or Tollans as it is referred to in the Mesoamerican literature.

The city is believed to have had the most diverse population in the Maya world; a factor which may have contributed to the city’s variety of architectural styles.

Fun Fact: In 2017, Chichen Itza received over 2.6 million tourists
Establishment

The layout core of Chichen Itza site core developed during its earlier phase of occupation, between 750 and 900 AD.

Its final layout was developed after 900 AD, and the 10th century saw the rise of the Late Classic city which was centered upon the area to the southwest of the Xtoloc cenote. Having the main architecture represented by the substructures now underlying the Las Monjas and Observatario and the basal upon which they were built.
Ascendancy

Chichen Itza rose to regional prominence roughly around 600 AD (the end of the early classic period). However, it was towards the end of the Late Classic period and the beginning of the Terminal Classic when the site became a major regional capital. This was when it began to centralize and dominate political, sociocultural, economic and ideological life in the northern Maya lowlands.

As Chichen Itza started its rise to eminence, cities as the city of Yaxuna (to the east) and Coba began their suffering of decline. The two cities had been in fact mutual allies, with Yaxuna dependent upon Coba.
Architectural styles

The Puuc-Style architecture in focused on in the Old Chichen. This style of building includes the traditional mosaic-decorated upper facades characteristic of the style but are different from the architecture of the Puuc heartland in their block masonry walls.

At least one structure in the Las Monjas Group features an ornate façade and masked doorway that are typical examples of Chenes-style architecture, a style centred on a region in the north of Campeche state.
Origin of name

The Maya name “Chichen Itza” means “At the mouth of the Itza.” This originates from “chi” meaning “mouth” or “edge” and ch’en or ch’e’en, meaning "well." Itzá is the name of an ethnic lineage group that gained political and economic dominance of the northern peninsula. One possible translation for Itza is "enchanter (or enchantment) of the water," from its, “Sorcerer” and ha, “water”
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