

The Ancient Mayans

- The Ancient Mayans developed the science of astronomy, calendar systems, and hieroglyphic writing. They were also known for creating elaborate ceremonial architecture, such as pyramids, temples, palaces, and observatories. These structures were all built without metal tools.
- The Maya were skilled weavers and potters. They also cleared routes through jungles and swamps to create trade routes. This allowed them to sell and trade the goods they had made for goods they needed.
- The Mayan writing system was made up of 800 glyphs. Some of the glyphs were pictures and others represented sounds. They chiseled the glyphs into stone and inside codices.
- Codices were books that were folded like an accordion. The pages were fig bark covered in white lime and bound in jaguar skins. The Mayans wrote hundreds of these books. They contained information on history, medicine, astronomy, and their religion. The Spanish missionaries burned all but four of these books.
- The Ancient Mayans were a very religious people. Mayan actions were based on rituals and ceremonies. The Mayans had many different gods. They also had rituals. One of those rituals was human sacrifice.
- The Mayan Kings were considered to be direct descendants of the Mayan Gods. Mayan religion was divided into three parts with earth as one part, the level above the earth as another part, and the level below the earth as the third part. The level above the earth was like the Christian heaven and the level below the earth was like the Christian hell.
- The Mayan people were also skilled farmers. In order to farm, they had to clear huge sections of tropical rainforest. Groundwater was scarce in these areas, so they had to build large underground reservoirs to store the rainwater.
- The Ancient Mayans had a class society. At the top were the nobles and priests. Their middle class was made up of warriors, craftsmen, and traders. The farmers, workers and slaves were at the bottom.