

Exploring Chichén Itzá

Chichén Itzá is an ancient Mayan city built in approximately 400 CE. It is located in the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. In 2007, Chichén Itzá was named one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

Chichén Itzá translates to 'at the mouth of the well of the Itzá'. The Itzá were the group of Mayan people who lived in the area. The well refers to the complex series of underground rivers and sinkholes, or cenotes, that surround the area. The cenotes were a vital water source and many sacrifices were offered to them to appease the gods.

When you visit Chichén Itzá, the first thing you will notice is the Temple of Kukulcan. Kukulcan is a feathered snake god of the Mayans with a similar significance to a Chinese dragon. Carved serpent heads guard each set of stairs. On the spring and autumn equinox sunsets, the pyramid is designed so that Kukulcan's shadow slithers down the steps to join the snake head at the bottom.



Surrounding the main pyramid are the remains of what was once a bustling city. This includes a ball court, which was used for a highly dangerous game that involved a five kilogram ball being thrown high into the air as well as killing the losing team.

There are also temples dedicated to different gods, markets, theatres, palaces and homes. It is a place well worth visiting when you are next in Mexico!