

Geography Knowledge Organiser

Year 5

Autumn (ii)

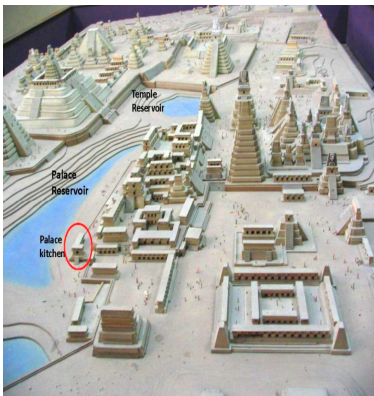
What can you find out about Yucatán Peninsula?

Substantive Knowledge – How Ancient and Modern Maya live in The Yucatán Peninsula

Maya cities were not always near rivers which required reservoir creation, filtration and purification systems which did not exist in Europe at that time.

The ancient Maya built a sophisticated rainwater collection system and created reservoirs of water. This system supplied inhabitants with enough water for several months. The Maya used mineral zeolite (from the highlands) in the treatment system to filter out harmful microorganisms and toxins. This system represents the oldest known example of a water treatment system in the Western Hemisphere. The region of the Yucatan Peninsula has no natural water sources -- no streams, lakes, rivers, or springs -- so the Maya had to figure out how to sustain large populations in this environment. They became excellent managers of rainwater, using massive systems of cisterns called chultuns to collect and store rainwater.

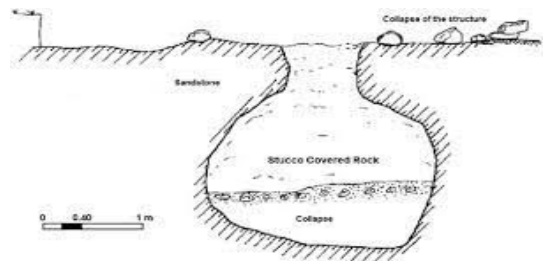
A chultun is a bottle-shaped underground storage chamber. Their entrances were surrounded by plastered areas which guided rainwater into them during the rainy seasons.



Reservoir



Filtration System



Human and physical geography of Yucatán Peninsula

The Yucatán Peninsula is located in the south eastern part of Mexico and has a tropical climate with summers that are often wetter than winters. While a majority of the inhabitants of the Yucatan Peninsula are descendants of the Maya people, the area is also very heavily populated with tourists a lot of the year.

Because of the region's Mayan history, there are many ruins on the peninsula, of which the major sites are Chichen Itza, Coba, Edzna, Kabah, Tulum, and Uxmal.



Because the region has a bed rock of limestone, the Maya used it to build.



Chichen Itza



How Humans Have Interacted With The Yucatán Peninsula

Although The Yucatán Peninsula is mostly plane, the area has both highlands and lowlands; the lowlands are generally used for producing crops such as maize, squash, beans, chili peppers, amaranth, manioc, and cotton. In the highlands, heavy minerals, such as, obsidian, jade, precious metals and hematite can be extracted. The area is dominated by limestone (a sedimentary) rock which is very porous meaning there is little surface water or rivers.



Cotton



Amaranth



Maize



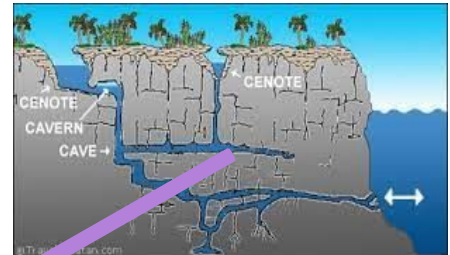
Manioc

Caves

Caves and Karsts on the Yucatan Peninsula are plentiful and were well used by the Maya because inland fresh water was and still is extremely scarce. Today, pottery shards, charcoal, torches, and artwork are all found in the caves. It is believed that the water in the caves was used not only for survival but for religious ceremonies as well. The caves themselves were used as a refuge from enemies, resting places and in mining for clay and minerals.



Caves and sinkholes



Sinkhole
(cenote)

Portable Knowledge – What we need to remember

Maya cities were not always near to a river.

The Yucatán Peninsula is mostly plane and is dominated by limestone bedrock and, as a result, there is very little surface water. It is covered with caves and sinkholes called Cenotes which were considered sacred and ceremonial places. They were a source of sweet and clean water.

Core Vocabulary

Reservoir– a large natural or artificial lake used as a source of water supply

Purification– to make clean or pure (free of toxins).

Filtration – the process of making water clean and pure (particles are removed from a liquid).