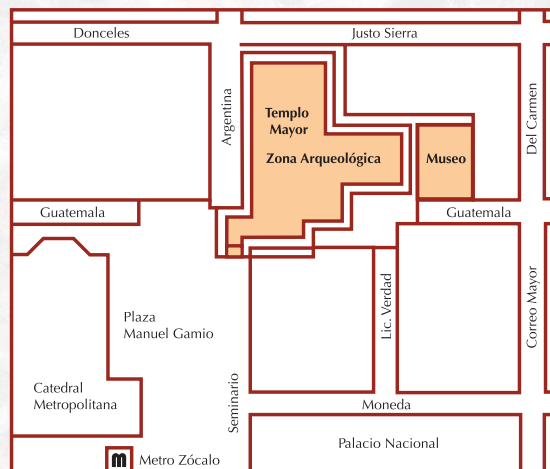


A panoramic view of the Templo Mayor archeological zone.



Museum of the Templo Mayor

Seminario No. 8, next to the National Palace
Historical Center of Mexico City

Attention and Information:

Departamento de Promoción Cultural
(Department of Cultural Promotion)
Telephone: 40405600 extensions 412930 and 412933

Department of Guides and Educational Services
Telephones: Direct 40405606
40405600 extensions 412931 and 412932

www.templomayor.inah.gob.mx
difusion.mntm@inah.gob.mx

Hours:

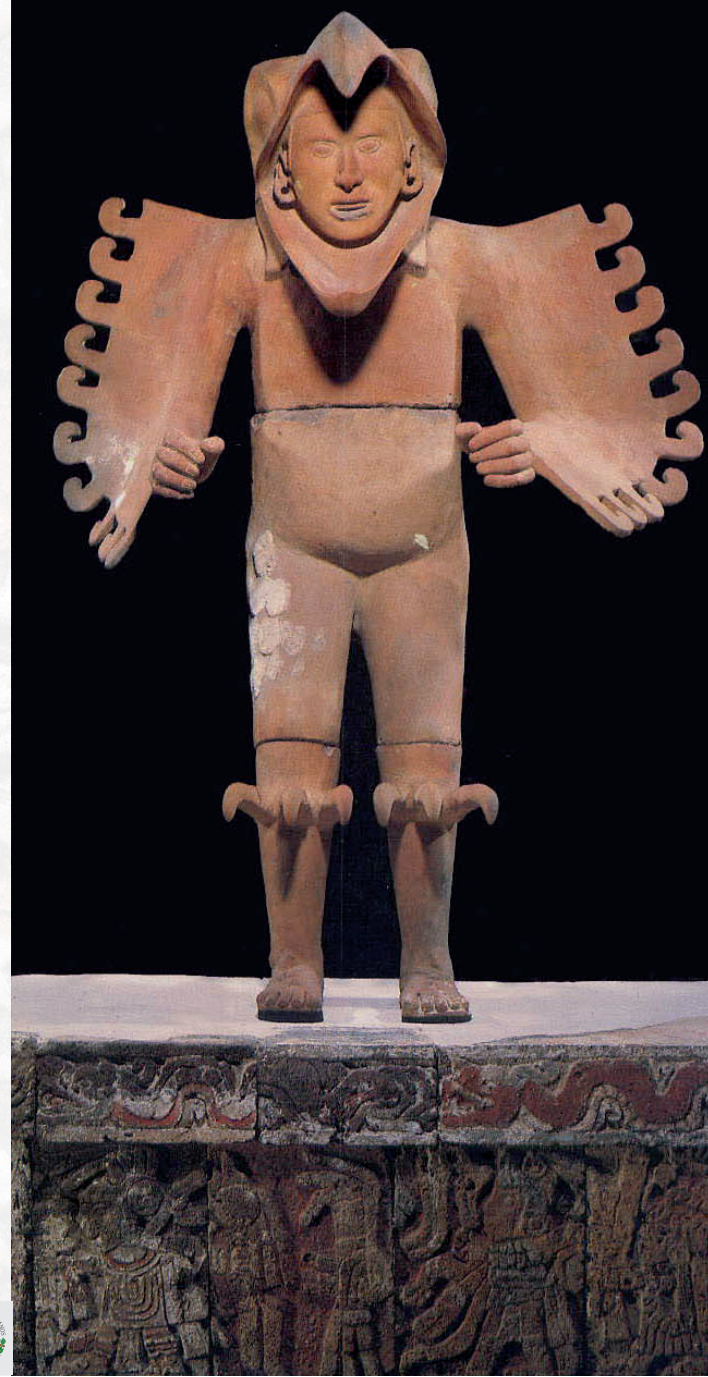
Tuesdays thru Sundays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
Closed on Mondays.

Mexican teachers and students
with up-to-date identification, elderly people,
people with different abilities and children
under 13 are admitted free-of-charge.

Free admission on Sundays and bank holidays

Archeological Zone

Templo Mayor



Introduction

The Main Temple was the most important building in the city of Tenochtitlan. The main religious ceremonies were celebrated there.

The building is comprised of a large platform, a four-bodied pyramid structure, a double stairway and two shrines on the top.

The shrine on the northern side was dedicated to Tlaloc, god of rain and agriculture; the one on the southern side was dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, god of war and the Sun, the most highly worshipped deities of the Mexica people.

The Main Temple also represents two mythic mountains. The northern side represents Tonacatepetl, meaning, "sustenance mountain," where all crops are stored. And the southern side represents Coatepec or "serpent mountain," where Huitzilopochtli was born.

Text by Laura del Olmo Frese. Cover: Eagle Warrior. Mexico Culture. Photography by Mauricio Marat. Design by Luz Ma. Muñoz de la Sota Riva / MTM.



Archeological Zone

Construction Stages

The myth claims that after migrating, the Mexicas found a signal sent by their god Huitzilopochtli. They thus settled on a small island where in 1325 they began to build the city of Tenochtitlan.

The Mexica believed that the Templo Mayor had been erected at the meeting point of the four cardinal points and the three vertical levels of the cosmos: heaven, the surface of the earth and the underworld. Therefore, its location could not be changed, which was why it was always reconstructed in the exact same place.

The Templo Mayor is evidence of the Mesoamerican practice of rebuilding pyramids in the same sacred place. Each new expansion would totally or partially cover the pyramid below. With the passing of time, pyramids thus became gigantic.

Although each remodeling of the Main Temple was larger and more magnificent than the earlier one, the Mexica architects always took care to reproduce the building's dual form.

Upon completing an enlargement, the Mexicas would initiate a military campaign to subject an independent territory and get war captives for the Templo Mayor's inaugural sacrifice. This implied that the growth of the empire was parallel to the growth of the main structure in Tenochtitlan.

Points of Interest

■ Point 1

Stage IVb. Reign of Axayacatl (1469-1481 A.D.)

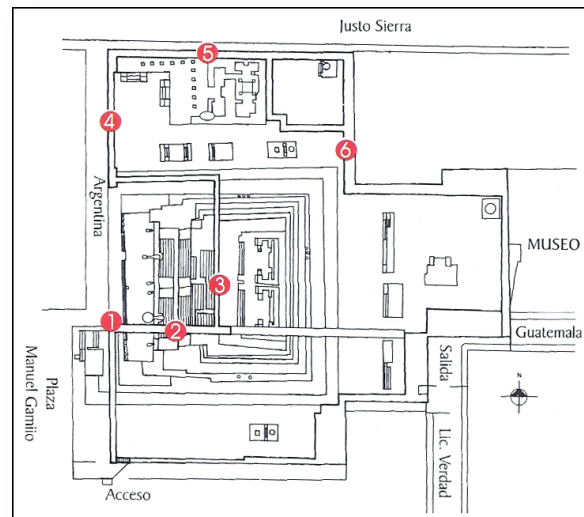
Four steps led to the platform of the pyramid's fourth stage of construction with its double stairway. These steps led to the upper platform where the shrines were located.

■ Point 2

Stage III Reign of Itzcoatl (1427-1440 A.D.)

Several sculptures found leaning against the southern stairway, probably representing the Centzon Huitznahua against whom Huitzilopochtli fought upon being born on Coatepec mountain pertain to this stage.

Their characteristics show they must have served as flag bearers. Some show a hole in the chest that held a green stone symbolizing the heart.



■ Point 3

Stage II Reign of Acamapichtli, Huitzilihuitl and Chimalpopoca (1376-1427 A.D.)

This is the oldest stage that has been excavated so far. On the southern side, dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, lies the *techcatl* or sacrifice stone where warriors were sacrificed in honor of the Sun.

■ Point 4

Stage VI Reign of Ahuitzotl (1486-1502 A.D.)

In front of the patio of the sixth construction stage the visitor can see: three shrines; what remains of floorings corresponding to different stages; and the steps to access the House of Eagles, one of which has eagle heads decorating its frame.

■ Point 5

Stages V and VI Reign of Ahuitzotl and Moctezuma II (1481-1502 A.D.)

The House of Eagles is a Tolteca-style building with several rooms, of which only three can be seen since the others are under Justo Sierra Street.

Inside, the visitor can see the base of the columns holding the portico's roof as well as sidewalks decorated with figures in a procession on which two natural-size ceramic sculptures representing eagle warriors were found. One of these statues can be seen in the Museum's Room 4.

In this building, priests carried out private religious ceremonies, like praying, spiritual contemplation, fasting and self-sacrifice.

■ Point 6

Stage VI Reign of Ahuitzotl (1486-1502 A.D.)

From this place the visitor can see three shrines in the northern plaza: in the foreground, the Teotihuacan-style Red Temple, oriented to the east and decorated with elements related to worship to Xochipilli, god of music and flowers. Half way back, the Tzompantli altar decorated with stone skulls, perhaps representing Mictlan, the place of the dead. In the background, an altar with two stairways, one to the east and another to the west, perhaps intimating the Sun's pathway.