



EK BALAM

MAYAN TRADITIONS





EK BALAM

This name in Yucatec Maya language is formed by the words "ek" meaning "black" and also "morning star" or "star," and "balam" which means "jaguar." It can be translated as "dark or black jaguar." However, some Maya speakers also translate it as "morning star jaguar."

It has an extension of approximately 12 square kilometers, along which about 45 structures have been discovered.

THE HIGHLIGHTS



ACROPOLIS

This building is a grand palace composed of several rooms and staircases. It was the residence and tomb of the ruler Ukit Kan Lek Tok'. It is the tallest structure in the site, measuring 160 m in length, 68 m in width, and 32 m in height. Best of all, it is still possible to climb to the top of this pyramid.



SAK XOK NAAH

It is a room on the fourth level of the acropolis, and its name means "the white house of reading." Here, the remains of Ukit Kan Lek Tok' were deposited, along with an offering consisting of over 7,000 pieces of shell and snail. Its facade is notably different, featuring a large stucco mask of the Earth Monster with its jaws open.



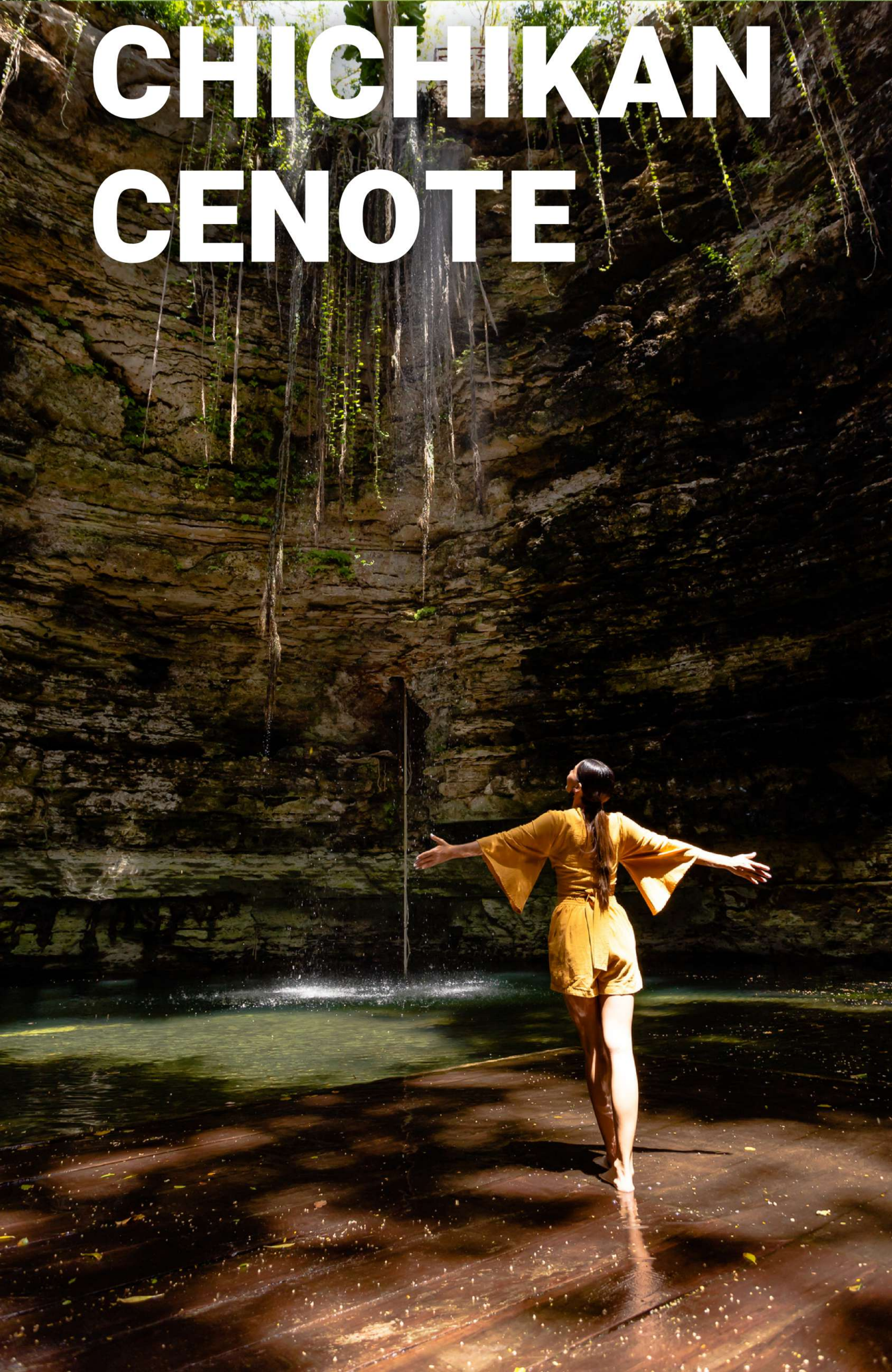
MAYAN ARCH

It is a unique vault formed by the union of four vaults that support a heavy roof. It is believed to have been the main access to the city reserved for the elite, protected by large stone walls.





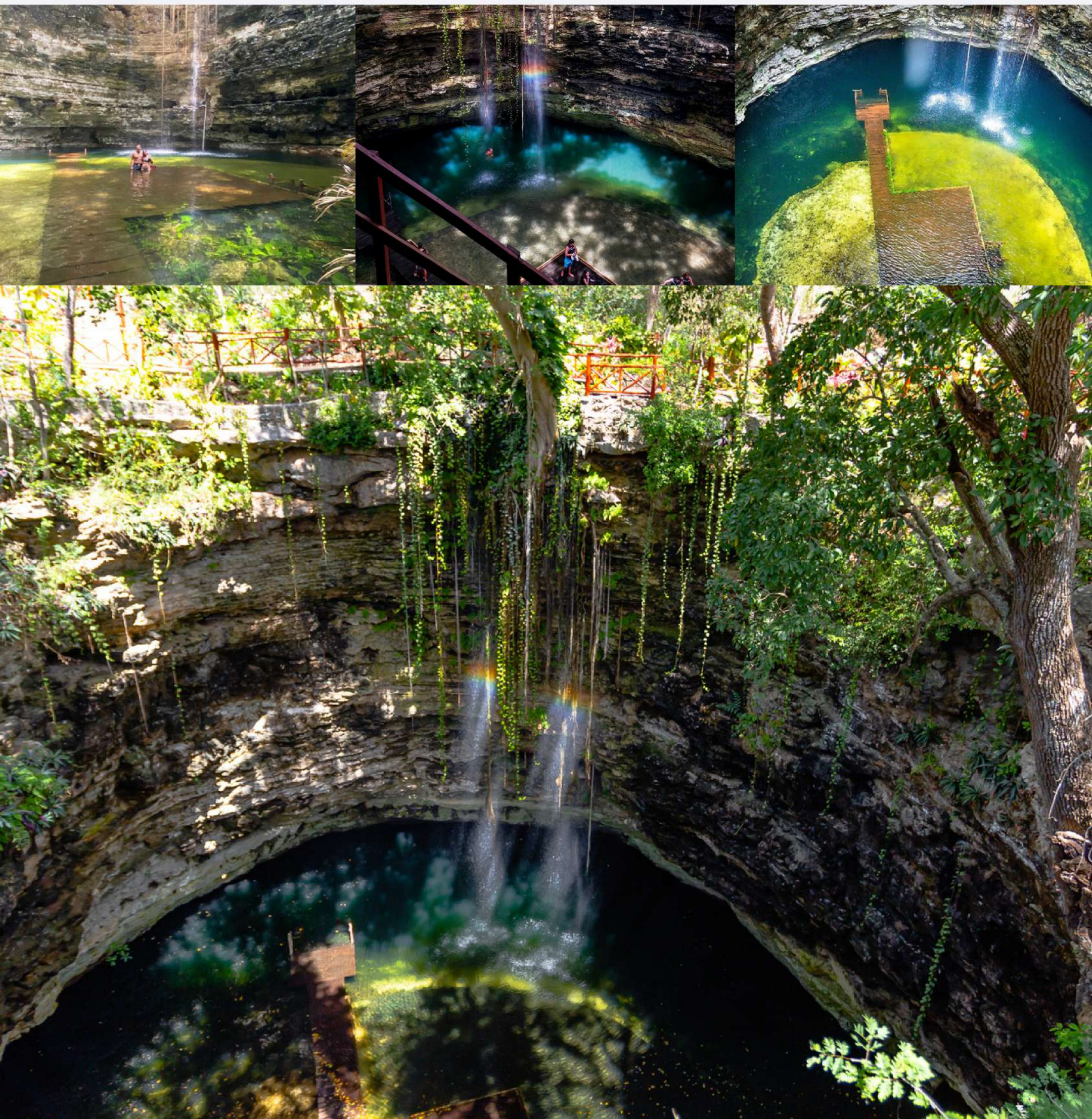
CHICHIKAN CENOTE



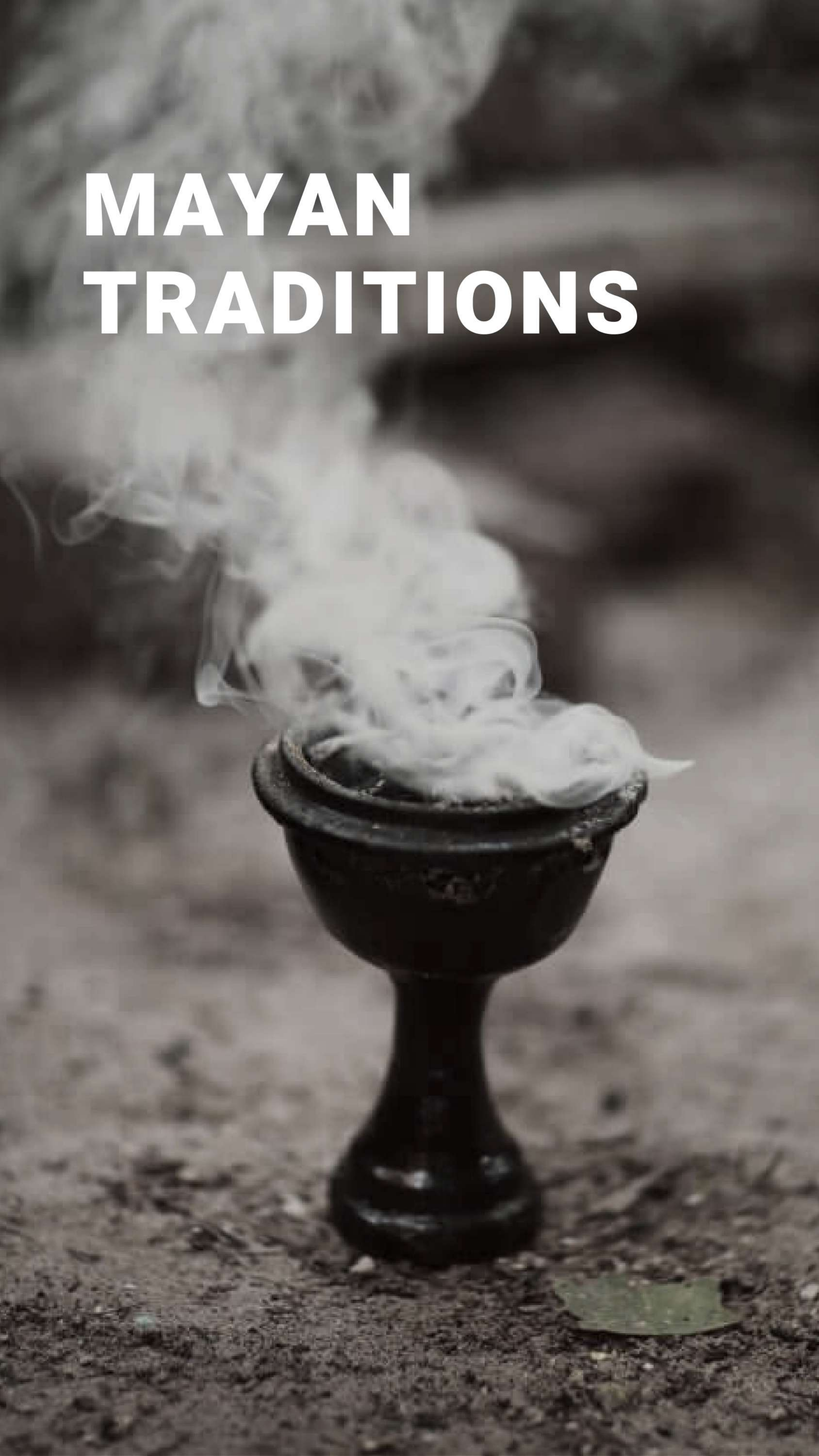
Let yourself be amazed by this incredible open cenote surrounded by limestone walls.

To reach it, you will descend 24 meters below ground level using wooden stairs. Its maximum depth is 8 meters, but you can easily explore it thanks to its central island where you can stroll, take photos, and access the water easily.

The cherry on top of this place, adding an even more magical touch, is the waterfall and the beautiful rainbow it creates. Don't miss capturing it in your photos!



MAYAN TRADITIONS



CHEWING GUM



In the Mayan world, the sap of the chicozapote tree was extracted and cooked in pots over low heat to dry it, resulting in "sicte," a soft gum that could be chewed for an indefinite period. The sicte was sent to the Mexican highlands, where it was known as "tzictli." From here, chewing gum was born and became popular worldwide.

CACAO

Cacao has been cultivated by the Maya for over 2,500 years. The word "cacao" derives from the Nahuatl word "cacahoatl" or "cacahuatl," which means "bitter juice." Chocolate was appreciated not only for its taste but also for its stimulating properties, and its seeds were used as currency for trading.



HONEY

The Maya practiced apiculture with the melipona beecheii bee, a stingless bee known in Maya as "xunán kab" or "royal lady." Its honey was used as medicine when mixed with other medicinal herbs.



HAMMOCKS

The Maya practiced an ancestral technique of making threads from the fiber obtained from the henequen plant. This knowledge surely facilitated the production of suitable henequen thread for hammocks.



UAYMA

Descubre el pueblo de Uayma, cuyo nombre en Maya significa "aquí no".



FORMER CONVENT OF SANTO DOMINGO

The picturesque temple and former convent of Santo Domingo is located in Uayma, a small village of 3,800 inhabitants about 15 km northwest of Valladolid. Built by the Franciscans in 1646 using stones from nearby Mayan temples, including Chichén Itzá, this viceregal church features a spacious atrium and courtyard, reflecting the missionary work of the friars who gathered the community in these facilities.

The Caste War (1847–1901) was a prolonged and bloody rebellion in Mexico, initiated due to the unfair working conditions imposed by the Spanish on the Maya, who also lost access to public lands for agriculture. The situation worsened with the boom of henequen and the feudal system on haciendas, keeping indigenous people in slavery.



After the burning of the church in Uayma by the Maya, it lay in ruins until its restoration began in 2003 by Elba Villareal de García Ponce and Fernando Garces Fierros from the INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History). During the restoration, the original colors and decorations of the stucco were revealed, including vibrant stars and rosettes that contrast with the building's turbulent history.

Officially reopened in November 2004, the church features symbolic colors such as red representing the martyrdom of Christ and green symbolizing hope. It also includes religious symbols like the eagle without a head, adopted by the Franciscans during construction to symbolize the Catholic union of the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal.



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Thank you