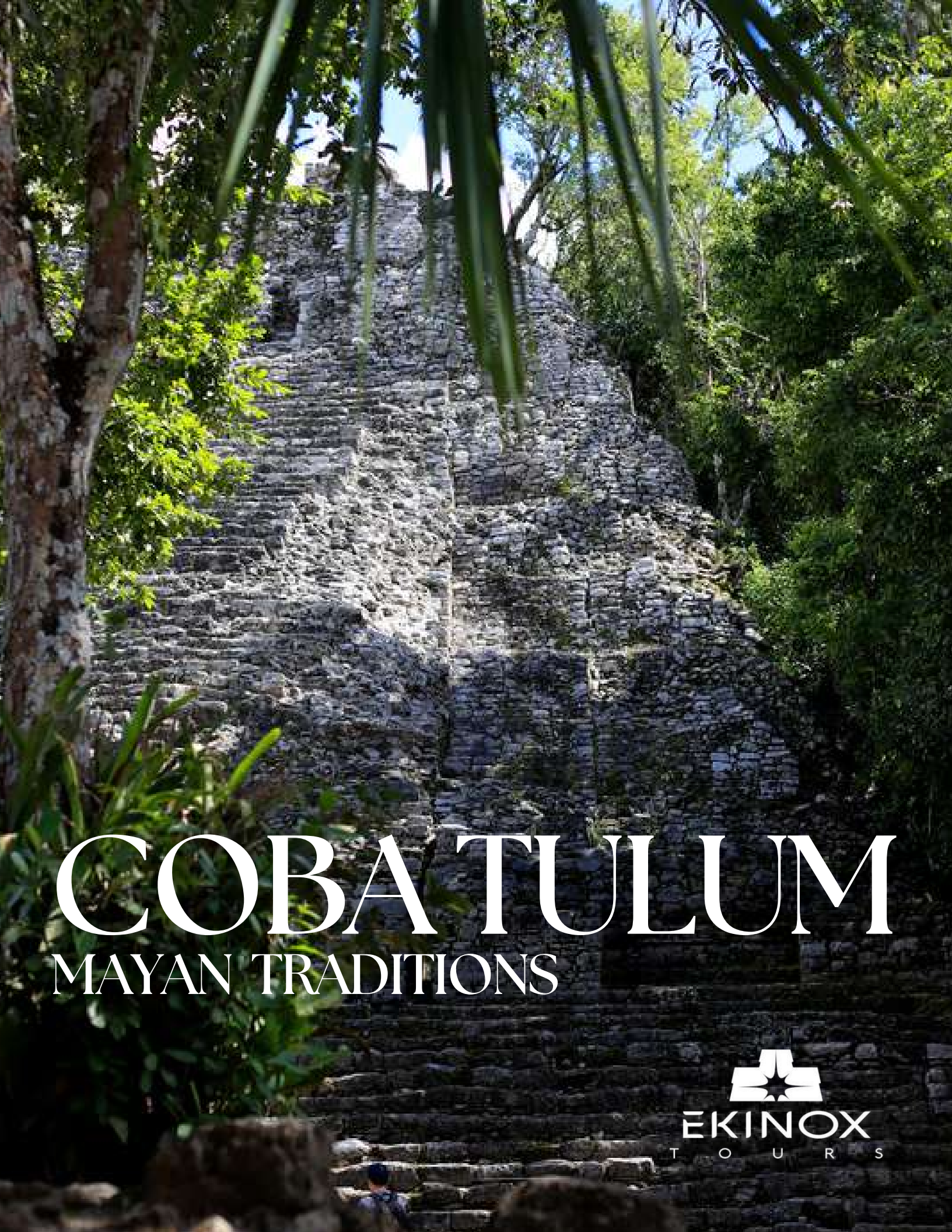




COBA TULUM

MAYAN TRADITIONS



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Nohoch Mul: the tallest pyramid in the northern Maya region, and the main pyramid in Cobá.



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Tulum, the walled city of the Mayan world by the sea.



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Enjoy the crystal-clear and sacred waters of Cenote Mariposa.



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You will learn about Mayan traditions: ceremonies with shamans, sacred cacao, and ancestral honey.

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COBA TULUM
MAYAN TRADITIONS

COBÁ

LA CIUDAD ENTRE LAGOS

The meaning of its name is uncertain, although several possible meanings have been attributed to it, such as "pierced water," "abundant water," or "water of the chachalacas." Its territorial extension covers just over 70 square kilometers.

Thanks to ceramic fragments found at the site dated to 100 B.C., it is known to be one of the oldest Maya cities.



Coba Tulum Tour, winner in 2022 as one of Mexico's top 100 must-see attractions in the Attractions category.

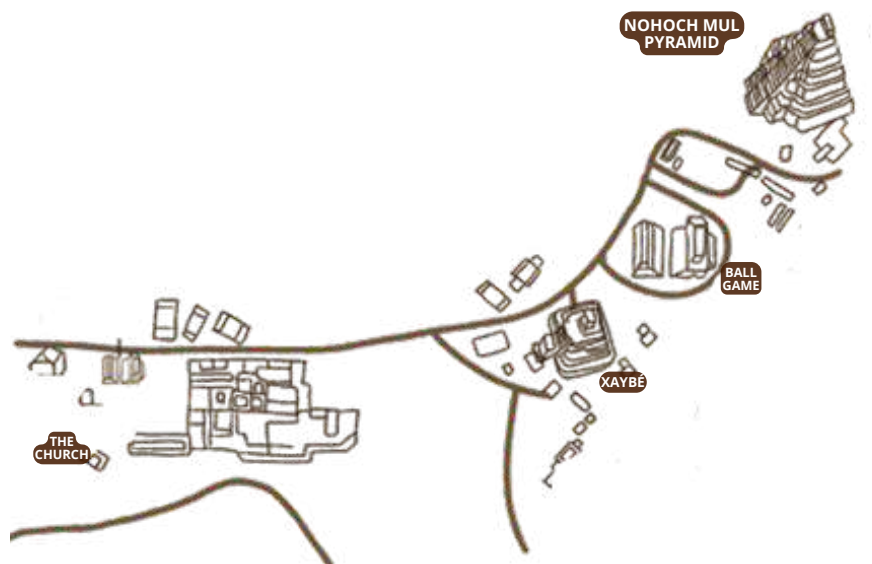
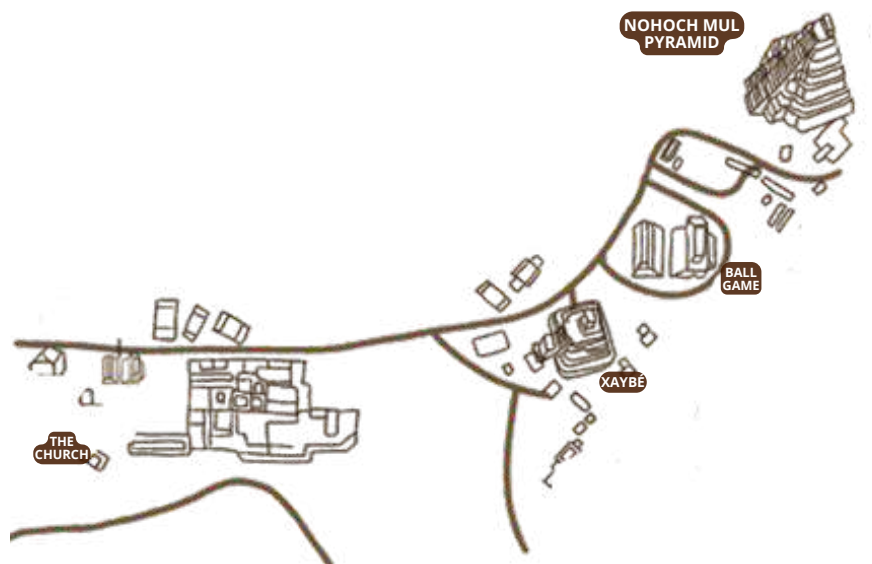
HIGHLIGHTS OF COBÁ

NOHOCH MUL

Standing 42 meters tall with 120 steps, this imposing structure is the tallest in the entire Yucatán Peninsula. Its name, which means "great mound," honors its majesty and size. It is one of the oldest Maya constructions still standing, notable for its unique architecture: seven stepped levels with rounded corners and a temple at the top, where sacred ceremonies were once held.

Cobá was a powerful Maya city with an extensive network of roads, residences, temples such as "La Iglesia," a ballgame court, and the majestic Nohoch Mul pyramid, the tallest in the peninsula.

Its layout reflects its ceremonial and political importance in the region.





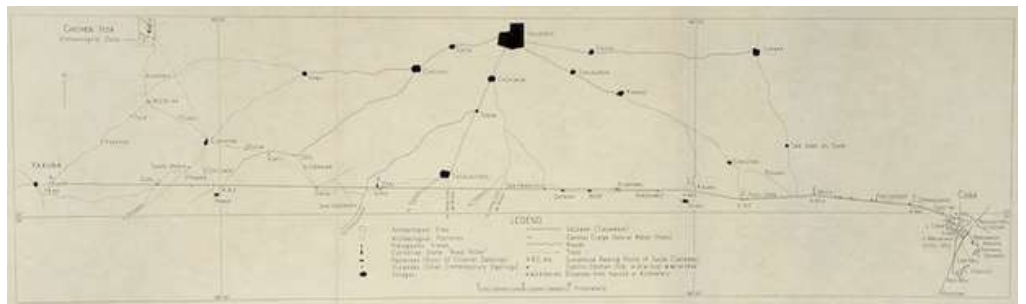
XAIBÉ

The Crossing of the White Roads

This building gets its name from being located at a key point where several sacbeo'ob or sacbé converge—the iconic elevated white roads of the Maya civilization, also known as xaibé. These routes, paved with limestone, functioned as true imperial highways, facilitating the movement of merchants, dignitaries, and important figures such as princesses during ceremonies or diplomatic meetings. Its location at such a strategic crossroads within the city suggests its great importance within Cobá's road network.

Cobá had at least 45 sacbés connecting internal structures and nearby communities.

The most impressive of all is a road nearly 100 kilometers long that connects Cobá with Yaxuná, in the current state of Yucatán, demonstrating the organizational capacity and territorial reach of this city.



Map of the Yaxuná-Cobá Sacbé – The sacbé that connected the Maya sites of Yaxuná and Cobá, illustrated in this map produced by one of the earliest archaeological expeditions, was the longest sacbé in the entire Yucatán Peninsula. Source: Dumbarton Oaks – Standing on Ceremony: Processions, Pathways, and Plazas.



THE CHURCH

Standing 24 meters tall, this structure rises as the second most imposing building at the site. At its base rests a carved stela, surrounded by a small altar that remains a place of deep veneration by the local inhabitants.

In this symbolically charged space, the community brings offerings and lights candles, invoking the protection and fertility of the lands.

Prayers are directed to Colebí, an ancient goddess associated with abundance and harvest, whose presence remains alive in the collective memory. This practice is a testament to the deep-rooted ancestral beliefs that have survived over time, blending with new forms of spirituality without losing their essence.



Stela 11: Discovered in 1926 by Gann. The stela was located in a simple enclosure, or sanctuary, in Patio A, which is accessed from the main plaza of the Cobá Group via a staircase ascending on the open west side. The eastern boundary of this patio is the staircase that leads up to Structure B-1 (La Iglesia).

MAYA BALLGAME

The rings of this court are engraved with the symbol of Venus, a figure associated in Maya culture with death, sacrifice, and war.

In the center of the court stands a marker shaped like a human skull, while at one end there is a disk representing a decapitated jaguar, a symbol of power and conquest. Additionally, one of the sloped walls houses a hieroglyphic slab with 74 glyphs, documenting important historical events that occurred during the Early Classic period, providing valuable information about the life and events of that era.

TULUM

THE WALLED CITY

Its original name was Zamá, which means "dawn." The name Tulum is more recent and means "wall" or "fortress."

Thanks to its privileged location facing the Caribbean Sea, this archaeological site is the most visited in the Riviera Maya and one of the busiest in all of Mexico. Its current area covers 664.32 hectares and it is located within the only protected natural area of the Cancun-Tulum corridor.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TULUM

TEMPLE OF THE DESCENDING GOD

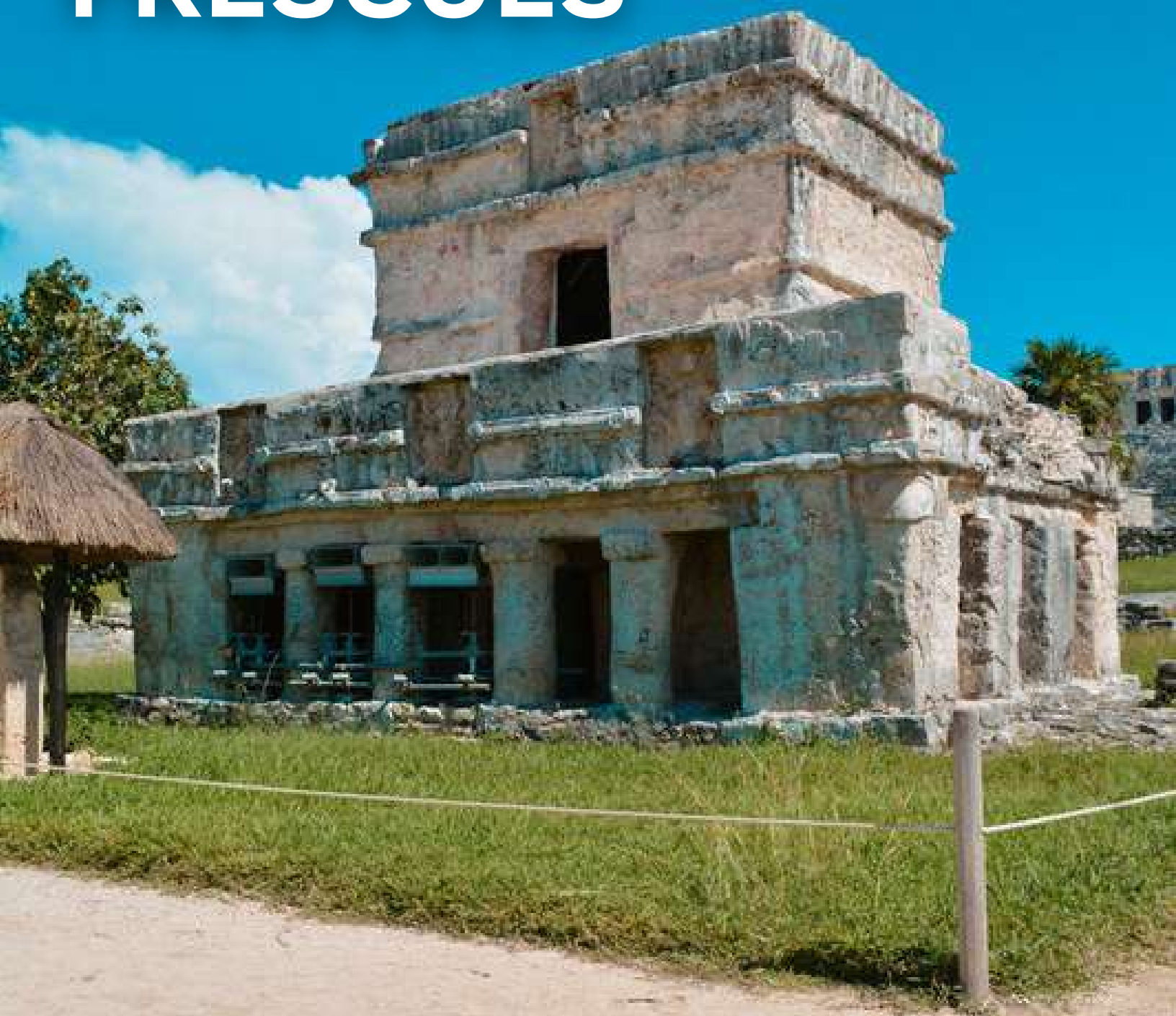
Temple of the Descending Gods: An interesting feature of this building is that neither its walls nor its door are aligned vertically, which is not an effect of the passage of time but an intentional characteristic of its construction. In its upper niche is the figure of the Descending God, a deity present in almost all the buildings of Tulum.

The Descending God has been associated with a wide variety of phenomena, both astronomical—such as the cycles of the Sun and Venus—and natural, including rain and lightning. He is also linked to agriculture and symbols of renewal and rebirth. Some scholars even identify him with God E, related to maize, or with Ah Musen Cab, the deity of bees.



Descending God attached to the front of Building 25.

TEMPLE OF THE FRESCOES



The appearance of the building, along with its decorative elements, clearly suggests that it was used for ritual purposes. Inside, fragments of mural paintings (frescos) still remain, depicting various deities, symbolic snakes, and offerings such as flowers, fruits, and ears of corn, reflecting the ceremonial importance of the space and its connection to fertility and the spiritual world.

TEMPLE OF THE WINDS

Its name comes from its round base shape, traditionally associated with wind deities, as the cylindrical structure offers less resistance to air currents. It is located at the northwest corner, facing the sea, and it is said that when a hurricane approached, it produced a whistle-like sound thanks to a specially designed hole inside, alerting the town of the threat.

THE CASTLE

Located by the sea, 12 meters above the beach, it is the largest building at this archaeological site. It stands atop a cliff, whose cave symbolizes the underworld, while the castle represents the upper realms. The temple has three entrances, two vaulted chambers, and a lintel supported by two snake-shaped columns, whose heads form the bases of the columns.

Thanks to its strategic location for spotting the ocean, El Castillo functioned as a lighthouse or "house of illumination" for allied navigators, guiding them through a secret passage in the coral reef barrier that protects the coast. This natural feature prevented the Spanish from reaching Tulum during the conquest.



MARIPOSA CENOTE



A woman in a bikini stands on a wooden platform in a cenote, surrounded by hanging vines and blue butterflies.

MARIPOSA CENOTE

For the Maya culture, cenotes were sacred places—not only because they were the main source of water, but also because they were considered portals to the underworld. These bodies of water remain mystical spaces full of history.

Cenote Mariposa is a semi-open cenote whose vault has largely collapsed, although it still retains a covered section resembling a cave. Its depth ranges from 30 cm to 6 meters due to rocky formations on the bottom. For safety reasons, wearing a life jacket is mandatory.

This cenote is home to the toh birds, also known as “clock birds.” These birds, which nest in or near cenotes, have a distinctive tail with two turquoise feathers they move side to side. You can also spot bats in the covered area, as well as dragonflies and various types of fish.

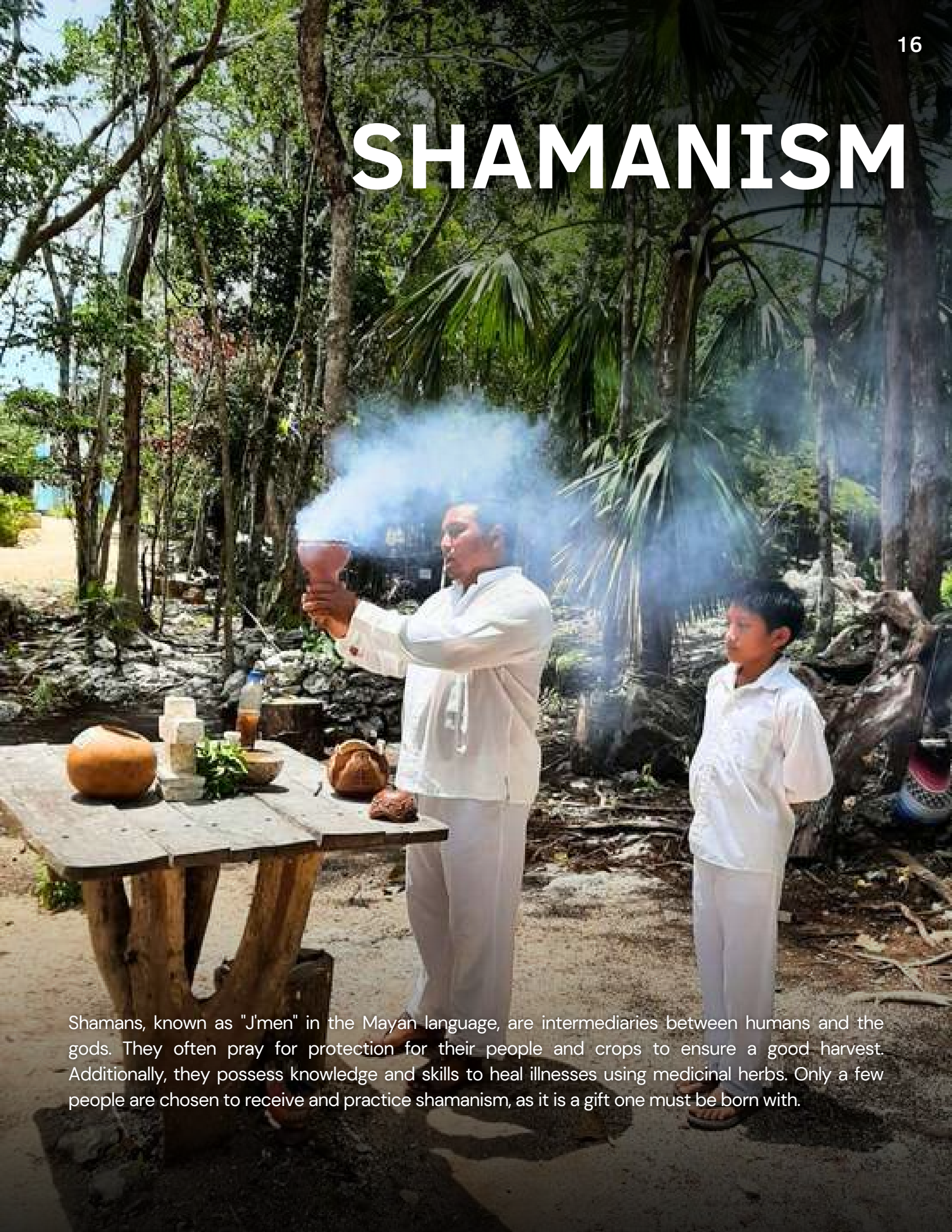
Besides swimming and observing the flora and fauna, you can enjoy the swings around the cenote or relax in hammocks under the shade of the trees, listening to the birdsong. Remember to shower before entering the cenote to remove creams and body oils, helping to protect the purity of the water.

A man in a white long-sleeved shirt is performing a ritual in a forest. He is holding a bundle of green leaves and herbs above a woman's head. The woman is wearing a bright pink halter-neck top with a bow at the waist and a black skirt. She has her eyes closed and a serene expression. The background is a dense forest with many trees and green foliage. The overall atmosphere is spiritual and natural.

MAYAN TRADITIONS

Las tradiciones mayas integran la espiritualidad, la naturaleza y la vida cotidiana. El chamán, llamado J'mén, es el guía espiritual que protege a la comunidad y las cosechas. El cacao y la miel, ambos sagrados, se usan en rituales y como alimento con valor simbólico. La gastronomía maya, basada en ingredientes locales como maíz, chiles y cacao, mantiene viva la herencia ancestral en cada platillo.

SHAMANISM



Shamans, known as "J'men" in the Mayan language, are intermediaries between humans and the gods. They often pray for protection for their people and crops to ensure a good harvest. Additionally, they possess knowledge and skills to heal illnesses using medicinal herbs. Only a few people are chosen to receive and practice shamanism, as it is a gift one must be born with.



CACAO

CACAO IN MAYAN CULTURE

Cacao was cultivated and revered by the Maya for over 2,500 years, not only as food but as an essential part of their spiritual and economic life. Although the term “cacao” comes from the Nahuatl word *cacahoatl* or *cacahuatl*, meaning “bitter juice,” its use in the Maya region predates even the Nahuatl influence.

Beyond its flavor and stimulating properties, chocolate held deep ritual and symbolic meaning. It was consumed in religious ceremonies and offerings, often associated with fertility, rebirth, and the gods of maize and rain. Additionally, its seeds were so valuable that they were used as currency in trade exchanges, reflecting its high status in the Mesoamerican economy.



Woman pouring chocolate into a vessel. Tudela Codex. Museum of America, Madrid.



CORN

Corn was the foundation of both the diet and worldview of the Maya people. According to the Popol Vuh, the gods created humans from corn, making this grain not only a food but also a sacred symbol of life, fertility, and connection to the earth.

It was cultivated in milpas (fields) and consumed in various forms such as tortillas, tamales, atoles, and traditional drinks like "pozol," a refreshing mixture of corn dough with cacao.

Its importance was such that it was also part of rituals, offerings, and celebrations, establishing itself as one of the most important cultural and spiritual pillars of the pre-Hispanic world.



HONEY

THE MELIPONA BEE

For the Maya, the melipona bee was a sacred creature. This stingless bee, native to the region, produced a special honey that was not only used as food but also held deep spiritual and medicinal value.

They considered its honey a gift from the god Ah Mucen Kab (god of the bees) and used it in rituals, ceremonies, and traditional medicine to treat various ailments.

The Maya were pioneers in meliponiculture, raising melipona bees in hollow logs or clay hives—a practice that still persists in communities in southeastern Mexico. The relationship between the Maya and the melipona reflects an ancient balance between culture, nature, and spirituality.

GASTRONOMÍA





Since pre-Hispanic times, corn and chili have been the foundation of Mexican cuisine. Their great versatility has allowed for the creation of a wide variety of dishes and culinary techniques across the different regions of the country.

Pre-Hispanic cuisine evolved by adapting to new ingredients, techniques, and utensils introduced during the conquest, giving rise to the traditional Mexican cuisine we know today.

Here are some popular dishes you can try in this activity:



TACOS AL PASTOR *THE MOST POPULAR DISHES IN MEXICO!*

Tacos al pastor originated when Syrian and Lebanese immigrants who arrived in Mexico tried to recreate their shawarma, substituting lamb with pork. They also incorporated a blend of chiles and achiote paste in the marinade, giving the tacos their distinctive red color.



TORTILLA SOUP

Also known as "Aztec soup," this dish is made with a base of tomato, chili peppers, garlic, and onion, with fried strips of corn tortilla. It is served accompanied by avocado, chili slices, crema (Mexican sour cream), and cheese. This dish originates from the state of Tlaxcala, whose name means "place where tortillas abound" or "land of corn."

In addition to these two dishes, you will be able to taste typical Mexican cuisine such as cochinita pibil, crispy tacos (tacos dorados), chicken tinga, and pork loin with prunes (lomo en ciruela).



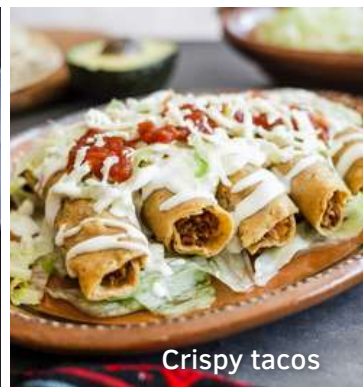
Cochinita Pibil



Tinga de Pollo



Lomo en ciruela



Crispy tacos

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CACAO



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MELIPONA BEE
HONEY

ARTISAN
SALT



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Alux

Piña
Colada

Margarita



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refreshing
Coco Loco!





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