



Major Accomplishments of the Mayan Civilization

*To the left, the astronomical
observatory at Chichen Itza*

The Maya were the most advanced ancient civilization of the Americas.

1. Concept of zero, place value, & simple base 20 system with 3 numerals
2. 365 day calendar (18 months of 20 days each, plus 5 additional days at the end)
3. Astronomical calculations---they were able to record eclipses that they could not have seen (that were only visible from other locations on the planet).
4. Only extensively preserved writing system in the Americas
5. Agriculture supported a vast population (40 cities from 5000 to 50,000 each; up to 2,000,000 in all); according to archaeologists' estimates, the Mayan population density was, at its peak, greater than the most densely populated parts of Africa (Rwanda and Burundi) are today.
6. Fascinating pyramids and other monuments