



The History of Campeche

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Seal of Campeche

Now one of the least-populated Mexican states, Campeche was once the site of a flourishing Mayan civilization. Campeche is also home to Mexico's oldest carnival. The state's second largest city, Ciudad del Carmen, receives much of its annual income from tourism related to its new seaboard and quiet beaches. The off-shore oil platforms also make a significant contribution to Ciudad del Carmen's economy.

Early History

Although pre-Mayan cultures inhabited the area of Campeche as early as 3000 B.C., relatively little is known about them. The Mayans, in contrast, left extensive evidence of their civilization, which originated on the Yucatán Peninsula. The Mayans made unique astronomical discoveries and followed their own calendar. About 6,000 Mayan buildings and ceremonial structures have been identified at the city of Calakmul in southern Campeche. Calakmul boasted a population of 50,000 at its height in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. At about the same time, the regional capital of Chichén-Itzá rose to prominence in the neighboring state of Yucatán, extending its influence over the inhabitants of Campeche.

The Mayan tribes of Campeche included the Yucatecos, Chontales and Quejaches. These groups shared a common Mayan culture but maintained distinct architectural styles, decorative arts and dialects.

For reasons that are unclear, the entire Mayan civilization declined sharply during the 8th and 9th centuries, perhaps because of an epidemic, environmental changes or foreign invasion. Tribes living in Campeche suffered the same fate. The Mayan settlement on Jaina Island, which reached its peak from 900 to 1100 A.D., was one of the last to survive in Campeche. When the Spaniards reached the Yucatán Peninsula early in the 16th century, the land held far fewer inhabitants than it had several centuries earlier.

Middle History

The first two Spanish explorers to reach the Yucatán Peninsula, Jerónimo de Aguilar and Gonzalo Guerrero, were the survivors of a shipwreck in 1511. They were taken in by Mayan villagers. Guerrero married the daughter of the Chetumal tribal chief, and their son was Mexico's first officially recorded mestizo (person of both Indian and Spanish ancestry). Jerónimo de Aguilar was later rescued by the conquistador Hernán Cortés. Even though Campeche itself was not densely populated, natives in the rest of the Yucatán Peninsula were numerous enough to repel occasional attacks by the Spaniards. In 1527 Francisco de Montejo attempted to conquer the region, but the Amerindian resistance was so strong that he fled. He returned three years later with his son, but again they were unable to overpower the Indians. Finally, a third attempt in 1537 was successful, and de Montejo established

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the cities of San Francisco de Campeche in 1540 and Mérida in 1542.

In an effort to convert the indigenous people to the Catholic faith, Franciscan priests built more than 30 monasteries throughout the region. Despite these modest gains, native revolts throughout the colonial period reinforced the Yucatán Peninsula's reputation as an area fiercely resistant to Spanish rule.

When it was discovered that logwood trees near the city of Campeche produced a valuable red dye, some Spaniards became wealthy trading the commodity. The dye was also a tempting target for Caribbean pirates and thieves, and as a result the city was attacked many times during the 17th century. These attacks prompted the residents to build a wall 8 meters (26 feet) high around the entire city. The walls formed an irregular hexagon and had four gates. Much of the wall, including two of the gates, still stands today.

Recent History

Shortly after Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the Yucatán region became a Mexican state. At that time, the state of Yucatán included the areas that are now the separate states of Campeche and Quintana Roo. Over the next quarter of a century, frequent rebellions brought occasional changes to the region's political status, including several periods when Yucatán declared itself an independent republic. In 1848, Yucatán rejoined Mexico for good, but internal disputes continued to plague the region. On August 7, 1857, Campeche declared itself independent of Yucatán, naming the city of Campeche as the new capital. The citizens drafted a constitution in 1861, and in 1862 the Mexican Congress ratified the proposal to recognize Campeche as a state.

In 1902, President Porfirio Díaz ordered Campeche to surrender a portion of its territory to create the province of Quintana Roo. During President Ortiz Rubio's brief term (1930-1932), the area was returned to Campeche, but President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) restored Quintana Roo's independence. In 1974 it became a state.

The discovery of oil fields off the coast of Campeche in the 1970s transformed the region's economy and also increased its political volatility, requiring occasional federal intervention to maintain order.

Campeche Today

Campeche's chief sources of revenue are the oil industry (45 percent), tourism (15 percent) and financial and real estate services (15 percent).

Off-shore wells in the Bay of Campeche produce over half of Mexico's oil and one-fourth of its natural gas. PEMEX, Mexico's state-owned oil company, maintains significant facilities there.

Many tourists are drawn to the breathtaking archaeological sites scattered throughout the state as well as the capital city's beautiful historical center. Museums, handicraft shops, night clubs and restaurants offer varied sightseeing opportunities both day and night.



Above: Campeche Cathedral built between 1540 and 1760.

Below: Mayan ruin of Edzna in Campeche.



Facts and Figures

Capital: Campeche

Major Cities: (population): Campeche (238,850)
Ciudad del Carmen (199,988) Champotón (76,116) Escárcega (50,106)
Calkiní (49,850)

Size/Area: 19,619 square miles

Population: 754,730 (2005 Census)

Year of Statehood: 1863



FOT WINTER FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

DOORS OPEN 5:00

DINNER SERVED 6:30

***VAN NUYS/RESEDA ELKS LODGE
14400 FRIAR ST., VAN NUYS***

ENTERTAINMENT

2790 3 MAN BAND:

MIKE, PATRICK & CLEVE

MENU:

GARLIC CHICKEN

SWEET CORN

AU GRATIN POTATOES

FRESH TOSSED SALAD

MELON FRUIT SALAD

CAKE

RAFFLE PRIZES GALORE

COST-\$20

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Felize Ano Nuevo y Prospero Ano to Every one of the Friends of Taxco! What a great group and tremendous hearts and souls that have given over the past year and for some many of our members that have given over the last many, many years.

I have been so lucky to have been involved with this extraordinary group. I am thankful for all of the Past officers and their knowledge and wisdom that will continue to help make our group a very unique group that provides for many children in Taxco! Many of you have given through your homes, hospitality and mostly the huge hearts for our Friends of Taxco. I may be President, but certainly could not accomplish anything without the leadership and guidance of all the knowledgeable people that are part of the group. The best thing is that we continue to move on with new ideas by building on old ideas and traditions and adding new members with new ideas and friendships that will grow and help our Friends of Taxco.

Our new year begins by a fund raiser to be held at the Van Nuys/Reseda Elks Lodge in Van Nuys on Saturday, January 18. We have a the 2790 3-man Band entertaining us with lots of music and dancing; the Lodge will be changed into a Winter Wonderland through the talents of Bobbie; and I will be using my culinary skills to provide a tantalizing dinner. Many unique baskets to be won by one and all.

The \$20 entrance fee will all go to the beginning of our Fund raiser for the 2020 year. Please come and join us in this great endeavor.

Please RSVP to me (818) 362-8784 or aguablanca1993@gmail.com by January 16.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Bruce Troe



Bruce Troe

Calendar of Events 2019

- January 18** **Winter Festival Fundraiser - Doors Open 5:00 PM - Dinner 6:30 PM**
\$20.00 Van Nuys/Reseda Elks Lodge - 14440 Friar St., Van Nuys
- January 25** **Board Meeting - 10:00 AM**
Lewis Home - 21305 Chase St.
- February 2** **General Meeting - 1:00 PM - Election of Officers**
Canoga Park Women's Club - 7401 Jordan Ave.
- February 15** **Ways and Means Event - 6:00 PM**
\$15.00 Details Forthcoming
- February 22** **Board Meeting - 10:00 AM**
Location TBD
- March 21** **Ways and Means Event - 6:00 PM**
Details Forthcoming



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