**10 FACINATING FACTS ABOUT THE AZTECS**

The Aztecs are best known for eating chocolate, killing boatloads of people in sacrifice to their gods and eventually getting beaten by the Spaniards. They are known by most as a warlike race, mostly due to the incredible amount of people they killed. However, contrary to popular belief, they were not without culture.

The Aztecs believed strongly in education, family and art. Even their system of slavery was very detailed.

Listed below are ten interesting facts about the Aztecs.

**10. Artistic**



**The Aztecs played sports**

**and were a very artistic people**

Despite the idea of Aztecs being

savages, they were a very [artistic people](http://www.aztec-indians.com/aztec-art.html). Aztecs were into pottery

and sculpting and created many

different artistic drawings as well.

They designed art for their warriors and applied tattoo’s to honor them for their accomplishments; they also had a love for poetry.

The Aztecs also played team sports, specifically a game very popular among them called [Ullamaliztli](http://www.aztec-history.com/ancient-aztec-games.html).

The game utilized a rubber ball and was played on a court called a Tlachtli. The object of the game was to get the ball through a small stone ring; however, it was an extremely difficult game to play. The ball was not supposed to hit the ground, and players could only touch it with their head, elbows, knees and hips.



**9 Mandatory Schooling**

**Aztecs had mandatory**

**schools separated**

**between boys and girls.**

Aztecs had mandatory public

schooling for all children.

Those of a noble class had

different schools to [attend](http://library.thinkquest.org/27981/school.html) and schools were also separated by gender.

Boys of nobility learned from the priests about history, astronomy, art, and how to [govern and lead](http://aztec.com/page.php?page=education). Boys of lower caste preparing for service in the military as warriors. Girls were sent to separate schools and much more of their education was focused at home where they were taught duties such as cooking and weaving.

**8. Defeated by Disease**

**Most Aztecs were actually defeated by disease, not war.**



If not for the smallpox contracted from the Europeans that wiped out so many of them, especially their leaders, that it is extremely unlikely they would have fallen to the Spanish. The amount of harm caused by European diseases was tremendous, it is estimated that over twenty million Mexicans died in a period of just five years due to the diseases brought over by the [Spanish](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/cunniff/americanhistorycentral/04encountersintheamericas/Fall_of_the_Az.html#TXTANC200111710133630).



**7. Wrong Name**

The Aztecs never referred to

themselves as Aztecs.

We all know the Aztecs by that name,

but it was not actually a name that they

ever called themselves.

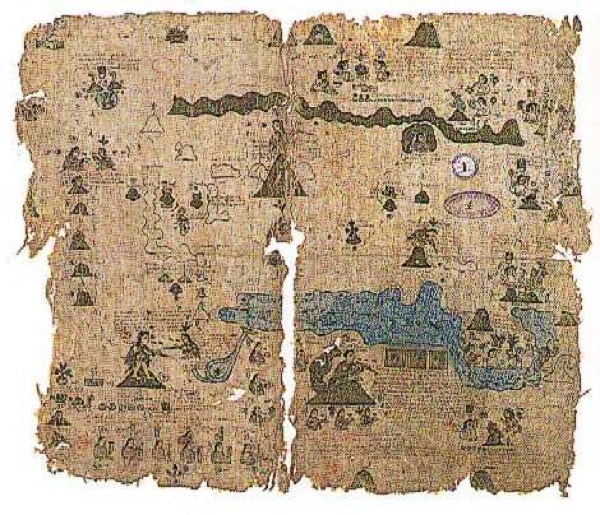
The Aztecs themselves actually

referred to themselves as [Mexica](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/aztecs.htm),

which is actually where the name for the country of Mexico originally came from.

**6 Advanced Record Keeping**

They had an advanced



system for writing and

keeping records.

The Aztecs had their own language

Knowledge on how to write things

down was mostly performed by

scribes, who had the needed training.

Records were kept on paper made of

bark, or [deer skin](http://www.ancientscripts.com/aztec.html).

The writing was usually performed

using charcoal and then colored with vegetables and other substances. They kept tax records, historical records, kept information written down on religious sacrifices and other ceremonies and even wrote poetry.



**5 Burial Customs**

The Aztecs had very

strange burial customs.

The Aztecs cared little

about having things built

on top of their graves.

In fact, the Aztecs made

a habit of burying their

ancestor’s right under

and around their [houses](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/08/100810-science-archaeology-ancient-mexico-human-bones-teotihuacan/). Sometimes the Aztecs would also kill a dog and bury

with the person so that it could guide them on their journey through the afterlife.



**4 Sell Children**

They would often sell their own

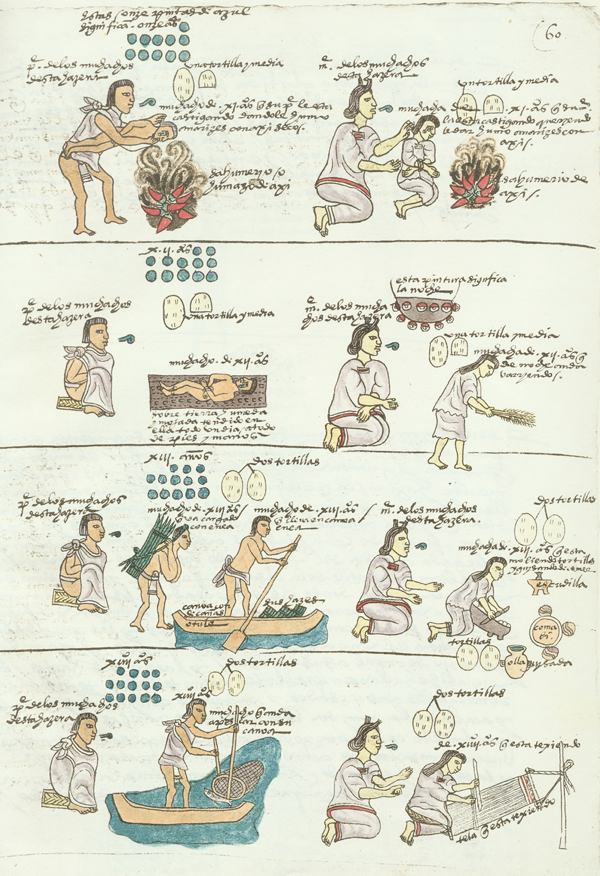
children into slavery.

Someone who was poor to sell their own

children into [slavery](http://slaveryinjustice.wordpress.com/slavery-in-ancient-aztec-mayan-and-inca/). Many Aztecs would

also sell themselves into slavery.

Someone would go bankrupt and sell themselves or their children into slavery would give them some income.



**3 Polygamy**

Aztec men practiced polygamy.

Aztec men were allowed to have more than

one [wife](http://www.aztec-history.com/aztec-society-family.html), however, there were certain strict

rules governing these relationships.

The first wife the man took was considered

his “principal” wife, and was the only one he

went through marriage ceremonies with.

**2 Slavery**



Aztecs had a unique system for slavery.

Slavery among the Aztecs was much different

than that of the [Europeans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztec_slavery) and followed much

different rules.

Slaves children were not automatically property,

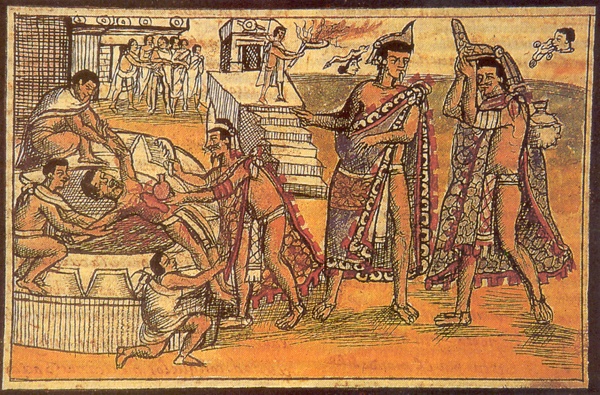
and slaves could own possessions and even own

other slaves.

If a slave tried to run away, only the master or his relatives were allowed to chase after them.

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**1 Human Sacrifice**



Aztec sacrifices were rituals to their gods and kept people under control.

Roughly 20,000 people were sacrificed by the Aztecs every year.

The people who were sacrificed were often eaten, as part of the sacrificial ritual.