TENOCHTITLAN ABOUT 1519

About 1519, Tenochtitlan had about 200,000 people, more than almost any city in Europe then. It stood on an island in Lake Texcoco, joined to the shore by three causeways. Canals crossed it like streets, chinampas fed it, and an aqueduct brought fresh water from Chapultepec. At its heart, the Templo Mayor rose above the walled sacred precinct.



WHAT THE LABELS SHOW

Templo Mayor The Great Temple: one stepped pyramid with twin temples on top, for Huitzilopochtli, god of sun and war, and Tlaloc, god of rain.

Sacred precinct The walled center of the city, full of temples, with a ball court and schools for priests.

Moctezuma's palace The ruler's huge palace beside the sacred precinct, with courtyards, rooms for officials and storehouses for tribute.

Tlatelolco market The biggest market, in the Mexica city on the north of the island. Judges kept order; goods were sold by count or by volume.

Causeway A raised stone road across the lake. Three joined the city to the shore; lift-away bridges let canoes through and could be removed in war.

Canal A waterway through the city. Canoes carried food, goods and people along canals like streets.

Chinampas Fields built up from the shallow lake bed with posts, woven fences, mud and plants, held by willow roots.

Aqueduct A stone channel that brought fresh spring water from Chapultepec hill. It had two channels, so one could be cleaned while the other ran.

Nezahualcoyotl's dike A long wall across the lake, built about 1449, that kept salty water and floods away from the city.

Lake Texcoco The biggest of the valley's five connected lakes, salty in its eastern part.