

MAYA

AD 900 - NON EUROPEAN SOCIETY

A cross-curricular resource box for ancient Maya & modern day Guatemala



- **Replica Maya ceramics:** calendars, codex stamps, masks and statues.
- **Dried maize and maize god statue** – maize was cultivated by the Maya and is important in creation myths.
- **Chocolate related things:** cocoa pod, molinillo (chocolate whisk), “Bean to Bar” set.
- **Dried cochineal insects** – used by the Maya to give red dye for fabric and body decoration. You might also look at other plant dyes used by the ancient Maya and which continue to be used today: indigo for blue and the purpura mollusc for purple.
- **Natural materials:** obsidian (for mirrors and arrowheads), jade and raw cotton.
- **Conch shell** – used as a trumpet by the Maya.
- **Traditional costumes and fabrics from Guatemala** – home to the modern day Maya people. The two red garments in the picture are called “huipilo”. They are made from fabric woven on traditional looms and richly decorated. The ancient Maya wove cotton on hip strap looms which are still used today. The moon goddess Ixchel is also goddess of weaving. Explore the motifs: snakes, double headed bird, jaguars, monkeys, eagles, parrots and sun and moon symbols feature in Mayan mythology. Contrast these with the horse, peacock and chicken which you see on modern fabrics; these animals were introduced only after the Spanish conquest.
- **Costume dolls from modern Guatemala**
One of the figures is carrying a basket on her head, the other has a “mecapal” - a net backpack suspended from a leather headband. Baskets are woven from bamboo, reeds or vines. In modern Guatemala motorised transport is scarce so provisions have to be carried in person. The dolls are wearing fabrics showing different woven and embroidery techniques.
- **Worry Dolls** – from Guatemala.
- **Geography artefacts to promote discussion about land use and climate:** rainforest plants & animals, volcano, cactus.