

DATE	EVENT
c. 20000 BCE	Evidence emerges of human existence in the Americas, resulting from two waves of migration across the Bering strait.
c. 10500 BCE	The first settlement of people in the Americas emerges around Monte Verde in southern Chile.
c. 9000 BCE	Evidence of several human settlements in Latin America.
c. 8000 BCE	"Tepexpan Man" (who was a woman) is thought to have lived. The remains were unearthed in the 1940s in Tepexpan, just north of Mexico City, marking the earliest human remains discovered in Latin America.
c. 7500–7000 BCE	Climactic changes lead to drier conditions and many large animals become extinct. Experimentation with agriculture begins.
c. 5000 BCE	Primitive farmers practice rudimentary agriculture in Tehuacán, in the modern state of Puebla, Mexico.
c. 4000 BCE	Agriculture settlements develop in the Amazon region.
c. 3500 BCE	Llamas are domesticated in Peru.
c. 3000 BCE	Cotton is used for cloth.
c. 2000 BCE	Maize emerges as the staple of human sustenance in the region.
c. 2000–400 BCE	The Olmec civilization in Mexico develops hieroglyphic writing and calendars.
c. 1800 BCE	The first settlements of the Classic Maya civilization take root.
c. 1400–400 BCE	Chavín culture develops in South America.
c. 1150 BCE	The Olmec center of San Lorenzo, Veracruz (Mexico), flourishes as an urban center with public buildings and drainage systems.
c. 900 BCE	La Venta surpasses San Lorenzo as the epicenter of Olmec activity.
c. 900–500 BCE	The Chavín culture in central Peru dominates the Andean region.
c. 400 BCE	Olmec civilization declines.
c. 200 BCE	Teotihuacán emerges as the most vibrant culture in the Valley of Mexico.
c. 200 BCE–c. 700 CE	The Nazca lines are created in the Peruvian desert.
c. 100–900 CE	Huari, Moche, and Tiwanaku cultures develop in the Andes.
292	The Mayan metropolis Tikal is settled. Its population eventually grows to about fifty thousand. Tikal features six enormous pyramids, with the largest rising more than 230 feet.
c. 500–800	The Classic Maya civilization declines, marked by internal upheaval, warfare, and increased human sacrifice.
c. 600	Teotihuacán is burned and desecrated by its own inhabitants.

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c. 950	Toltec civilization emerges in Mexico.
c. 968	The Toltec capital of Tula is founded by Topiltzin-Quetzalcóatl. Tula serves as the most important city in the area between the fall of Teotihuacán and the rise of Tenochtitlán.
c. 987	Topiltzin-Quetzalcóatl and his followers depart from Cholula, sailing across the Gulf of Mexico to Mayan territory. Bearded and with a fair complexion, the deposed ruler speaks of returning from where the sun rose in the year of Ce Acatl (which recurred cyclically) to reclaim his throne.
c. 1000	Metallurgy is developed.
c. 1000–1250	The city of Chichén Itzá dominates the twilight of the Toltec civilization.
c. 1080–1156	Drought and famine ravages the Toltec civilization, leading to civil strife and warfare. The Toltec abandon Tula, spreading in various directions.
c. 1100–1474	The Chimú kingdom develops in northern Peru.
1111	Occupants of Aztlán leave their village to meander throughout the Valley of Mexico for over a century before coalescing around Chapultepec, forming what would become the Aztec Empire.
c. 1200	Manco Capac founds the Kingdom of Cuzco, marking the birth of the Inca civilization.
1325	Aztec settlers begin expanding the capacity of their small island, transforming it into Tenochtitlán.
1415–1460	Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal encourages European exploration to find easier trade routes to Asia.
1438	Incan ruler Pachacuti begins a military expedition that would enlarge the realm of the Inca to include the whole of the Andes.
c. 1450	Natural disasters create famine, stunting Aztec growth.
1469	Isabella of Castile marries Ferdinand of Aragon, uniting the kingdoms of Spain.
1475–1476	The Inca conquer the Chimú after a decade of conflict.
1492	Christopher Columbus reaches the Caribbean islands. Though widely regarded as a pacific man, what he writes of his initial impressions is portentous: "They would make fine servants . . . with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want." The Spanish Crown expels the Muslim Moors from Spain; the Reconquista heavily influences Spanish conquistadors.
1493	Columbus settles Hispaniola on his second voyage. The Crown establishes the encomienda system on Hispaniola.
1494	Portugal and Spain sign the Treaty of Tordesillas, divvying control of the discovered continent between the two European countries.
1496	The first Spanish city in the Americas, Santo Domingo, is founded on Hispaniola.
1498	Columbus reaches mainland South America on his third voyage. Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama circumnavigates Africa en route to India.