



A Brief History of the Nahuatl People

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The Nahuatl developed many disciplines including art, poetry, architecture, murals, sculptures and textiles. In their culture artists were considered particularly gifted. The Nahuatl believed that artists were destined for such pursuits, and that this destiny was determined by the position of the stars at the time of a person’s birth.

Among the Nahuatl, snakes were associated with earthly matters, the night, and all things feminine. The serpent was considered the most important of sacred symbols.

Nahuatl tradition says that the world as we know it was created by Ometeotl “the Absolute” from which the four directions of the universe emerged: black, the North; white, the West; blue, the South; and red, the East.

The Mexican language comes from the Nahuatl root word meaning “a dance done with the hands.” It is also known as the “turquoise smoke harmonious speech,” or “that which is pleasing to the ear.”

A brief dictionary of common terms:

Nahuatl	English	Spanish
Kalli	House	Casa
Tlazocamatli	Thank you	Gracias
Tonatiuh	Sun	Sol
Mezli	Moon	Luna
Azteka	From Aztekatl (meaning Aztlan)	De Aztekatl (significa de Aztlan)
Tlatoa	Speak	Hablar
Ikniuhtli	Friend	Amigo
Nehuatl	I	Yo
Tehuatl	You	Tu

Niltze	Hi	Hola
Amo	No	No
Kema	Yes	Si
Titlatoa Nahuatl?	Do you speak Nahuatl?	Tu hablas Nahuatl?
Kema, Nitlatoa Nahuatl	Yes, I speak Nahuatl.	Yo hablo Nahuatl.
Amo, Nitlato Nahuatl.	No, I don't speak Nahuatl.	No hablo Nahuatl.
Ken Motoka?	What is your name?	Cual es tu nombre?
Nehuatl Notoka...	My name is...	Mi nombre es...
Kanin Tichanti?	Where do you live?	Donde es tu vives?
Nehuatl Nichanti...	I live...	Yo vivo...
Kenin Otimo Uika?	How are you doing?	Como as estado?
Hue Kaulli.	Very good.	Muy bien.
Kualli.	Good.	Bueno.
Cihuatl.	Woman	Mujer
Tlacatl	Man	Hombre
Nantlil	Mother	Madre
Tahtll	Father	Padre
Ikniuh	Brother	Hermano
Hueltiuh	Sister	Hermana
Cuacualti	Beautiful	Bonita
Ce	One	Uno
Ome	Two	Dos
Yeyi	Three	Tres
Nahui	Four	Cuatro
Macuil	Five	Cinco
Chicuacen	Six	Seis
Chicome	Seven	Siete
Chicuei	Eight	Ocho
Chihnahui	Nine	Nueve
Matlactli	Ten	Diez