

## MAYAS, INCAS AND AZTECS: THREE INDIAN CRADLES

In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived in San Salvador, an island where there were many people that he called "Indians". Before Europeans came to America, there were three important Indian civilizations: the Inca in Peru, the Maya and the Aztec in Mexico and Central America.

### Incas – The Peruvian Cradle

They lived in Peru. They were farmers and engineers. They created water irrigation systems because their land was dry and cool. Then, they lived in the mountainous regions and cultivated corn, cotton, beans and the white potato. They domesticated the llama and the alpaca that were in the Andean mountains.

They were great architects, too. Important cities were Cuzco and Machu Picchu. The Spaniards called them "The Inca Empire" because their ruler was the "Inca".

### THE MAYAN CIVILIZATION

The Mayas lived in Mexico and Central America. They were architects and built large buildings and cities like Chichén Itzá and Uxmal. They were astronomers, too. They invented a calendar with 18 months.

They also cultivated corn, sweet potatoes, peanut, manioc, pineapples, avocados, cotton and papayas. Currently many countries in different parts of the world also cultivate these products.

Today there are still many Mayas that speak their native language in the south of Mexico and in the north of Guatemala.

They were warriors. They lived in Mexico and Central America after the Mayan Civilization. The capital of the empire was Tenochtitlán, where Mexico City is located today. When the Spaniards came, there were silver and gold. There were huge pyramids too, because they were great engineers.

### CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

- a How many Indian civilizations were there in Latin America
- 1 two
  - 2 one
  - 3 three

- b The Peruvians created water irrigation systems because:
  - 1 the land was mountainous
  - 2 the land was dry and cool
  - 3 the land was flat and small
  
- c When the Spaniards came to the Aztec empire, there were:
  - 1 silver and gold
  - 2 pyramids and museums
  - 3 alpacas and llamas

**D. WHEN DID CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ARRIVE IN SAN SALVADOR?**

- 1. In 1942
- 2. In 1492
- 3. IN 1992

**E. WHERE DID THE MAYAN LIVE?**

- 1. In Perú
- 2. In San Salvador
- 3. In México