A000-MEX-Mixtec-Maize Deity

  



Figs. 1-4.

“Human Corn” — What Do You Mean?

“Human Corn” — it’s an odd phrase at first glance, especially to those of us raised in a modern, Euro-American society. Boiled down to its essence, it means “people are food.” Food for what? For everything, really. In traditional Aztec thought, humans are food for the gods and food for the Earth.

In his article “Cosmic Jaws,” Dr. David Carrasco notes a saying that survives among some indigenous tribes today in the region, “We eat the Earth, and the Earth eats us.” The Earth was said to have been created from the ever-hungry primordial monster-goddess Cipactli when Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, transformed into great serpents, squeezed her in half and created the land and the sky from her remains. In exchange for housing and feeding us, She eats us when we die. When we eat of the land, we literally eat death and begin racking up a debt to Cipactli (later honored with the name Tlaltecuhtli, the Earth Lord) for Her bounty.

Cipactli/Tlaltecuhtli isn’t the only deity depicted as eating people. Most famously, Tonatiuh the Sun received the heart sacrifice as food and drink, and Tlacaelel likened Nahua soldiers to tasty warm tortillas, hot from the griddle, destined for the table of the gods. Numerous prayers and songs, some recorded by Sahagun in Book 6 of the Florentine Codex, describe the sacrificed warrior entering the jaws of Tlaltecuhtli, and praise his blessed state as he goes to feed the cosmos.

Other prayers and huehuetlatolli (moral speeches) explicitly describe humans as corn. During the [festival month of Tititl](http://www.amoxtli.org/cuezali/festivals.html), young plants and young children were stretched to encourage them to grow tall and healthy — and for the same purpose. Youthful warriors were likened to the corn god Centeotl, and the strong linkage between corn/crop and war imagery in Aztec religion has long fascinated and puzzled scholars. (See works by David Carrasco and Kay Almere Read, for example.) Over and over again, we see the idea of “being food” as a central part of the Aztec conception of what it means to be human.

The Implications of “Human Corn”

So, what does it mean to incorporate “being food” into the human identity? Well… it means a very different outlook on our place in the world from what a lot of us were probably raised with. It means we’re not exempt from the natural cycle of eating and being eaten that the natural world runs on, and that this is the ordinary, proper mode of things. It’s no curse or aberration that we’re subject to birth and death, it’s merely part of our nature. It also means we’re not the center of the universe — if the Earth is a garden, we’re a crop planted in it, not the gardener. There’s no analogue to the story of Eden and the Abrahamic view of the dominance of humanity over the natural world here.

It also means humility. If we’re not the capstone of creation, the reason for the whole show, it means we need to get over ourselves. We’re just a part of the greater whole, sometimes likened to a household in traditional Nahua thought. No part is indispensable, from plants to animals, from humans to gods. Every being has its part to play, and that should be honored and acknowledged, but in its proper measure. Perhaps instead of whispering to ourselves, “Remember, thou art mortal!” as the Romans did, we should think, “Remember, thou art corn!” when we’re tempted to hubris.

Finally, it also imparts a certain amount of meaning and purpose to miquiztli (death). When we die, we nourish life and we pay the debt we owe to the Earth for sustaining us. Depending on your understanding of the gods and how the universe works, this can be interpreted in many, many ways as best suits your metaphysical and theological perspective. Whether interpreted poetically, mystically, or literally, the idea of “human corn” still holds valuable meaning in a modern setting.

As a bonus, if you would like to read a bit more about Aztec funeral practices and thoughts on death, I came across a brief article on the subject by David Iguaz that you might enjoy. Click [HERE to read it in html](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/pia/pv41993/pv4iguaz.htm), or [HERE to download the PDF](https://tlacatecco.com/2008/11/12/human-corn/www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/pia/prevcont/vol4/6.pdf).

[](https://tlacatecco.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/borgia27_corn.jpg)

Corn, Plate 27 of the Codex Borgia

In [Aztec mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztec_mythology), **Centeōtl** [[senˈteoːt͡ɬ]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Nahuatl) (also known as **Centeocihuatl** or **Cinteotl**) is the maize deity. *Cintli* [[ˈsint͡ɬi]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Nahuatl) means "dried maize still on the cob" and *teōtl* [[ˈteoːt͡ɬ]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Nahuatl) means "deity".[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-dic-1) According to the [Florentine Codex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Codex),[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-Miller-2) Centeotl is the son of the earth goddess, [Tlazolteotl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tlazolteotl" \o "Tlazolteotl) and solar deity [Piltzintecuhtli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piltzintecuhtli" \o "Piltzintecuhtli), the planet [Mercury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercury_(planet)). Born on the day-sign 1 Xochitl.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-4) Another myth claims him as the son of the goddess [Xochiquetzal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xochiquetzal" \o "Xochiquetzal).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-5) The majority of evidence gathered on Centeotl suggests that he is usually portrayed as a young man (although a debate is still ongoing), with yellow body colouration.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl#cite_note-Miller-2) Some specialists believe that Centeotl used to be the maize goddess [Chicomecōātl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicomecoatl" \o "Chicomecoatl). Centeotl was considered one of the most important deities of the Aztec era. There are many common features that are shown in depictions of Centeotl. For example, there often seems to be maize in his headdress. Another striking trait is the black line passing down his eyebrow, through his cheek and finishing at the bottom of his jaw line. These face markings are similarly and frequently used in the late post-classic depictions of the 'foliated' [Maya maize god](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god).

Like other [Mesoamerican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesoamerica) people, the traditional [Mayas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_civilization) recognize in their staple crop, [maize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maize), a vital force with which they strongly identify. This is clearly shown by their mythological traditions. According to the 16th-century [Popol Vuh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popol_Vuh), the [Hero Twins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero_Twins) have maize plants for alter egos and man himself is created from maize. The discovery and opening of the Maize Mountain - the place where the corn seeds are hidden - is still one of the most popular of Maya tales. In the Classic period (200-900 AD), the maize deity shows aspects of a [culture hero](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_hero).

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**Female and male maize deities**

In Mayan oral tradition, maize is usually personified as a woman[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god" \l "cite_note-1) - like [rice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice) in Southeast Asia, or [wheat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheat) in [ancient Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and Rome. The acquisition of this woman through bridal capture constitutes one of the basic Mayan myths.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Thompson-2) In contrast to this, the pre-Spanish Mayan aristocracy appears to have primarily conceived of maize as male. The classic period distinguished two male forms: a foliated (leafy) maize god and a [tonsured](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonsure) one.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Taube_1985-3) The foliated god is present in the so-called maize tree (Temple of the Foliated Cross, [Palenque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palenque)), its cobs being shaped like the deity's head. A male maize deity representing the foliated type and labeled God E is present in the three extant Maya books of undisputed authenticity.

Whereas the foliated maize god is a one-dimensional vegetation spirit, the tonsured maize god's functions are much more diverse. When performing ritually, the latter typically wears a netted jade skirt and a belt with a large [spondylus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spondylus) shell covering the loins. On [stelae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_stelae), it is a queen rather than a king that tends to represent the tonsured maize god. The queen thus appears as a maize goddess, in accordance with the Mayan narrative traditions mentioned above.

**Late pre-classic and classic Mayan maize mythology**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SAN_FRAN-1.jpg)

Fig. 2: San Francisco Capstone depicting the Tonsured Maize God residing in a well.

Many classic Mayan paintings, particularly those on vases, testify to the existence of a rich mythology centered on the tonsured maize god. The late pre-classic murals of [San Bartolo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Bartolo_(Maya_site)) demonstrate its great antiquity.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Saturno_2005-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Taube_2010-5) Several theories, with varying degrees of ethnographic support, have been formulated to account for episodes such as the maize deity's resurrection from a turtle, his canoe voyage, and his transformation into a cacao tree.

**Popol Vuh twin myth extension**

The tonsured maize god is often accompanied by the [hero twins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero_Twins). Following [Karl Taube](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Taube), many scholars (such as [Michael D. Coe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_D._Coe)) believe that the resurrected tonsured maize god of the classic period corresponds to the father of the hero twins in the [Popol Vuh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popol_Vuh) called [Hun-Hunahpu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hun-Hunahpu).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Taube_1985-3) However, this generally accepted identification has also been contested.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Braakhuis_2009-6)

**Cosmological creation myth**

[Linda Schele](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Schele)'s emphasis on creation has led to a series of interconnected hypotheses all involving the cosmological centrality of the tonsured maize god (or "first father"), to wit: his establishment of the so-called "three-stone hearth" (assumed to represent a constellation);[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Freidel-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-8) his raising of the world tree;[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Freidel-7) his "dance of creation";[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Freidel-7)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Taube_2009-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-10) and his stance as an acrobat, which (more or less coinciding with representations of a crocodile tree) seems to evoke the central world tree.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-11) The maize god's presence in the San Bartolo arrangement of five world trees has been interpreted as his establishment of the world.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-12)

**Seasonal myth**

Another theory, formulated by [Simon Martin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Martin_(Mayanist)),[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god" \l "cite_note-Martin_2006-13) focuses on the tonsured maize god's interaction with an aged jaguar deity of trade, [God L](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_L). This interaction is related to the hero's transformation into a cacao tree conceived as a "trophy tree." God L is assumed to have presided over the dry season dedicated to long-distance trade, warfare, and the cacao harvest, and the Tonsured Maize God over the wet season and the growth of the maize. The onset of the two seasons is thought to be symbolized by the defeat of the maize deity and of God L, respectively.

**Gulf Coast maize myth**

In many scenes, an aquatic environment strongly comes to the fore (see fig. 2), most famously in the maize deity's resurrection from the carapace of a turtle that is floating on the waters. Braakhuis[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god" \l "cite_note-Braakhuis_2009-6) pointed out that such an environment also characterizes an important maize myth shared by many ethnic groups (such as [Huaxtecs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huastec_people), [Totonacs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totonacs), [Nahuas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahuas) and [Zoques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoque_people)) inhabiting Mexico's Gulf Coast. The fact that this myth focuses on a male, rather than a female maize deity, while at the same time establishing an intimate connection between the maize god and the turtle, is adduced in support of the idea that the classic Mayas once formed part of the same narrative tradition. More in particular, the Pre-Classic [San Bartolo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Bartolo_(Maya_site)) Mayan maize deity dancing with a turtle drum amidst aquatic deities may have a connection with a [Zoque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoque_people) ([Popoluca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popoluca" \o "Popoluca)) version of the Gulf Coast maize myth.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Braakhuis_2009-6)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Taube_2009-9)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Braakhuis_2014-14)

**Names and calendar functions**

Several designations for the pre-Spanish maize god occur in the *Book of Chilam Balam* of Chumayel. They include *ah mun* (tender green shoot) [[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-15) and *zac uac nal* (white six new corn) or *uac chuaac nal* (six tall new corn).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Thompson-2) In the wake of Schele, the tonsured maize god (hypothetically equated with Hun-Hunahpu) has often been nicknamed "first father." The classic name of the tonsured maize god, which usually includes the numeral "One", is not known with certainty. Schele's "Hun-Nal-Ye" used to be popular; more recently, "Ixim" (maize grains) and "Nal" (wet ear of corn) are being considered.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Zender,_Marc_2014_1–14-16)

In a general sense, maize relates to the day Q'an (ripe or ripeness). The appearance of the tonsured maize god is connected to the base date of the Long Count, 4 Ahau 8 Cumku. The head of the tonsured maize god serves to denote the number 1, that of the foliated maize god the number 8.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_maize_god#cite_note-Zender,_Marc_2014_1–14-16) The tonsured maize god is sometimes found associated with the lunar crescent and may therefore have played a role in the divisions of the lunar count; his head seems to occur in glyph C of the Lunar Series (see also [Maya moon goddess](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_moon_goddess)).

**See also**

* [Centeōtl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centeotl) (Aztec god of maize)
* [Chicomecōātl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicomecoatl) (Aztec goddess of maize)
* [Xochipilli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xochipilli) (Aztec god of flowers, maize, and the arts)

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[**The Maize God (God E)**](http://ancientmayalife.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-maize-god-god-e.html)

*Author's note: this post was last updated on 11/19/17.*

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| [https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-Wz37Kw2vmmo/WhIz77tqoDI/AAAAAAAAA_Y/saMJFt1aerIymt1orBL7pgEiHVSTipPZACLcBGAs/s640/composite.png](https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-Wz37Kw2vmmo/WhIz77tqoDI/AAAAAAAAA_Y/saMJFt1aerIymt1orBL7pgEiHVSTipPZACLcBGAs/s1600/composite.png) |
| *Composite image by the author, made from photos of figurine made in the 700s AD, in Mexico.It shows the Maize God wearing jewelry and a headdress, in a corn plant. Source photos from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* |

Fertility, [jade](http://ancientmayalife.blogspot.com/2011/07/jade-precious-stone-of-maya.html), beauty, and the idea of being young were all things the ancient Maya thought when they thought of the Maize God; they also would draw his head when they wanted a symbol of corn -- or a symbol of cacao. Other than all of these things, this god was connected to rulers and may have had several aspects. The ancient Maya believed in a lot of gods, and the Maize God -- which you may see called God E -- was definitely a major one in their religion.  
  
Appearance   
The Maize God was drawn as young and with a head that looks somewhat like an ear of corn. That is, his head was elongated and he only had hair right on top of his head. He is also drawn with a whole bunch of jewelry made from jade, and on his belt there's an ornament that you may see called the "xook monster." (The "xook monster" looks like the head of a shark that was drawn with a lot of artistic license.)

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| [https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-rmw9KwdAQVo/WhIv2W5udUI/AAAAAAAAA_A/OWDnMzQDDbwc-z5jijGGHTsEjNsoYYbkACLcBGAs/s200/b.jpg](https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-rmw9KwdAQVo/WhIv2W5udUI/AAAAAAAAA_A/OWDnMzQDDbwc-z5jijGGHTsEjNsoYYbkACLcBGAs/s1600/b.jpg) |
| *This stucco artifact was made between 100 BC and 100 AD. It comes either from Mexico or Guatemala. From LACMA, which  calls it an "architectural medallion."* |

The ancient Maya also liked to draw images of the Maize God wearing a netted "skirt" of jade that goes down to the middle of his thighs. This "skirt" might be a symbol of something else. Another is that it represents a turtle shell, which is a symbol representing the earth. (The turtle shell symbol is also part of a myth about the Maize God that the ancient Maya seemed to like a lot. See below for more in The Myth of the Maize God section.)  
  
 How the ancient Maya drew the Maize God didn't always stay exactly the same. For a while, in the Early Classic (the first part of the Classic Period,) the ancient Maya liked to draw the Maize God so that his mouth was open and his two front teeth stuck out. They moved away from this, and eventually began to like drawing him with a closed mouth.  
  
The Two Aspects  
This description of the Maize God -- being young, with a long head and having only some hair -- might only apply to an aspect of the Maize God. You may know this aspect as the Tonsured Maize God. His ancient Mayan name might be Juun Ixiim, which has several translations including "One Grain Corn."  
  
The reason why the description might be only for the Tonsured Maize God is because of what the ancient Maya who lived in the Classic Period never seemed to want to put on their pottery: images of another possible aspect, the Foliated Maize God. (Though they did use his name glyph as a "head variant" for the number eight.)  
  
The Foliated Maize God, whose name might be Ajan, was connected to corn plants that were fully grown. The ancient Maya drew this possible aspect with an ear of corn coming out of his head. The ancient Maya who created the four known codices -- which come from the Postclassic Period -- seem to have drawn only him.  
  
These two aspects might not even be aspects at all. There is also the belief that they were both gods on their own, though they were both gods of corn.  
Fig. 1: Tonsured Maize God as a patron of the scribal arts, Classic period



unknown Maya artist - Francis Robicsek: The Maya Book of the Dead. The Ceramic Codex, University of Virginia Art Museum (1981).

The Maize God as scribe

The Myth of the Maize God  
There is a myth of the Maize God, seen from the Preclassic Period on into the Popol Vuh. (It doesn't mean it's always the exact same myth, though.) In it, the Maize God dies, goes into the underworld, and comes back to life.

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| *The front pieces of a pair of earflares showing the head of the Maize God as a symbol of picked corn -- his close eyes mean he's dead. They were made in the 400s AD to 600s AD and might be from Guatemala. From The Metropolitan Museum of Art.* |

When they drew the Maize God going to the Underworld, which is drawn as being watery, Ancient Maya artists liked to show him going there in a canoe. The Maize God is then reborn, but as strange as it may sound, he isn't resurrected yet -- he only does that after he forces his way back above the ground. (He doesn't do it alone either -- he either has Chaak or the Hero Twins help him back out.) Before he can force his way back above ground through, women in the Underworld put pieces of jade jewelry on him -- this has to be done before he resurrects.  
  
Connections to Ancient Maya Rulers  
It seems rulers in the ancient Maya world wanted people to look at their family's rule as like the cycle of plants: when a ruler died, another one took that ruler's place. (It was supposed to be like the cycle had started over with the new ruler.)

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| https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-3g1_IitpEZQ/WhHQ8Yp0AxI/AAAAAAAAA-k/qpo-I0AlbnYdMUBPEbqU9i9hAJdzLZRawCPcBGAYYCw/s1600/a.jpg |
| *This piece of pottery is from Guatemala and was made between 300 AD and 600 AD. The ruler drawn  on it is impersonating the Maize God. From LACMA.* |

It also looks like rulers thought that they would actually have the same thing happen to them that happened to the Maize God in the myth -- so they had jade jewelry put on their bodies when they died. While alive, rulers would impersonate the Maize God for rituals, which was something they did with other gods too.  
  
An example of where you can see a ruler dressed like the Maize God (and another god, K'awiil) is the sarcophagus lid of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, a ruler of Palenque. He may either be rising up from the Underworld, rising up to the Upperworld, or perhaps falling into the Underworld.  
  
Another example of an impersonation of the Maize God is on Stela H at the site of Copan. The king impersonating the god on this stela is Waxaklajuun Ub'aah K'awiil. His netted "skirt" though goes to his ankles, which is not the normal length at all for it.  
  
Consideration: Other Aspects?  
According to Oswaldo Chinchilla Mazariegos, the Maize God had a lunar aspect. This is because there are a lot of images where he is drawn with a rabbit as well as a symbol representing the moon. This symbol, can start from one of two places: either his armpit or his back.

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| https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-DMc1JC_vjxI/WhHQ-MGO31I/AAAAAAAAA-o/0B0LWk80muEg3I6jIQgRbSgHp54SfskxgCPcBGAYYCw/s1600/b.jpg |
| *The figure on the left of this vase is a drawing of the Maize God  with that moon symbol. The vase comes from either Guatemala or Mexico  and was made between 300 AD and 900 AD. From LACMA.* |

There is a theory that the Maize God was somehow female too. This is because of the netted "skirt" that the ancient Maya liked to draw him wearing. However, this garment doesn't have any specific connection to women.  
  
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**ORIGINAL QUESTION received from - and thanks to - *Danny, school pupil*: Where did the Aztecs store their food? *(Answered by Ian Mursell/Mexicolore)***

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| Stone sculpture representing the storage of corn/maize |
| Stone sculpture representing the storage of corn/maize |

The short answer is *‘in granaries’.*  
Famine was a constant worry to the Aztecs and their rulers. It was famine, rather than malnutrition, that proved the biggest threat to the population. Hunger was a common fact of life during the year, especially during June and July, the season between the two harvests. Worse, there could always be emergencies due to swarms of locusts and/or rodents (rats and mice), or particularly heavy rain or snow storms.  
Feeding a valley-wide population of some 1 million people was no joke, and a four-year drought around the year 1450 ended in a disastrous famine. At that time, one report tells of the three rulers of the ‘Triple Alliance’ government working together to distribute the saved-up stores of grain of 10 years and more.

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| [Filling a granary, Florentine Codex Book 7](http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/images-aus/aus_26_02_2.jpg) |
| Filling a granary, Florentine Codex Book 7 (Click on image to enlarge) |

In the case of their most important crop, corn/maize, a ‘typical’ Aztec farmer harvested ripe corn cobs in September, plucking the ears and tying them up in bundles. *‘Some of the shelled maize was kept in jars around the house, and the rest was stored in great bins made of planks or of wickerwork plastered with mortar’*(Warwick Bray).

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| [Exhibition model of wooden corn storage bin, Mexico City](http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/images-aus/aus_26_03_2.jpg) |
| Exhibition model of wooden corn storage bin, Mexico City (Click on image to enlarge) |

According to Book 8 of the famous Florentine Codex, an entire building in the city of Tenochtitlan, called the***Petlacalco***, was used to house these food storage bins. The building had its own full-time official, called a ‘Keeper of the Storehouse’.  
The Codex records that more than 2,000 measures of dried maize kernels were kept there - enough, apparently, to give a 20-year supply to the city. Other bins contained dried beans, chía (grain), amaranth seeds, coarse salt, chiles and squash seeds. Most of this food supply was, as shown in the Codex Mendoza, probably collected by the Aztecs as tribute.

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| [Maize and beans/chia storage bins - tribute from Coyolapan - in the Codex Mendoza, folio 44r](http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/images-aus/aus_26_04_2.jpg) |
| Maize and beans/chia storage bins - tribute from Coyolapan - in the Codex Mendoza, folio 44r (Click on image to enlarge) |

It was in these large food storage bins or huts, by the way, that pregnant women had to stay during the night of the ‘New Fire Ceremony’, to avoid being turned into demons! At least this all-important Aztec festival only happened once every 52 years...!

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