



Masterpieces at Their Peak: The World's Largest Exhibition on the Ancient Civilizations of the Americas Opens at the Shanghai Museum

Descrizione

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SHANGHAI, July 17, 2026 /PRNewswire/ • The Shanghai Museum's "On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas" is now officially open to the public. As the largest exhibition ever dedicated to the ancient civilizations of the Americas, it brings together 1,129 groups of objects, nearly 3,000 pieces, from leading museums and cultural institutions in Mexico, Peru, and China. Jointly organized by the Shanghai Museum, Secretariat of Culture of the Government of Mexico's, INAH, and Ministry of Culture of Peru, the exhibition is structured around the World Tree, the central cosmological concept shared across many ancient American civilizations. Spanning nearly three millennia of history, it presents a comprehensive survey of the civilizations of the ancient Americas. Exceptional works from museum collections across seven provinces in China also join these remarkable treasures from the Americas.

During the exhibition, the Shanghai Museum on People's Square is transformed beneath the symbolic canopy of the World Tree into an immersive environment inspired by the ancient Americas. Drawing on visual motifs including maize, jaguars, feathered serpents, and pyramids, the museum becomes a cultural landscape that evokes the civilizations on display. Occupying over 7,000m² of gallery space, the exhibition moves beyond a conventional chronological presentation by placing objects within their historical and cultural contexts to reveal the connections between different civilizations. High-fidelity reconstructions are combined with multimedia installations to create immersive experiences, including multimedia projections, immersive environments, and participatory installations inspired by ritual practice, sacred architecture, mythology, and a ceremonial ballgame. Together, these installations present both the engineering achievements and spiritual worlds of ancient Mesoamerican civilizations, translating the concept of a "vertical cosmos" into an immersive spatial experience where archaeology and mythology converge.

Extending beyond the galleries, the exhibition unfolds across 10,000m2 of immersive experiences, offering visitors far more than a visual spectacle. This journey through ancient civilizations engages all the senses. From the maize field outside People's Square to the towering World Tree rising through the Museum's central atrium, visitors are gradually immersed in the world of the ancient Americas as they move from outdoors to indoors. Sight, smell, and taste all become part of the experience. The Shanghai Museum also introduces an integrated cultural experience combining special exhibitions, cultural products, dining, social activities, and live performances, allowing every visitor to discover the way of experiencing the exhibition that appeals to them most.

The Shanghai Museum has partnered with institutions including Shanghai Zoo, Shanghai Expo Culture Park, and Chenshan National Botanical Garden to launch an integrated, multi-dimensional curatorial approach encompassing the interplay of antiquities, historical figures, animals, plants and foods in a citywide collaborative program inspired by the concept of the World Tree. Through these cross-institutional partnerships, the exhibition extends beyond the Museum to create a multidimensional cultural experience across Shanghai. The Shanghai Museum has also established a comprehensive land-sea-air model, featuring cross-sector ticket packages to enhance accessibility and audience engagement. Beyond the Museum, themed immersive consumption spaces have been created, fostering deeper integration between the exhibition and urban life. To accompany the exhibition, the Shanghai Museum will introduce over 3,000 exhibition-inspired cultural products, alongside Museum Nights, multifunctional leisure spaces, immersive VR experiences, dedicated dining and relaxation areas, and a wide range of educational programs and interpretive resources. During the exhibition period, themed metro trains, buses, sightseeing coaches, and Huangpu River cruises will further extend the exhibition's presence throughout the city, bringing the atmosphere of the ancient civilizations of the Americas to Shanghai.

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