

Fruit

Wild cucumber trees known as Kat or Cat in the Maya language, grow in South Mexico and Guatemala. The fruits are known as pepino kat in Yucatan always eaten cooked.



The Achiotl or Ku'u up in Maya, or Achiote in Spanish, grew originally in Mexico. Achiote is an important ingredient in "Pibil Pastes" and Mayan cooking. The spiny fruits are red-brown and contain the valuable burned red seeds. Seeds are dried and used as powder.



Habanero Chilis, are native to the Yucatan peninsula. Habanero chili have green, yellow and orange skins when ripe and are considered to be the world's hottest chili. It was used to flavour lots of Maya foods, including chocolate and the corn-meal gruel known as ul.



Sapote trees, Cuyche in Maya bear light brown velvety fruits with soft creamy texture pulp in the middle and grow all over Mesoamerica.



Other plants

Coconuts, Kastelan tuk in Maya, don't grow in the mountains. Coconut palms require sandy soil, full sun, and high humidity for growth, so prefer the rainforest.

The Ramon tree, Tax'Osh in Maya, are found across Mesoamerica. Ramon trees produce small round seeds with one starchy highly nutritious nut.

The Elephant Ear Tree, Piich in Maya, also grows over Mesoamerica. Piich exotic seed pods, (that look like purple ears), contain seeds with a light peanut flavour. Maya people cooked Piich seeds as snacks (much like pop-corn) and to make flour for tortillas when corn crops are not good.



Animals

As well as keeping some animals, like dogs, for eating, the Maya also hunted for meat. They hunted armadillos, who preferred the grasslands and rainforest to the mountains.

Tapirs were also hunted. They are a small pig-like animal with a long snout, although they're more closely related to horses. They live in the mountains as well as the lower ground.



Monkeys were also hunted, like the howler monkeys who live in the rainforests.

Wild turkeys, which lived in the grass and scrub in the Yucatan peninsula, were hunted too.



The Maya hunted with spears, bows and arrows and blowpipes, as shown on these images from Maya vases.

