



IMAGE: Great Big Story

CHINAMPAS: ANCIENT WAYS TODAY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

[#12: Responsible Consumption and Production](#)

[#6: Clean Water & Sanitation](#)

POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are Chinampas and why are they important today?

BACKGROUND

In the southern part of Mexico, the *indigenous* (first, original) people were called Nahua people. They spoke many Nahuatl languages and found ways to farm and live in environments that were diverse and ever changing. Over 800 years ago, in about the year 1100, Nahua people were farming by creating small islands. There is some evidence that people were using these islands to farm over 5,000 years ago! These islands were called chinampas and they are an incredible technological invention that continues today. The chinampas were so successful that when the Aztec empire grew in about 1428, chinampas became the main way to feed many people in the empire and the massive city of Tenochtitlan. There are many things that make chinampas unique, which is why they are still in use today in Mexico and why people around the world have started similar practices. Unfortunately, chinampas are in danger today because of how Spanish colonizers destroyed water systems in the Mexico Valley. This destruction, combined with current social and environmental issues, put chinampas and their traditions in great danger. However, there are many people working to protect and spread chinampas because of how well they can feed people while protecting the earth.

RESOURCES

Key Vocabulary

- Chinampa
- Sustainable
- Indigenous
- Canals
- Biodiversity
- Urbanization

Personal Stories

- [Can the Chinampas Survive?](#) (Commonweal)
- [Keeping Aztec Farming Traditions Alive in Mexico](#) (Al Jazeera)

Background

- Article: [Chinampas, The Floating Gardens of Mexico](#) (Ancient Origins)
- Infographic/diagram: [Las Chinampas](#)
- Map: [Mexico Valley in 1519](#) (ScienceDirect, Wikimedia)
- Photos: [Images of Chinampas](#) (Permies)
- Photos: [Xochimilco Floating Gardens, Canals, and Local Food Photo Gallery](#) (Lokal)
- Video: [How Mexico City's Mysterious Floating Gardens Helped Feed the City For Hundreds of Years](#) (11 mins - Youtube: Eater)
- Website: [UNESCO World Heritage Site: Historic Center of Mexico City and Xochimilco](#) (UNESCO)

Problems + Perspectives

- Article & Video: [Mexico's Axolotl salamander fights for survival](#) (Reuters)

- Map: [Mexico Valley Today](#) (Geo Institute / WSP)
- Video: [Mexico City's troubled relationship with water](#) (10 mins - Physics World)

Progress + Solutions

- Article: [Chinampas: What they are, and why they matter today more than ever](#) (Upworthy)
- Article: [Mexico's Famous Floating Gardens Return to Their Agricultural Roots](#) (Smithsonian)
- Article, Video, Diagram: [Farmers in Bangladesh are floating crops to adapt to climate change](#) (Global Commission on Adaptation)
- Infographic: [Floating Cities: Your Guide to the Future of Urban Construction](#) (Big Rentz)
- Video: [Fighting to Keep Mexico's Floating Farms Alive](#) (3 mins - Youtube: Great Big Story)
- Video: [Making Chinampas in Montana](#) (7 mins. - Youtube: ABC Farms)
- Video: [Mexicans turn to ancient Aztec floating gardens to revive mangrove forests](#) (6 mins -DW)
- Website: [Organization - Yolcan](#) (Website in Spanish, page can Google Translate to English)

