

Everyone has their own religion they follow, different holidays they celebrate, and speak their own native language. Even the person who is reading this has their own way of doing things. Most families hand down their way of doing things for generations and generations. Some are so old that it is often affected by their surroundings. Indigenous people preserve their culture by celebrating traditions, following their religions, eating their cultural foods, and speaking their native languages. All of these have been handed down to the different indigenous groups for thousands and thousands of years.

Every group of Indigenous people have their own set of beliefs. The religion is practiced among the group of people in the same area for years and years. People continue to practice their religions and often in a combination with common religions, such as Christianity (Indigenous Religions). The ancient Mayan worshiped many gods. These gods stand for the elements of the world. For instance there is a god of rain, sun, and lightning. The ancient Mayan believed that everything in the world had a spirit (Hart 14). For instance, I follow the Catholic religion, and I go to church almost every Sunday and follow the different traditions in the religion. This religion has been passed down by my family for generations. So we are keeping the Catholic religion alive by pursuing the religion. The Mayan celebrate important holidays, such as Christmas and Easter week. They are celebrated by carrying pictures of saints through the streets (Hart 14-15). This tradition will continue to be passed on, just like how the Catholic religion has been passed down in my family.

Similar to preserving their religious beliefs, the Mayan also have traditional farming practices that are important to their culture. Many Mayan are farmers growing beans, corn, squash, and many other vegetables. Indigenous communities have a great understanding about crop cycles and harvest mostly corn because it is considered holy to the Maya, who call it the “giver of life”. That’s why most of the harvest will be corn (Indigenous communities). The slash-and-burn method is used traditionally among indigenous people to clear the land. Now the Maya have been introduced to chemical fertilizers that enrich the soil, the traditional slash-and-burn method is not as ordinary anymore. “Some Maya still follow traditional farming methods, but in many parts of the highlands, much of the land has already been cleared. As a result, slash-and-burn agriculture is no longer as common as it once was among Maya farmers. Many farmers have adapted by using chemical fertilizers to enrich the soil. Some Maya farmers have developed new methods for growing crops in the shade of their own orchards” (Hart 10-11). Due to not many people following the traditional slash-and-burn method, the tradition will soon die out and no one will be using it anymore. The only way the tradition can stay alive, is that you have to pass the tradition down your family and not let it be influenced by other people’s methods of farming. Then the tradition can stay alive between your family and eventually, spread across to other families.



Over time the Maya in different areas developed their own languages. A bunch of different Maya groups now live spread across Mesoamerica. Each group speaks its own language (Hart 3). “There are as many as 31 Mayan languages, each spoken in a particular part of the Mayaregion. Among the most widely spoken highland languages are Quiché, Cakchiquel, Tzotzil, and Tzeltal. Many Maya also speak Spanish” (Hart 3). Since every group of indigenuous people have their own language and live all spread out in places where not many visitors go near, they can keep their culture and traditions alive without people influencing them. The languages are unique and one of a kind for every Indiginous group of people. They speak them every day and teach the language to their children, for them to later pass it down and keep the language alive.



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