

How to play the Ancient Maya game of Pok-a-Tok

The fun and exciting game of 'Pok-a-tok' was played thousands of years ago. The aim of the game was to pass a solid, rubber ball through a hoop on either side of a high, walled stadium to score points. Games would frequently last all day, so if a team managed to score a point, the game would usually end. It was a very religious game, where the rubber ball represented the sun and the players represented the sun god's servants carrying the sun across the great earth.

Would you like to go back in time to play a ball game of the Ancient Maya? Then read on and follow these simple instructions.

You will need:

- 2 circular, stone hoops
- 3 discs or markers
- 1 deadly ball (50cm in diameter)
- 2 knee pads
- A headdress is optional
- 1 protective helmet, called a yolk
- 2 teams of 2-7 players



How to play:

- First, choose two teams that have the same amount of people and choose who is scoring in each hoop.
- Next, ensure that everyone is fully protected with arm, chest and knee pads and a protective helmet. The ball is extremely hard and heavy (7kg) and players will often get hurt.

- The aim of the game is to try and hit the ball in to the stone hoop (about 9m off the ground).
- The ball can only be hit using the knee, hip and right elbow.
- Always ensure the ball is in constant motion and the ball must not touch the ground; however, you can try to get the other team to drop the ball.
- Once a team have managed to score a goal, by getting the ball through a hoop, the game is over.
- It is not the end though. Be careful, as sometimes the winners or losers were sacrificed to the gods.

Congratulations, you now know precisely how to play the historical, ancient game of pok-a-tok.

Top Tip: Remember DO NOT use your hands or feet!