

From: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_sacrifice\\_in\\_Aztec\\_culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice_in_Aztec_culture)

*Tezcatlipoca was generally considered the most powerful god, the god of night, sorcery and destiny...The Aztecs believed that Tezcatlipoca created war to provide food and drink to the gods. Tezcatlipoca was known by several epithets...which stress his affinity for discord. Tezcatlipoca had the power to forgive sins and to relieve disease, or to release a man from the fate assigned to him by his date of birth; however, nothing in Tezcatlipoca's nature compelled him to do so. He was capricious and often brought about reversals of fortune, such as bringing drought and famine...To the Aztecs, he was an all-knowing, all-seeing nearly all-powerful god.*

*During the 20-day month of Toxcatl, a young impersonator of Tezcatlipoca would be sacrificed. Throughout a year, this youth would be dressed as Tezcatlipoca and **treated as a living incarnation of the god. The youth would represent Tezcatlipoca on earth**; he would get four beautiful women as his companions until he was killed. In the meantime he walked through the streets of Tenochtitlan playing a flute. On the day of the sacrifice, a feast would be held in Tezcatlipoca's honor. The young man would climb the pyramid, break his flute and surrender his body to the priests. Sahagún compared it to the Christian Easter.*

*In the usual procedure of the ritual, the sacrifice would be taken to the top of the temple. The sacrifice would then be laid on a stone slab by **four priests**, and his/her abdomen would be sliced open by **a fifth priest** with a ceremonial knife made of flint. The cut was made in the abdomen and went through the diaphragm. The priest would grab the heart and tear it out, still beating. It would be **placed in a bowl held by a statue of the honored god**, and the body thrown down the temple's stairs. The body would land on a terrace at the base of the pyramid...Before and during the killing, priests and audience (who gathered in the plaza below) **stabbed, pierced and bled themselves as autosacrifice**...Hymns, whistles, spectacular costumed dances and percussive music marked different phases of the rite.*

*The body parts would then be disposed of: **the viscera fed the animals in the zoo**; the bleeding head was placed on display in the tzompantli, meaning 'hairy skulls'. Not all the skulls in the tzompantlis were victims of sacrifice. In the Anales de Tlatelolco it is described ...the Tlatelolcas built three tzompantli: two for their own dead and one for the fallen conquerors, including two severed heads of horses.*

*...in 1487, the Aztecs sacrificed about 80,400 prisoners over the course of four days [that's over 20 000 a day, and around fourteen human sacrifices per minute]. Four tables were arranged at the top so that the victims could be jettisoned down the sides of the temple. Nonetheless, according to Codex Telleriano-Remensis, old Aztecs who talked with the missionaries told about ...the reconsecration of the temple, approximately 4,000 victims [were sacrificed] in total. Michael Harner, in his 1977 article *The Enigma of Aztec Sacrifice*, estimates the number of persons sacrificed in central Mexico in the 15th century as high as 250,000 per year.*

