The Mayan god Karturulum

God of truth

**Did you know?**Interestingly, the Mayans believed that it was a great honour to be sacrificed to the gods. They believed that when ordinary Mayan people die their souls would forever be stuck in Xibalba, the underworld, however, those who were sacrificed would get to go to the upperworld.

**How did the Mayans celebrate Karturulum?**Just like we celebrate big events such as birthdays, the ancient Maya held festivals related to special dates on the Maya calendar to celebrate their gods. Once a year, the ancient Maya would hold a festival for the god Karturulum. They would celebrate by piercing their tongues to symbolise that they need to speak the truth.  
The specific ritual related to Karturulum was called turuleam (too-roo-lee-am) which was the ritual performed when they needed to settle an issue between two or more Mayan people. First, they would pray to Karturulum and dance around a huge, open fire pit with a blazing fire burning at the centre. After the prayers, each person would have to offer their best, healthiest maize crop to the god by burning it and whoever’s smoke went the highest was considered to be the person that was telling the truth.

**What does he look like?**The Mayans believed that Karturulum took the form of a human, as he was able to empathise and show compassion with the humans. Curiously, he was always pictured with a snake on his head. It is believed that this is because the snake represents deceit and therefore is able to recognise the deceitful, cheating snake in anyone who presents themselves.



The gods and spirits were extremely important to the ancient Maya. They believed in many, many gods, which each represented a different aspect of life. On a regular basis, the Mayan communities made offerings to them, in the form of animal and even human sacrifices. Many of their gods had overlapping roles and names. Some had human form, some took the form of an animal, others were phenomena of nature.

**Karturulum   
(car-too-roo-loom)**

**Who is the god, Karturulum?**Karturulum was valued as one of the highest Mayan gods because he was known as the god of truth. He was so important to the Mayans as they believed that he had the power to determine whether or not someone was telling the truth. Incredibly, the Mayans relied on this ritual to settle arguments from as little as who took the last cocoa bean to as big as murder.