

PrepUS History  
Unit 1 – The Colonial Era  
Early Native Americans Notes

*Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Early Native Americans were dispersed across different environments in North America. Here are some of the main Early Native American cultures:*

Arctic Region: Inuit

- inhabited Arctic areas where temperature was below zero much of the year
- ate primarily fish, sea mammals (seals), and land mammals (caribou, deer)
- wore clothing made from the skins of the animals they eat
- lived in igloos while hunting on the ice
  - winter houses were partly dug into the ground and built with sod and/or seal skin roofs
  - summer homes were animal hides sewn together and held up with sticks or whale ribs

Northwest Coast Region: Kwakiutl (kwah-kee-oo-tl)

- inhabited the Pacific Northwest coast characterized by a rainy, mild climate
- ate fish, sea mammals, deer, birds, small game, clams, shellfish, seaweed, berries, and roots
- in the summer men wore nothing or a breechcloth and women wore short skirts of cedar bark
  - in the winter both genders wore knee-length tunics made of animal skins, long cloaks of shredded cedar bark, and moccasins on their feet
- both men and women sometimes wore basketry hats made of finely woven spruce root
  - designs and patterns displayed a person's status and family
- lived in villages of rectangular cedar-plank houses up to 100 feet long with bark roofs
  - housed as many as 50 people from several families of the same clan in each house

Southwest Region: Pueblo

- inhabited the Southwest in present-day New Mexico and Arizona
- lived in desert areas and areas bordering cliffs and mountains
- ate corn more than anything else, but also ate squash, peppers
  - would eat rabbit, gopher, squirrel, deer, antelope, and mountain lions when available
- men didn't wear much clothing, only breechcloths or short kilts
  - women wore knee-length cotton dresses called mantas
- lived in houses known as pueblos
  - multi-story house complexes made of adobe (clay and straw baked into hard bricks)
  - each adobe unit was home to one family, like an apartment
  - used ladders to reach upstairs apartments
  - Pueblo adobe house contained dozens of units of an entire clan

Great Plains Region: Sioux

- inhabited the interior Great Plains region of the United States
- characterized by dry grasslands
- ate buffalo, deer, fruits, and vegetables such as maize, squash, and beans
- wore clothing made from animal skins
- lived in tepees

Northeast Woodlands Region: Iroquois

- inhabited heavily forested Eastern woodlands area in northeast North America
- ate corn, beans, squash, berries and herbs and deer, elk and fish
- men wore breechcloths with long leggings
  - women wore wraparound skirts with shorter leggings or a tunic called an overdress
- lived in villages of longhouses, or large wood-frame buildings covered with sheets of elm bark
  - were up to a hundred feet long and housed an entire clan (as many as 60 people)