

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 tipis

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)