



# NATIVE AMERICAN

## HERITAGE MONTH

### NOVEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 30

**Native Americans** are indigenous peoples of North America. Native Americans had lived throughout the continent for thousands of years before Europeans began exploring the “New World” in the 15th century.



Most scientists agree that the human **history** of North America began when the ancient ancestors of modern Native Americans made their way across a land bridge that once spanned the Bering Sea and connected northeastern Asia to North America. Scientists believe these people first migrated to the Americas more than 10,000 years ago, before the end of the last ice age. However, some Native Americans believe their ancestors originated in the Americas, citing gaps in the archaeological record and oral accounts of their origins that have been passed down through generations.

Native Americans excelled at using **natural resources** and adapting to the climates and terrains in which they lived. Over thousands of years distinct culture areas developed across North America. In the Northeast, for example, Native Americans used wood from the forests to build houses, canoes, and tools. Dense populations in the Pacific Northwest exploited the abundance of sea mammals and fish along the Pacific Coast. In the deserts of the Southwest, Native Americans grew corn and built multilevel, apartment-style dwellings from adobe, a sun-dried brick. In the Arctic, inhabitants adapted remarkably well to the harsh environment, becoming accomplished fishers and hunters.

**Website:**

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/search.aspx?q=history+of+native+americans>

