

American Indians - Native Americans



Learn more about the native people of the United States

- There are more than 550 federally recognized tribes in the United States.
- There are approximately 275 Indian land areas in the U.S. administered as Indian reservations (reservations, pueblos, rancherias, communities, etc.). The largest is the Navajo Reservation of some 16-million acres of land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Many of the smaller reservations are less than 1,000 acres with the smallest less than 100 acres. On each reservation, the local governing authority is the tribal government.
- Reservations are lands held in trust by the federal government and are not subject to tax.
- Reservations are sovereign (self-governing) nations.
- There are more than 300 Indian languages - about 250 are still spoken.

Why are Indians sometimes referred to as Native Americans?

The term, "Native American," came into use in the 1960's to denote the groups served by the Bureau of Indian Affairs: American Indians and Alaska Native (Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts of Alaska). Later the term also included Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in some Federal programs. It, therefore, came into disfavor among some Indian groups. The preferred term is American Indian.

The Eskimos and Aleuts in Alaska are two culturally distinct groups and are sensitive about being included under the "Indian" designation. They prefer, "Alaska Native."



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