



Alaska Natives & Native Hawaiians



Resilience and Heritage

The Native Peoples of Alaska and Hawaii

From the icy waters of the **Bering Sea** to the warm shores of the **Pacific**, the Native peoples of Alaska and Hawaii have not only survived but also thrived, demonstrating remarkable resilience. Living in harmony with their environments for thousands of years, the **Aleut, Athabascan, Eyak, Iñupiat**, and **Kānaka Maoli** have each developed unique traditions shaped by the land and sea around them. Their adaptability and strength are a testament to the human spirit. Though separated by thousands of miles, these communities share deep cultural ties to their homelands, carrying forward legacies of resourcefulness and respect for nature.



Aleut

The Aleut, or **Unangaġ**, are the original inhabitants of the **Aleutian Islands**, a rugged chain stretching from Alaska toward Russia. For centuries, they thrived in this windswept, treeless region by hunting sea mammals, fishing, and crafting seaworthy kayaks known as **baidarkas**. Their maritime skills and survival knowledge were unmatched in one of the harshest environments on Earth.

Lifestyle & Culture Today

Many Aleut people live in coastal villages, where traditions such as sea-grass basket weaving and storytelling are not only practiced but also preserved with utmost care. Cultural centers teach younger generations about the Unangax language and history, ensuring the legacy of their ancestors continues. Modern Aleut communities strike a balance between contemporary life and the practice of time-honored crafts and ceremonies, showing a deep respect for their cultural heritage.



Interesting Facts

- Aleut **baskets** are woven so tightly that they can hold water without leaking.
- The word “Alaska” comes from the Aleut term **Alaxsxaq**, meaning “the mainland.”
- Hunters once wore bentwood visors decorated with sea lion whiskers and beads, believed to bring luck at sea.

Athabascan

The Athabascans traditionally lived in **Alaska's interior**, an immense region of forests, rivers, and mountains. Nomadic by nature, they followed the seasonal migrations of animals, relying on moose, caribou, fish, and plants for food and survival. Their resourcefulness in utilizing birch bark, moosehide, and river routes helped them to endure the subarctic climate.

Lifestyle & Culture Today

Today, Athabascan communities maintain strong cultural ties through the preservation of their language, traditional beadwork, and canoe-building. Their beadwork, often colorful floral designs stitched onto moosehide garments, is a powerful symbol of identity. Each design and stitch carries a story and a connection to their ancestors. Annual gatherings celebrate Athabascan storytelling, a practice that not only entertains but also preserves history and reinforces cultural identity.



Interesting Facts

- Athabascan society was **traditionally matrilineal**, with family traced through the mother's line.
- **Birch bark** was used for canoes, containers, and even baby cradles.
- There are **11** different Athabascan languages spoken in Alaska.

Eyak

The Eyak people lived along the **Copper River Delta** and **Prince William Sound**, an area rich with salmon and forest resources. Salmon fishing was the heart of Eyak life, providing not only food but also spiritual and cultural meaning. They acted as intermediaries in trade between coastal and inland peoples, strengthening their role in the region's history.

Lifestyle & Culture Today

Though the Eyak population declined dramatically, efforts are underway to preserve their legacy. The Eyak language nearly disappeared with the passing of its last fluent speaker in 2008; however, revitalization projects and cultural programs have helped preserve the memory and traditions. Salmon remains a vital part of cultural identity and community gatherings.



Interesting Facts

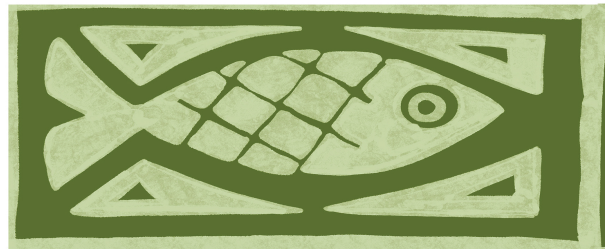
- The Eyak language was unique, being neither closely related to nor influenced by neighboring tongues.
- **Salmon** was central to Eyak culture, diet, and spirituality.
- Recent projects focus on teaching Eyak words and traditions to new generations.

Iñupiat

The Iñupiat have lived on **Alaska's northern and northwestern coasts** for centuries, where survival depends on a deep understanding of sea ice and marine animals. **Whale hunting** was and remains central to their culture, providing food and materials for entire communities. Their skill in navigating the Arctic environment reflects a profound connection to the land and sea.

Lifestyle & Culture Today

Iñupiat communities continue traditional practices such as whaling, ivory carving, and blanket toss celebrations, while also engaging in modern life. Cultural programs emphasize the preservation of their language and knowledge of the Arctic. Their close relationship with the environment is reflected in traditions that honor the land, sea, and animals.



Interesting Facts

- The Iñupiat have dozens of words for different types of snow and ice.
- They still use **umiaq** (skin boats) for whale hunts.
- The traditional **blanket toss**, originally part of whaling festivals, is now performed at community celebrations.

Kānaka Maoli

The Kānaka Maoli are the Indigenous people of **Hawaii**, navigating across the **Pacific Ocean** long before European explorers arrived. Using the stars, ocean swells, and natural signs, they traveled vast distances in double-hulled canoes. They established complex societies on the Hawaiian Islands, developing farming, fishing, and cultural systems deeply tied to the land and sea.

Lifestyle & Culture Today

Native Hawaiian culture remains vibrant, with traditions such as hula, surfing, and voyaging kept alive alongside modern practices. The ahupua'a system, which divided land from mountain to sea, is still studied as a model of sustainability. Cultural revitalization movements, such as Hawaiian language immersion schools, restoration of ancient agricultural practices like taro farming, and the protection of sacred spaces across the islands, focus on language, traditional navigation, and preserving the unique cultural heritage of the Kānaka Maoli.



Interesting Facts

- Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing, or **he'e nalu**.
- The **hula** is more than dance; it is a form of storytelling and spiritual expression.
- The **ahupua'a land system** ensured each community had access to all necessary resources.

Enduring Traditions of Alaska and Hawaii

The Native peoples of Alaska and Hawaii show us how culture and tradition endure even in the most challenging environments. From the Aleut's sea-grass baskets to the Iñupiat's Arctic whale hunts, from Athabascan beadwork to Hawaiian voyaging canoes, these communities demonstrate resilience and creativity across generations. Their traditions remain living legacies, honoring the past while shaping a stronger future for the next generations.

Map of The USA's Pacific Ocean



Alaska Natives & Native Hawaiians

Word Search

N W S O X D B W S E N U N I S K Y U A E
 H O B R Y K O E P H O V L S A Q M H P G
 U I Y S P W J G V P E K L C T D B I Z C
 B M N U C G S X V H D G W I Q J E B F R
 N W K X P N E N W R D P K F S B R A D V
 K S L Q E I U J W V O S Z I Y A I T G P
 O B I V F L W H S H A D Z C S S N H L W
 N E D V M A Q A S A U N A A N K G A U C
 Y A X F P H K W M H Z A R P O E S B N U
 V D D W Q W K A P Z L L T M I T E A B L
 D W U T Y X I I F F A S E Q T X A S G T
 D O P U F G P I P B I I M B I I N C M A
 D R S E R L O K T D I N J L D B F A P I
 X K Q L P R I C R D J A R L A D O N K P
 K A N A K A M A O L I I I Y R L T Z A U
 C D B H N A C Z A Z V T Y Z T M O W Y N
 A P H C Z U E N W H M U A L A S K A E I
 N S F A J R J E H V L E S A H S X J R K
 O J O H D Q A N B M V L K B I C T U B E
 E Y B A I D A R K A S A P R O L Q J B K

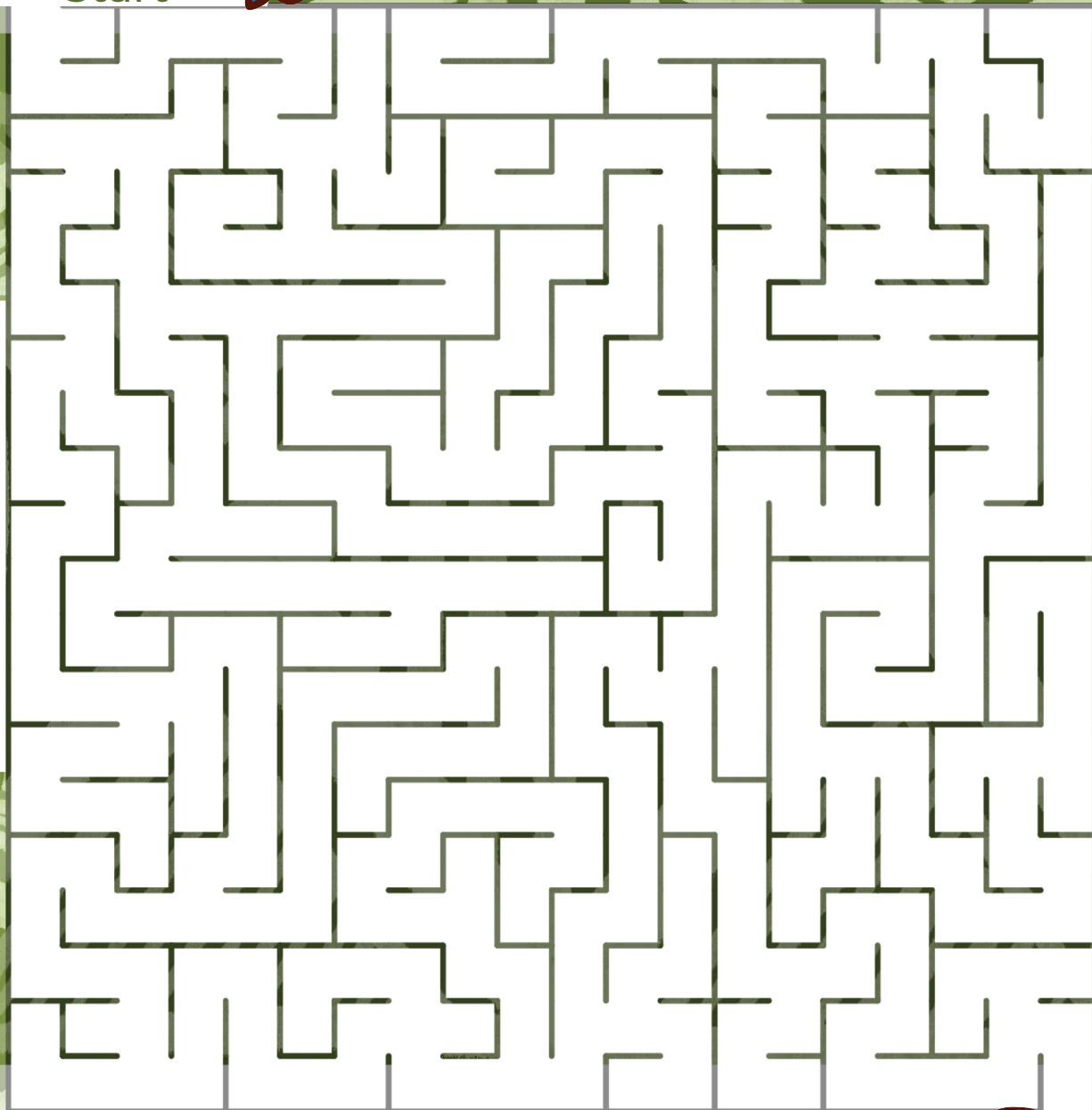
Eyak
 Pacific
 Iñupiat
 Bearing Sea

Kanaka Maoli
 Baidarkas
 Beadwork

Aleut
 Athabascan
 Aleutian Islands
 Basket

Hawaii
 Canoe
 Alaska
 Whaling

Alaska Natives & Native Hawaiians Maze



Solutions

[illegible]