

Indigenous peoples of the Americas

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The **indigenous peoples of the Americas** are the pre-Columbian peoples of the Americas and their descendants.

Pueblos indígenas or *indígenas* (lit. "indigenous peoples") is a common term in Spanish-speaking countries, and *pueblos nativos* or *nativos* (lit. "native peoples" in the sense of descendants of non-immigrants) may also be heard, while *aborigen* (aborigine) is used in Argentina, and *pueblos aborígenes* (aboriginal peoples) is common in Chile. The term "Amerindian" (short for "'Indians' of the Americas)" is used in Quebec, the Guianas, and the English-speaking Caribbean.^{[23][24][25][26]} Indigenous peoples are commonly known in Canada as Aboriginal peoples, which includes not only First Nations and Arctic Inuit, but also the minority population of First Nations-European mixed-race Métis people^[27] who identify culturally and ethnically with indigenous peoplehood. This is contrasted, for instance, to the American Indian-European mixed-race mestizos of Hispanic America (caboclos in Brazil) who, with their larger population (in most Latin American countries constituting either outright majorities, pluralities, or at the least large minorities), identify largely as a new ethnic group distinct from both Europeans and Indigenous Americans, but still considering themselves a subset of the European-derived Hispanic peoplehood in culture and ethnicity.

Indigenous peoples of the United States are commonly known as Native Americans or American Indians, and Alaska Natives.^[28]

Application of the term "Indian" originated with Christopher Columbus, who, in his search for Asia, thought that he had arrived in the East Indies.^{[29][30][31][32][33][34]} Eventually, the Americas came to be known as the "West Indies", a name still used to refer to the islands of the Caribbean Sea. This led to the blanket term "Indies" and "Indians" (Spanish "indios") for the indigenous inhabitants, which implied some kind of racial or cultural unity among the indigenous peoples of the Americas. This unifying concept, codified in law, religion, and politics, was not originally accepted by the myriad groups of indigenous peoples themselves, but has since been embraced by many over the last two centuries. Even though the term "Indian" does not include the culturally and linguistically distinct indigenous peoples of the Arctic regions of the Americas — such as the Aleuts, Inuit, or Yupik peoples, who entered the continent as a second more recent wave of migration several thousand years ago, and have much more recent genetic and cultural commonalities with the aboriginal peoples of the Asiatic Arctic Russian Far East — these groups are nonetheless considered "indigenous peoples of the Americas".

Indigenous peoples of the Americas



Quechua women in Peru

Total population





Approximately 60.5 million

Regions with significant populations

 Mexico	25.7 million ^[1]
 Peru	13.8 million ^[2]
 Bolivia	6.0 million ^[3]
 Guatemala	5.8 million ^[4]
 Ecuador	3.4 million
 United States	2.9–5 million ^[5]
 Chile	1.8 million ^[6]
 Canada	1.4 million ^[7]
 Colombia	1.4 million ^[8]
 Argentina	955,032 ^[9]
 Brazil	817,963 ^[10]
 Venezuela	524,000 ^[11]
 Honduras	520,000 ^[12]
 Nicaragua	443,847 ^[13]
 Panama	204,000 ^[14]
 Paraguay	95,235 ^[15]
 El Salvador	c. 70,000 ^[16]
 Costa Rica	c. 114,000 ^[17]
 Guyana	c. 60,000 ^[18]
 Greenland	c. 51,000 ^[19]

Although some indigenous peoples of the Americas were traditionally hunter-gatherers—and many, especially in Amazonia, still are—many groups practiced aquaculture and agriculture. The impact of their agricultural endowment to the world is a testament to their time and work in reshaping and cultivating the flora indigenous to the Americas.^[35] Although some societies depended heavily on agriculture, others practiced a mix of farming, hunting, and gathering. In some regions the indigenous peoples created monumental architecture, large-scale organized cities, chiefdoms, states, and empires.

Many parts of the Americas are still populated by indigenous peoples; some countries have sizable populations, especially Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Greenland, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru. At least a thousand different indigenous languages are spoken in the Americas. Some, such as the Quechuan languages, Aymara, Guaraní, Mayan languages, and Nahuatl, count their speakers in millions. Many also maintain aspects of indigenous cultural practices to varying degrees, including religion, social organization, and subsistence practices. Like most cultures, over time, cultures specific to many indigenous peoples have evolved to incorporate traditional aspects, but also cater to modern needs. Some indigenous peoples still live in relative isolation from Western culture and a few are still counted as uncontacted peoples.

 Belize	c. 24,501 (Maya) ^[20]
 French Guiana	c. 19,000 ^[21]
 Suriname	c. 12,000–24,000
 Trinidad and Tobago	1,460 ^[22]
Languages	
Indigenous languages of the Americas, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Danish, Dutch	
Religion	
Inuit religion	
Native American religion	
Christianity	



A Navajo man on horseback in Monument valley, Arizona.



Some Inuit people on a traditional *qamutik* (dog sled) in Cape Dorset, Nunavut, Canada.

Contents

- 1 History
 - 1.1 Migration into the continents
 - 1.1.1 Pre-Columbian era
 - 1.2 European colonization
- 2 Agriculture
- 3 Culture
 - 3.1 Languages
 - 3.2 Writing systems
 - 3.3 Music and art
- 4 Demography
- 5 History and status by country
 - 5.1 Argentina
 - 5.2 Belize
 - 5.3 Bolivia
 - 5.4 Brazil
 - 5.5 Canada
 - 5.6 Chile
 - 5.7 Colombia
 - 5.8 Costa Rica
 - 5.9 Cuba
 - 5.10 Dominica
 - 5.11 Ecuador
 - 5.12 El Salvador
 - 5.13 Guatemala
 - 5.14 Honduras
 - 5.15 Mexico

- 5.16 Nicaragua
- 5.17 Peru
- 5.18 Suriname
- 5.19 United States
- 5.20 Venezuela
- 5.21 Other parts of the Americas
- 6 Native American name controversy
- 7 Rise of indigenous movements
 - 7.1 Legal prerogative
- 8 Genetics
- 9 See also
- 10 Notes
- 11 Sources
 - 11.1 Books
- 12 Further reading
- 13 External links

History

Migration into the continents

The specifics of Paleo-Indian migration to and throughout the Americas, including the exact dates and routes traveled, provide the subject of ongoing research and discussion.^{[36][37]} According to archaeological and genetic evidence, North and South America were the last continents in the world with human habitation.^[36] During the Wisconsin glaciation, 50–17,000 years ago, falling sea levels allowed people to move across the land bridge of Beringia that joined Siberia to north west North America (Alaska).^{[38][39]} Alaska was a glacial refugium because it had low snowfall, allowing a small population to exist. The Laurentide Ice Sheet covered most of North America, blocking nomadic inhabitants and confining them to Alaska (East Beringia) for thousands of years.^{[40][41]}

Indigenous genetic studies suggest that the first inhabitants of the Americas share a single ancestral population, one that developed in isolation, conjectured to be Beringia.^{[42][43]} The isolation of these peoples in Beringia might have lasted 10–20,000 years.^{[44][45][46]} Around 16,500 years ago, the glaciers began melting, allowing people to move south and east into Canada and beyond.^{[37][47][48]} These people are believed to have followed herds of now-extinct Pleistocene megafauna along ice-free corridors that stretched between the Laurentide and Cordilleran Ice Sheets.^[49]

Another route proposed involves migration - either on foot or using primitive boats - along the Pacific Northwest coast to South America.^[50] Evidence of the latter would have been covered by a sea level rise of more than 120 meters since the last ice age.^[51]

The time range of 40,000–16,500 years ago is debatable and probably will remain so for years to come.^{[36][37]} The few agreements achieved to date include:^{[52][53]}

- the origin from Central Asia
- widespread habitation of the Americas during the end of the last glacial period, or more specifically what is known as the Late Glacial Maximum, around 16,000–13,000 years before present

Stone tools, particularly projectile points and scrapers, are the primary evidence of the earliest human activity in the Americas. Crafted lithic flaked tools are used by archaeologists and anthropologists to classify cultural periods.^[54] The Clovis culture, the earliest definitively-dated Paleo-Indians in the Americas, appears around 11,500 RCBP (radiocarbon years Before Present^[55]), equivalent to 13,500 to 13,000 calendar years ago.

In 2014, the autosomal DNA of a 12,500+-year-old infant from Montana found in close association with several Clovis artifacts was sequenced.^[56] These are the Anzick-1 remains from the Anzick Clovis burial in Montana. The data indicate that the individual was from a population ancestral to present South American and Central American Native American populations, and closely related to present North American Native American populations. The implication is that there was an early divergence between North American and Central American plus South American populations. Hypotheses which posit that invasions subsequent to the Clovis culture overwhelmed or assimilated previous migrants into the Americas were ruled out.^[56]

Similarly, the skeleton of a teenage girl (named 'Naia', after a water nymph from Greek mythology) found in the underwater caves called sistema Sac Actun in Mexico's eastern Yucatán Peninsula in 2007 has had DNA extracted, and at 13,000 years old is considered the oldest genetically intact human skeleton ever found in the Americas. The DNA indicates she was from a lineage derived from Asian origins that is represented in the modern native population's DNA.^[57]

Pre-Columbian era



Language families of indigenous peoples in Greenland, Canada, the United States, and northern Mexico

The Pre-Columbian era incorporates all period subdivisions in the history and prehistory of the Americas before the appearance of significant European and African influences on the American continents, spanning the time of the original arrival in the Upper Paleolithic to European colonization during the early modern period.^[58]

While technically referring to the era before Christopher Columbus' voyages of 1492 to 1504, in practice the term usually includes the history of American indigenous cultures until Europeans either conquered or significantly influenced them, even if this happened decades or even centuries after Columbus' initial landing.^[59] "Pre-Columbian" is used especially often in the context of discussing the precontact Mesoamerican indigenous societies (Olmec, Toltec, Teotihuacano, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aztec, and Maya civilizations) and Andean society Andes (Inca Empire, Moche culture, Muisca Confederation, and Cañaris).

Many pre-Columbian civilizations established characteristics and hallmarks which included permanent or urban settlements, agriculture, civic and monumental architecture, and complex societal hierarchies.^[60] Some of these civilizations had long faded by the time of the first significant European and African arrivals (ca. late 15th–early 16th centuries), and are known only through oral history and through archaeological investigations. Others were contemporary with this period, and are also known from historical accounts of the time. A few, such as the Mayan, Olmec, Mixtec, and Nahua peoples, had their own written records. However, the European colonists of the time worked to eliminate non-Christian beliefs, and Christian pyres destroyed many pre-Columbian written records. Only a few documents remained hidden and survived, leaving contemporary historians with glimpses of ancient culture and knowledge.



Ethnic groups ca. 1300 to 1535 CE

According to both indigenous American and European accounts and documents, American civilizations at the time of European encounter had achieved many accomplishments.^[61] For instance, the Aztecs built one of the largest cities in the world, Tenochtitlan, the ancient site of Mexico City, with an estimated population of 200,000. American civilizations also displayed impressive accomplishments in astronomy and mathematics. The domestication of maize or corn required thousands of years of selective breeding.

Inuit, Yupik, Aleut, and American Indian creation myths tell of a variety of origins of their respective peoples. Some were "always there" or were created by gods or animals, some migrated from a specified compass point, and others came from "across the ocean".^[62]

European colonization

The European colonization of the Americas forever changed the lives and cultures of the peoples of the continents. Although the exact pre-contact population of the Americas is unknown, scholars estimate that Native American populations diminished by between 80 and 90% within the first centuries of contact with Europeans. The leading cause was disease. The continent was ravaged by epidemics of diseases such as smallpox, measles, and cholera, which were brought from Europe by the early explorers and spread quickly into new areas even before later explorers and colonists reached them. Native Americans suffered high mortality rates due to their lack of prior exposure to these diseases. The loss of lives was exacerbated by conflict between colonists and indigenous people. Colonists also frequently perpetrated massacres on the indigenous groups and enslaved them.^{[63][64][65]} According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1894), the North American Indian Wars of the 19th century cost the lives of about 19,000 whites and 30,000 Native Americans.^[66]

The first indigenous group encountered by Columbus were the 250,000 Taínos of Hispaniola who represented the dominant culture in the Greater Antilles and the Bahamas. Within thirty years about 70% of the Taínos had died.^[67] They had no immunity to European diseases, so outbreaks of measles and smallpox ravaged their population.^[68] Increasing punishment of the Taínos for revolting against forced labour, despite measures put in place by the *encomienda*, which included religious education and protection from warring tribes,^[69] eventually led to the last great Taíno rebellion.

Following years of mistreatment, the Taínos began to adopt suicidal behaviors, with women aborting or killing their infants and men jumping from the cliffs or ingesting untreated cassava, a violent poison.^[67] Eventually, a Taíno Cacique named Enriquillo managed to hold out in the Baoruco Mountain Range for thirteen years, causing serious damage to the Spanish, Carib-held plantations and their Indian auxiliaries.^[70] Hearing of the seriousness of the revolt, Emperor Charles V (also King of Spain) sent captain Francisco Barrionuevo to negotiate a peace treaty with the ever-increasing number of rebels. Two months later, after consultation with the Audencia of Santo Domingo, Enriquillo was offered any part of the island to live in peace.

The Laws of Burgos, 1512-1513, were the first codified set of laws governing the behavior of Spanish settlers in America, particularly with regard to native Indians. The laws forbade the maltreatment of natives and endorsed their conversion to Catholicism.^[71] The Spanish crown found it difficult to enforce these laws in a distant colony.

Various theories for the decline of the Native American populations emphasize epidemic diseases, conflicts with Europeans, and conflicts among warring tribes. Scholars now believe that, among the various contributing factors, epidemic disease was the overwhelming cause of the population decline of the American natives.^{[72][73]} Some believe that after first contacts with Europeans and Africans, Old World diseases caused the death of 90 to 95% of the native population of the New World in the following 150 years.^[74] Smallpox killed up to one third of the native population of



Illustration of Paleo-Indians hunting a glyptodont



Cultural areas of North America at time of European contact



Drawing accompanying text in Book XII of the 16th-century *Florentine Codex* (compiled 1540–1585), showing Nahuas of conquest-era central Mexico suffering from smallpox

Hispaniola in 1518.^[75] By killing the Incan ruler Huayna Capac, smallpox caused the Inca Civil War. Smallpox was only the first epidemic. Typhus (probably) in 1546, influenza and smallpox together in 1558, smallpox again in 1589, diphtheria in 1614, measles in 1618—all ravaged the remains of Inca culture.

Smallpox had killed millions of native inhabitants of Mexico.^{[76][77]} Unintentionally introduced at Veracruz with the arrival of Pánfilo de Narváez on April 23, 1520, smallpox ravaged Mexico in the 1520s,^[78] possibly killing over 150,000 in Tenochtitlán alone (the heartland of the Aztec Empire), and aiding in the victory of Hernán Cortés over the Aztec Empire at Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) in 1521.

Over the centuries, the Europeans had developed high degrees of immunity to these diseases, while the indigenous Americans had no immunity.^[79]

Explorations of the Caribbean led to the discovery of the Arawaks of the Lesser Antilles. The culture was destroyed by 1650. Only 500 had survived by the year 1550, though the bloodlines continued through to the modern populace. In Amazonia, indigenous societies weathered centuries of colonization.^[80]

Contact with European diseases such as smallpox and measles killed between 50 and 67 per cent of the Aboriginal population of North America in the first hundred years after the arrival of Europeans.^[81] Some 90 per cent of the native population near Massachusetts Bay Colony died of smallpox in an epidemic in 1617–1619.^[82] In 1633, in Fort Orange (New Netherland), the Native Americans there were exposed to smallpox because of contact with Europeans. As it had done elsewhere, the virus wiped out entire population groups of Native Americans.^[83] It reached Lake Ontario in 1636, and the lands of the Iroquois by 1679.^{[84][85]} During the 1770s, smallpox killed at least 30% of the West Coast Native Americans.^[86] The 1775–82 North American smallpox epidemic and 1837 Great Plains smallpox epidemic brought devastation and drastic population depletion among the Plains Indians.^{[87][88]} In 1832, the federal government of the United States established a smallpox vaccination program for Native Americans (*The Indian Vaccination Act of 1832*).^{[89][90]}



Indians visiting a Brazilian farm plantation in Minas Gerais ca. 1824

The Indigenous peoples in Brazil declined from a pre-Columbian high of an estimated three million^[91] to some 300,000 in 1997.^[92]

The Spanish Empire and other Europeans brought horses to the Americas. Some of these animals escaped and began to breed and increase their numbers in the wild.^[93] The re-introduction of the horse, extinct in the Americas for over 7500 years, had a profound impact on Native American culture in the Great Plains of North America and of Patagonia in South America. By domesticating horses, some tribes had great success: horses enabled them to expand their territories, exchange more goods with neighboring tribes, and more easily capture game, especially bison.

Agriculture

Over the course of thousands of years, American indigenous peoples domesticated, bred and cultivated a large array of plant species. These species now constitute 50–60% of all crops in cultivation worldwide.^[94] In certain cases, the indigenous peoples developed entirely new species and strains through artificial selection, as was the case in the domestication and breeding of maize from wild *teosinte* grasses in the valleys of southern Mexico. Numerous such agricultural products retain their native names in the English and Spanish lexicons.

The South American highlands were a center of early agriculture. Genetic testing of the wide variety of cultivars and wild species suggests that the potato has a single origin in the area of southern Peru,^[95] from a species in the *Solanum brevicaule* complex. Over 99% of all modern cultivated potatoes worldwide are descendants of a subspecies indigenous to south-central Chile,^[96] *Solanum tuberosum ssp. tuberosum*, where it was cultivated as long as 10,000 years ago.^{[97][98]} According to George Raudzens, "It is clear that in pre-Columbian times some groups struggled to survive and often suffered food shortages and famines, while others enjoyed a varied and substantial diet."^[99] The persistent drought around 850 AD coincided with the collapse of Classic Maya civilization, and the famine of One Rabbit (AD 1454) was a major catastrophe in Mexico.^[100]



A bison hunt depicted by George Catlin



Andenes in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, Peru.

The Incan agricultural terraces are still used by many of the Incas' descendants, Quechua-speaking Andean farmers.

Natives of North America began practicing farming approximately 4,000 years ago, late in the Archaic period of North American cultures. Technology had advanced to the point that pottery was becoming common and the small-scale felling of trees had become feasible. Concurrently, the Archaic Indians began using fire in a controlled manner. Intentional burning of vegetation was used to mimic the effects of natural fires that tended to clear forest understories. It made travel easier and facilitated the growth of herbs and berry-producing plants, which were important for both food and medicines.^[101]

In the Mississippi River valley, Europeans noted Native Americans' managed groves of nut and fruit trees not far from villages and towns and their gardens and agricultural fields. Further away, prescribed burning would have been used in forest and prairie areas.^[102]

Many crops first domesticated by indigenous Americans are now produced and used globally. Chief among these is maize or "corn", arguably the most important crop in the

world.^[103] Other significant crops include cassava, chia, squash (pumpkins, zucchini, marrow, acorn squash, butternut squash), the pinto bean, *Phaseolus* beans including most common beans, tepary beans and lima beans, tomatoes, potatoes, avocados, peanuts, cocoa beans (used to make chocolate), vanilla, strawberries, pineapples, Peppers (species and varieties of *Capsicum*, including bell peppers, jalapeños, paprika and chili peppers) sunflower seeds, rubber, brazilwood, chicle, tobacco, coca, manioc and some species of cotton.

Studies of contemporary indigenous environmental management, including agro-forestry practices among Itza Maya in Guatemala and hunting and fishing among the Menominee of Wisconsin, suggest that longstanding "sacred values" may represent a summary of sustainable millennial traditions.^[104]

Culture

Cultural practices in the Americas seem to have been shared mostly within geographical zones where unrelated peoples adopted similar technologies and social organizations. An example of such a cultural area is Mesoamerica, where millennia of coexistence and shared development among the peoples of the region produced a fairly homogeneous culture with complex agricultural and social patterns. Another well-known example is the North American plains where until the 19th century several peoples shared the traits of nomadic hunter-gatherers based primarily on buffalo hunting.

Languages



Quechua woman and child in the Sacred Valley, Andes, Peru

The languages of the North American Indians have been classified into 56 groups or stock tongues, in which the spoken languages of the tribes may be said to centre. In connection with speech, reference may be made to gesture language which was highly developed in parts of this area. Of equal interest is the picture writing especially well developed among the Chippewas and Delawares.^[105]

Writing systems

The development of writing is counted among the many achievements and innovations of pre-Columbian American cultures. Independent from the development of writing in other areas of the world, the Mesoamerican region produced several indigenous writing systems beginning in the 1st millennium BCE. What may be the earliest-known example in the Americas of an extensive text thought to be writing is by the Cascajal Block. The Olmec hieroglyphs tablet has been indirectly dated from ceramic shards found in the same context to approximately 900 BCE, around the time that Olmec occupation of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán began to wane.^[106]



Maya glyphs in stucco at the Museo de sitio in Palenque, Mexico

The Maya writing system was a combination of phonetic syllabic symbols and logograms — that is, it was a logosyllabic writing system. It is the only pre-Columbian writing system known to represent completely the spoken language of its community. In total, the script has more than one thousand different glyphs, although a few are variations of the same sign or meaning, and many appear only rarely or are confined to particular localities. At any one time, no more than about five hundred glyphs were in use, some two hundred of which (including variations) had a phonetic or syllabic interpretation.^{[107][108][109]}

The Zapotec writing system is one of the earliest writing systems in the Americas.^[110] The oldest example of the Zapotec script is a monument discovered in San José Mogote, dating from around from 600 BC.^[111] Zapotec writing was logographic and presumably syllabic.^[110] The remains of the Zapotec writing system are present in the monumental architecture. There are only a few extant inscriptions, which makes study of this writing system difficult.

Aztec codices (singular *codex*) are books written by pre-Columbian and colonial-era Aztecs. These codices provide some of the best primary sources for Aztec culture. The pre-Columbian codices differ from European codices in that they are largely pictorial; they were not meant to symbolize spoken or written narratives.^[112] The colonial era codices not only contain Aztec pictograms, but also Classical Nahuatl (in the Latin alphabet), Spanish, and occasionally Latin.

Spanish mendicants in the sixteenth century taught indigenous scribes in their communities to write their languages in Latin letters, and there is a large number of local-level documents in Nahuatl, Zapotec, Mixtec, and Yucatec Maya from the colonial era, many of which were part of lawsuits and other legal matters. Although Spaniards initially taught indigenous scribes alphabetic writing, the tradition became self-perpetuating at the local level.^[113] The Spanish crown gathered such documentation, and contemporary Spanish translations were made for legal cases. Scholars have translated and analyzed these documents in what is called the New Philology to write histories of indigenous peoples from indigenous viewpoints.^[114]

The Wiigwaasabak, birch bark scrolls on which the Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) people wrote complex geometrical patterns and shapes, can also be considered a form of writing, as can Mi'kmaq hieroglyphics.

Aboriginal syllabic writing, or simply **syllabics**, is a family of abugidas used to write some Aboriginal Canadian languages of the Algonquian, Inuit, and Athabaskan language families.

Music and art

Native American music in North America is almost entirely monophonic, but there are notable exceptions. Traditional Native American music often centers around drumming. Rattles, clappersticks, and rasps were also popular percussive instruments. Flutes were made of rivercane, cedar, and other woods. The tuning of these flutes is not precise and

depends on the length of the wood used and the hand span of the intended player, but the finger holes are most often around a whole step apart and, at least in Northern California, a flute was not used if it turned out to have an interval close to a half step. The Apache fiddle is a single stringed instrument.

The music of the indigenous peoples of Central Mexico and Central America was often pentatonic. Before the arrival of the Spaniards and other Europeans, music was inseparable from religious festivities and included a large variety of percussion and wind instruments such as drums, flutes, sea snail shells (used as a trumpet) and "rain" tubes. No remnants of pre-Columbian stringed instruments were found until archaeologists discovered a jar in Guatemala, attributed to the Maya of the Late Classic Era (600–900 CE), which depicts a stringed musical instrument which has since been reproduced. This instrument is one of the very few stringed instruments known in the Americas prior to the introduction of European musical instruments; when played, it produces a sound that mimics a jaguar's growl.^[115]

Visual arts by indigenous peoples of the Americas comprise a major category in the world art collection. Contributions include pottery, paintings, jewellery, weavings, sculptures, basketry, carvings, and beadwork.^[116] Because too many artists were posing as Native Americans and Alaska Natives^[117] in order to profit from the cachet of Indigenous art in the United States, the U.S. passed the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, requiring artists to prove that they are enrolled in a state or federally recognized tribe. To support the ongoing practice of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian arts and cultures in the United States,^[118] the Ford Foundation, arts advocates and American Indian tribes created an endowment seed fund and established a national Native Arts and Cultures Foundation in 2007.^{[119][120]}

Demography

The following table provides estimates for each country in the Americas of the populations of indigenous people and those with partial indigenous ancestry, each expressed as a percentage of the overall population. The total percentage obtained by adding both of these categories is also given.

Note: these categories are inconsistently defined and measured differently from country to country. Some figures are based on the results of population-wide genetic surveys while others are based on self-identification or observational estimation.



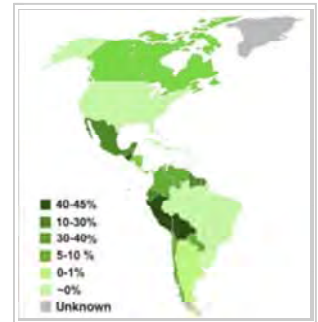
Apache fiddle made by Chesley Goseyun Wilson (San Carlos Apache)



Chimu culture feather pectoral, feathers, reed, copper, silver, hide, cordage, ca. 1350–1450 CE



Textile art by Julia Pingushat (Inuk, Arviat, Nunavut Territory, Canada), wool, embroidery floss, 1995



This map shows the percentage of indigenous population in different countries of the Americas.

Indigenous populations of the Americas
as estimated percentage of total country's population

Country	Indigenous	Ref.	Part indigenous	Ref.	Combined total	Ref.
North America						
Greenland	89%	[121]	%	[121]	89%	[121]
Canada	1.8%	[122]	3.6%	[122]	5.4%	[122]
Mexico	12.8%	[123]				
Dominican Republic	%		%		%	
Grenada	~0.4%	[124]	~0%	[124]	~0%	[124]
Haiti	~0%	[125]	~0%	[125]	~0%	[125]
Jamaica	%		%		%	
Puerto Rico	0.4%	[126]	84%	[127]	84%	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	%		%		%	
Saint Lucia	%		%		%	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2%	[128]	%		%	
Trinidad and Tobago	0.8%		88%		80%	
South America						
Argentina	2.38%	[129]	8.5%	[130][131]	10.88%	
Bolivia	55%	[132]	30%	[132]	85%	[132]
Brazil	0.4%	[133]	%		%	
Chile	4.6%	[134]	%		%	
Colombia	3.4%	[135]	49%	[135]	52.4%	[135]
Ecuador	25%	[136]	65%	[136]	90%	[136]
French Guiana	%		%		%	
Guyana	9.1%	[137]	%		%	
Paraguay	1.7%	[138]	95%	[139]	96.7%	
Peru	45%	[140]	37%	[140]	82%	[140]
Suriname	2%	[141]	%		%	
Uruguay	0%	[142]	2.4%	[143]	2.4%	[143]
Venezuela	2.7%	[144]	68%		70.7%	

History and status by country

Argentina

In 2005, Argentina's indigenous population (known as *pueblos originarios*) numbered about 600,329 (1.6% of total population); this figure includes 457,363 people who self-identified as belonging to an indigenous ethnic group and 142,966 who identified themselves as first-generation descendants of an indigenous people.^[145] The ten most populous indigenous peoples are the Mapuche (113,680 people), the Kolla (70,505), the Toba (69,452), the Guaraní (68,454), the Wichi (40,036), the Diaguita-Calchaquí (31,753), the Mocoví (15,837), the Huarpe (14,633), the Comechingón (10,863) and the Tehuelche (10,590). Minor but important peoples are the Quechua (6,739), the Charrúa (4,511), the Pilagá (4,465), the Chané (4,376), and the Chorote (2,613). The Selknam (Ona) people are now virtually extinct in its pure form. The languages of the Diaguita, Tehuelche, and Selknam nations have become extinct or virtually extinct: the Cacán language (spoken by Diaguitas) in the 18th century and the Selknam language in the 20th century; one Tehuelche language (Southern Tehuelche) is still spoken by a handful of elderly people.



Proprietors of a roadside cafe near Cachi, Argentina

Belize

Mestizos (mixed European-Indigenous) number about 34% of the population; unmixed Maya make up another 10.6% (Ketchi, Mopan, and Yucatec). The Garifuna, who came to Belize in the 19th century from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, have mixed African, Carib, and Arawak ancestry make up another 6% of the population.^[146]

Bolivia

In Bolivia, a 62% majority of residents over the age of 15 self-identify as belonging to an indigenous people, while another 3.7% grew up with an indigenous mother tongue yet do not self-identify as indigenous.^[147] Including both of these categories, and children under 15, some 66.4% of Bolivia's population was registered as indigenous in the 2001 Census.^[148] The largest indigenous ethnic groups are: Quechua, about 2.5 million people; Aymara, 2.0 million; Chiquitano, 181,000; Guaraní, 126,000; and Mojeño, 69,000. Some 124,000 belong to smaller indigenous groups.^[149] The Constitution of Bolivia, enacted in 2009, recognizes 36 cultures, each with its own language, as part of a plurinational state. Some groups, including CONAMAQ (the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu) draw ethnic boundaries within the Quechua- and Aymara-speaking population, resulting in a total of fifty indigenous peoples native to Bolivia.



Bolivia and Peru have a dominant Native American population.

Large numbers of Bolivian highland peasants retained indigenous language, culture, customs, and communal organization throughout the Spanish conquest and the post-independence period. They mobilized to resist various attempts at the dissolution of communal landholdings and used legal recognition of "empowered caciques" to further communal organization. Indigenous revolts took place frequently until 1953.^[150] While the National Revolutionary Movement government begun in 1952 discouraged self-identification as indigenous (reclassifying rural people as *campesinos*, or peasants), renewed ethnic and class militancy re-emerged in the Katarista movement beginning in the 1970s.^[151] Lowland indigenous peoples, mostly in the east, entered national politics through the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity organized by the CIDOB confederation. That march successfully pressured the national government to sign the ILO Convention 169 and to begin the still-ongoing process of recognizing and titling indigenous territories. The 1994 Law of Popular Participation granted "grassroots territorial organizations" that are recognized by the state certain rights to govern local areas.



Indigenous woman in traditional dress, near Cochabamba, Bolivia

Some radio and television programs in Quechua and Aymara are produced. The constitutional reform in 1997 recognized Bolivia as a multilingual, pluri-ethnic society and introduced education reform. In 2005, for the first time in the country's history, an indigenous Aymara, Evo Morales, was elected as President.

Morales began work on his "indigenous autonomy" policy, which he launched in the eastern lowlands department on August 3, 2009, making Bolivia the first country in the history of South America to affirm the right of indigenous people to govern themselves.^[152] Speaking in Santa Cruz Department, the President called it "a historic day for the peasant and indigenous movement", saying that, though he might make errors, he would "never betray the fight started by our ancestors and the fight of the Bolivian people".^[152] A vote on further autonomy will take place in referendums which are expected to be held in December 2009.^[152] The issue has divided the country.^[153]

Brazil

Indigenous peoples of Brazil make up 0.4% of Brazil's population, or about 700,000 people,^[92] even though millions of Brazilians have some indigenous ancestry.^[154] Indigenous peoples are found in the entire territory of Brazil, although the majority of them live in indigenous territories in the North and Center-Western part of the country. On January 18, 2007, FUNAI reported that it had confirmed the presence of 67 different uncontacted tribes in Brazil, up from 40 in 2005. With this addition Brazil has now overtaken the island of New Guinea as the country having the largest number of uncontacted tribes.^[154]

In a 2007 news story, *The Washington Post* reported, "As has been proved in the past when uncontacted tribes are introduced to other populations and the microbes they carry, maladies as simple as the common cold can be deadly. In the 1970s, 185 members of the Panara tribe died within two years of discovery after contracting such diseases as flu and chickenpox, leaving only 69 survivors."^[155]



Members of an uncontacted tribe encountered in the Brazilian state of Acre in 2009

Canada



Bill Reid's sculpture **The Raven and The First Men**. The Raven represents the Trickster figure common to many mythologies.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada comprise the First Nations,^[156] Inuit^[157] and Métis,^[158] the descriptors "Indian" and "Eskimo" are falling into disuse, and other than in neighboring Alaska. "Eskimo" is considered derogatory in many other places because it was given by non-Inuit people and was said to mean "eater of raw meat."^[159] Hundreds of Aboriginal nations evolved trade, spiritual and social hierarchies. The Métis culture of mixed blood originated in the mid-17th century when First Nation and native Inuit married European settlers.^[160] The Inuit had more limited interaction with European settlers during that early period.^[161] Various laws, treaties, and legislation have been enacted between European immigrants and First Nations across Canada. Aboriginal Right to Self-Government provides opportunity to manage historical, cultural, political, health care and economic control aspects within first people's communities.

Although not without conflict, European/Canadian early interactions with First Nations and Inuit populations were relatively peaceful compared to the experience of native peoples in the United States.^[162] Combined with a late economic development in many regions,^[163] this relatively peaceful history has allowed Indigenous peoples to have a fairly strong influence on the early national culture while preserving their own identity.^[164] From the late 18th century, European Canadians encouraged Aboriginals to assimilate into their own culture,

referred to as "Canadian culture".^[165] These attempts reached a climax in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with forced integration.^[166] National Aboriginal Day recognises the cultures and contributions of Aboriginal peoples of Canada.^[167] There are currently over 600 recognized First Nations governments or bands encompassing 1,172,790²⁰⁰⁶ people spread across Canada with distinctive Aboriginal cultures, languages, art, and music.^{[168][169][170]}

Chile

According to the 2002 Census, 4.6% of the Chilean population, including the Rapanui (a Polynesian people) of Easter Island, was indigenous, although most show varying degrees of mixed heritage.^[171] Many are descendants of the Mapuche, and live in Santiago, Araucanía and the lake district. The Mapuche successfully fought off defeat in the first 300–350 years of Spanish rule during the Arauco War. Relations with the new Chilean Republic were good until the Chilean state decided to occupy their lands. During the Occupation of Araucanía the Mapuche surrendered to the country's army in the 1880s. Their land was opened to settlement by Chileans and Europeans. Conflict over Mapuche land rights continues to the present.

Other groups include the Aymara, the majority of whom live in Bolivia and Peru, with smaller numbers in the Arica-Parinacota and Tarapacá Regions, and the Atacama people (*Atacameños*), who reside mainly in El Loa.

Colombia

A minority today within Colombia's overwhelmingly Mestizo and White Colombian population, Colombia's indigenous peoples consist of around 85 distinct cultures and more than 1,378,884 people.^{[172][173]} A variety of collective rights for indigenous peoples are recognized in the 1991 Constitution.

One of the influences is the Muisca culture, a subset of the larger Chibcha ethnic group, famous for their use of gold, which led to the legend of *El Dorado*. At the time of the Spanish conquest, the Muisca were the largest native civilization geographically between the Incas and the Aztecs empires.

Costa Rica

There are over 60,000 inhabitants of Native American origins, representing 1.5% of the population. Most of them live in secluded reservations, distributed among eight ethnic groups: Quitirrisí (In the Central Valley), Matambú or Chorotega (Guanacaste), Maleku (Northern Alajuela), Bribri (Southern Atlantic), Cabécar (Cordillera de Talamanca), Guaymí (Southern Costa Rica, along the Panamá border), Boruca (Southern Costa Rica) and Ngäbe (Southern Costa Rica).

These native groups are characterized for their work in wood, like masks, drums and other artistic figures, as well as fabrics made of cotton.

Their subsistence is based on agriculture, having corn, beans and plantains as the main crops.

Cuba



Tsuu T'ina children at a parade



Mapuche man and woman. The Mapuche make up about 85% of Chile's indigenous population.



Guambía people relaxing in Colombia

In Cuba the population of Amerindians includes 0.1 of the population and 0.2 part Native which is also part of the population. Many are from the Taino people or Arawak people. When the Spanish Empire was in control of the island they used the Natives as slaves and many died from diseases, hence decreasing the population. Presently 0.3 of the population of Cuba consists of part Native and full-blooded Amerindians.

Dominica

Dominica is home to the Carib Territory, one of the last indigenous communities in the Caribbean. The Carib Territory is home to an estimated 3,000 Kalinago or Carib people.

Ecuador



Shaman from the shuara culture in Ecuador
Amazonian forest

Ecuador was the site of many indigenous cultures, and civilizations of different proportions. An early sedentary culture, known as the Valdivia culture, developed in the coastal region, while the Caras and the Quitus unified to form an elaborate civilization that ended at the birth of the Capital Quito. The Cañaris near Cuenca were the most advanced, and most feared by the Inca, due to their fierce resistance to the Incan expansion. Their architecture remains were later destroyed by Spaniards and the Incas.

Approximately 96.4% of Ecuador's Indigenous population are Highland Quichuas living in the valleys of the Sierra region. Primarily consisting of the descendents of Incans, they are Kichwa speakers and include the Caranqui, the Otavalos, the Cayambi, the Quito-Caras, the Panzaleo, the Chimbuelo, the Salasacan, the Tugua, the Puruhá, the Cañari, and the Saraguro. Linguistic evidence suggests that the Salasacan and the Saraguro may have been the descendants of Bolivian ethnic groups transplanted to Ecuador as *mitimaes*.



Otavalo girl from Ecuador

Coastal groups, including the Awá, Chachi, and the Tsáchila, make up 0.24% percent of the indigenous population, while the remaining 3.35 percent live in the Oriente and consist of the Oriente Kichwa (the Canelo and the Quijos), the Shuar, the Huaorani, the Siona-Secoya, the Cofán, and the Achuar.

In 1986, indigenous people formed the first "truly" national political organization. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) has been the primary political institution of the Indigenous since then and is now the second largest political party in the nation. It has been influential in national politics, contributing to the ouster of presidents Abdalá Bucaram in 1997 and Jamil Mahuad in 2000.

El Salvador

Much of El Salvador was home to the Pipil, the Lenca, Xinca, and Kakawira. The Pipil lived in western El Salvador, spoke Nawat, and had many settlements there, most noticeably Cuzcatlan. The Pipil had no precious mineral resources, but they did have rich and fertile land that was good for farming. The Spaniards were disappointed not to find gold or jewels in El Salvador as they had in other lands like Guatemala or Mexico, but upon learning of the fertile land in El Salvador, they attempted to conquer it. Noted Meso-American indigenous warriors to rise militarily against the Spanish included Princes Atonal and Atlacatl of the Pipil people in central El Salvador and Princess Antu Silan Ulap of the Lenca people in eastern El Salvador, who saw the Spanish not as gods but as barbaric invaders. After fierce battles, the Pipil successfully fought off the Spanish army led by Pedro de Alvarado along with their Mexican Indian allies (the Tlaxcalas), sending them back to Guatemala. After many other attacks with an army reinforced with Guatemalan Indian allies, the Spanish were able to conquer Cuzcatlan. After further attacks, the Spanish also conquered the Lenca people. Eventually, the Spaniards intermarried with Pipil and Lenca women, resulting in the Mestizo population which would become the majority of the Salvadoran people. Today many Pipil and other indigenous populations live in the many small towns of El Salvador like Izalco, Panchimalco, Sacacoyo, and Nahuizalco.

Guatemala



Maya women from Guatemala

Most of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala are of Maya heritage. The Xinca people are a non-Maya indigenous people.

Pure Maya account for some forty percent of the population; although around forty percent of the population speaks an indigenous language, those tongues (of which there are more than twenty) enjoy no official status. Guatemala's majority population holds a percentage of 59.4% in White or Mestizo (of mixed

European and indigenous ancestry) people. The area of Livingston, Guatemala is highly influenced by the Caribbean and its population includes a combination of Mestizos and Garifuna people.



Indigenous Salvadoran Pipil women dancing in the traditional Procession of Palms, Panchimalco in El Salvador

Honduras

About five percent of the population are of full-blooded indigenous descent, but upwards to eighty percent more or the majority of Hondurans are mestizo or part-indigenous with European admixture, and about ten percent are of indigenous or African descent.^[174] The main concentration of indigenous in Honduras are in the rural westernmost areas facing Guatemala and to the Caribbean Sea coastline, as well on the Nicaraguan border.^[174] The majority of indigenous people are Lencas, Miskitos to the east, Mayans, Pech, Sumos, and Tolupan.^[174]

Mexico

The territory of modern-day Mexico was home to numerous indigenous civilizations prior to the arrival of the Spanish *conquistadores*: The Olmecs, who flourished from between 1200 BCE to about 400 BCE in the coastal regions of the Gulf of Mexico; the Zapotecs and the Mixtecs, who held sway in the mountains of Oaxaca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; the Maya in the Yucatan (and into neighbouring areas of contemporary Central America); the Purépecha in present-day Michoacán and surrounding areas, and the Aztecs/Mexica, who, from their central capital at Tenochtitlan, dominated much of the centre and south of the country (and the non-Aztec inhabitants of those areas) when Hernán Cortés first landed at Veracruz.

In contrast to what was the general rule in the rest of North America, the history of the colony of New Spain was one of racial intermingling (*mestizaje*). *Mestizos*, which in Mexico designate people who do not identify culturally with any indigenous grouping, quickly came to account for a majority of the colony's population; but 6% of the Mexican population identify as speakers of one of the indigenous languages. The CDI identifies 62 indigenous groups in Mexico, each with a unique language.^[175]

In the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca and in the interior of the Yucatan peninsula the majority of the population is indigenous. Large indigenous minorities, including Aztecs or Nahuas, Purépechas, Mazahua, Otomi, and Mixtecs are also present in the central regions of Mexico. In Northern Mexico indigenous people are a small minority.

The "General Law of Linguistic Rights of the Indigenous Peoples" grants all indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, regardless of the number of speakers, the same validity as Spanish in all territories in which they are spoken, and indigenous peoples are entitled to request some public services and documents in their native languages.^[176] Along with Spanish, the law has granted them — more than 60 languages — the status of "national languages". The law includes all indigenous languages of the Americas regardless of origin; that is, it includes the indigenous languages of



Wixarika (Huichol) woman from Zacatecas

ethnic groups non-native to the territory. The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the language of the Kickapoo, who immigrated from the United States,^[177] and recognizes the languages of the Guatemalan indigenous refugees.^[178] The Mexican government has promoted and established bilingual primary and secondary education in some indigenous rural communities. Nonetheless, of the indigenous peoples in Mexico, only about 67% of them (or 5.4% of the country's population) speak an indigenous language and about a sixth do not speak Spanish (1.2% of the country's population).^[179]

The indigenous peoples in Mexico have the right of free determination under the second article of the constitution. According to this article the indigenous peoples are granted:^[180]

- the right to decide the internal forms of social, economic, political and cultural organization;
- the right to apply their own normative systems of regulation as long as human rights and gender equality are respected;
- the right to preserve and enrich their languages and cultures;
- the right to elect representatives before the municipal council in which their territories are located;

amongst other rights.

Nicaragua

About 5% of the Nicaraguan population are indigenous. The largest indigenous group in Nicaragua is the Miskito people. Their territory extended from Cape Camarón, Honduras, to Rio Grande, Nicaragua along the Mosquito Coast. There is a native Miskito language, but large groups speak Miskito Coast Creole, Spanish, Rama and other languages. The Creole English came about through frequent contact with the British who colonized the area. Many are Christians. Traditional Miskito society was highly structured with a defined political structure. There was a king, but he did not have total power. Instead, the power was split between himself, a governor, a general, and by the 1750s, an admiral. Historical information on kings is often obscured by the fact that many of the kings were semi-mythical. Another major group is the Mayangna (or Sumu) people, counting some 10,000 people.^[181]

Other indigenous groups in Nicaragua are located in the Central and Northern Pacific area and they are self-identified as follows: Chorotega, Cacaopera, Xiu-Subtiaba and Nahoa.^[182]

Peru

Indigenous population in Peru make up around 45%.^[183] Native Peruvian traditions and customs have shaped the way Peruvians live and see themselves today. Cultural citizenship—or what Renato Rosaldo has called, "the right to be different and to belong, in a democratic, participatory sense" (1996:243)—is not yet very well developed in Peru. This is perhaps no more apparent than in the country's Amazonian regions where indigenous societies continue to struggle against state-sponsored economic abuses, cultural discrimination, and pervasive violence.^[184]

Suriname

United States

Indigenous peoples in what is now the contiguous United States, including their descendants, are commonly called "American Indians", or simply "Indians" domestically, or "Native Americans" by the USCB. In Alaska, indigenous peoples belong to 11 cultures with 11 languages. These include the St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Iñupiat, Athabaskan,



Two Maya women in the highlands of Chiapas



A group of Quechuas in the Conchucos District, Ancash Region, Peru



Choctaw artist from Oklahoma

Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Unangax, Alutiiq, Eyak, Haida, Tsimshian, and Tlingit,^[185] who are collectively called Alaska Natives. Indigenous Polynesian peoples, which include Marshallese, Samoan, Tahitian, and Tongan, are politically considered Pacific Islands American but are geographically and culturally distinct from indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Native Americans in the United States make up 0.97%^[186] to 2% of the population. In the 2010 census, 2.9 million people self-identified as Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native alone, and 5.2 million people identified as U.S. Native Americans, either alone

or in combination with one or more ethnicity or other races.^[5] 1.8 million are recognized as enrolled tribal members. Tribes have established their own criteria for membership, which are often based on blood quantum, lineal descent, or residency. A minority of US Native Americans live in land units called Indian reservations. Some California and Southwestern tribes, such as the Kumeyaay, Cocopa, Pascua Yaqui and Apache span both sides of the US–Mexican border. Haudenosaunee people have the legal right to freely cross the US–Canada border. Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Iñupiat, Blackfeet, Nakota, Cree, Anishinaabe, Huron, Lenape, Mi'kmaq, Penobscot, and Haudenosaunee, among others live in both Canada and the US.

Venezuela

Most Venezuelans have some indigenous heritage, but the indigenous population make up only around 2% of the total population. They speak around 29 different languages and many more dialects, but some of the ethnic groups are very small and their languages are in danger of becoming extinct in the next decades. The most important indigenous groups are the Ye'kuana, the Wayuu, the Pemon and the Warao. The most advanced native people to have lived in present-day Venezuela is thought to have been the Timoto-cuicas, who mainly lived in the Venezuelan Andes. In total it is estimated that there were between 350 thousand and 500 thousand inhabitants, the most densely populated area being the Andean region (Timoto-cuicas), thanks to the advanced agricultural techniques used.

The 1999 constitution of Venezuela gives them special rights, although the vast majority of them still live in very critical conditions of poverty. The largest groups receive some basic primary education in their languages.

Other parts of the Americas

Indigenous peoples make up the majority of the population in Bolivia and Peru, and are a significant element in most other former Spanish colonies. Exceptions to this include Uruguay (Native Charrúa). According to the 2011 Census, 2.4% of Uruguayans reported having indigenous ancestry.^[143] At least four of the Native American languages (Quechua in Peru and Bolivia; Aymara also in Peru and Bolivia, Guaraní in Paraguay, and Greenlandic in Greenland) are recognized as official languages.

Native American name controversy

The Native American name controversy is an ongoing dispute over the acceptable ways to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Americas and to broad subsets thereof, such as those living in a specific country or sharing certain cultural attributes. When discussing broader subsets of peoples, naming may be based on shared language, region, or historical relationship. Many English exonyms have been used to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Americas.



Eight Crow Nation prisoners under guard at Crow agency. Montana, 1887



A Venezuelan Warao family traveling in their canoe

Some of these names were based on foreign-language terms used by earlier explorers and colonists, while others resulted from the colonists' attempt to translate endonyms from the native language into their own, and yet others were pejorative terms arising out of prejudice and fear, during periods of conflict.

However, since the 20th century, indigenous peoples in the Americas have been more vocal about the ways they wish to be referred to, pressing for the elimination of terms widely considered to be obsolete, inaccurate, or racist. During the latter half of the 20th century and the rise of the Indian rights movement, the United States government responded by proposing the use of the term "Native American," to recognize the primacy of indigenous peoples' tenure in the nation, but this term was not fully accepted. Other naming conventions have been proposed and used, but none are accepted by all indigenous groups.

Rise of indigenous movements

In recent years, there has been a rise of indigenous movements in the Americas (mainly South America). These are rights-driven groups that organize themselves in order to achieve some sort of self-determination and the preservation of their culture for their peoples. Organizations like the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin and the Indian Council of South America are examples of movements that are breaking the barrier of borders in order to obtain rights for Amazonian indigenous populations everywhere. Similar movements for indigenous rights can also be seen in Canada and the United States, with movements like the International Indian Treaty Council and the accession of native Indian group into the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

There has also been a recognition of indigenous movements on an international scale, with the United Nations adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, despite dissent from the stronger countries of the Americas.

In Colombia, various indigenous groups protested the denial of their rights. People organized a march in Cali in October 2008 to demand the government live up to promises to protect indigenous lands, defend the indigenous against violence, and reconsider the free trade pact with the United States.^[187]

Legal prerogative



Evo Morales
(Aymara),
President of
Bolivia

The first indigenous president to be democratically elected in Latin America was Benito Juarez, a Mexican of the Zapotec ethnic group, who was elected President of Mexico in 1858.^[188]

With the rise to power of governments in Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay, and especially Bolivia where Evo Morales was the first indigenous descendant elected president of Bolivia, the indigenous movement gained a strong foothold.

Representatives from indigenous and rural organizations from major South American countries, including Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Brazil, started a forum in support of Morales' legal process of change. The meeting condemned plans by the European "foreign power elite" to destabilize the country. The forum also expressed solidarity with the Morales and his economic and social changes in the interest of historically marginalized majorities. Furthermore, in a cathartic blow to the US-backed elite, it questioned US interference through diplomats and NGOs. The forum was suspicious of plots against Bolivia and other countries, including Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay and Nicaragua.^[189]

The forum rejected the supposed violent method used by regional civic leaders from the called "Crescent departments" in Bolivia to impose their autonomous statutes, applauded the decision to expel the US ambassador to Bolivia, and reaffirmed the sovereignty and independence of the presidency. Amongst others, representatives of CONAIE, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, the Chilean Council of All Lands, and the Brazilian Landless Movement participated in the forum.^[189]

Genetics



Schematic illustration of maternal (mtDNA) gene-flow in and out of Beringia, from 25,000 years ago to present

Genetic history of indigenous peoples of the Americas primarily focuses on Human Y-chromosome DNA haplogroups and Human mitochondrial DNA haplogroups. "Y-DNA" is passed solely along the patrilineal line, from father to son, while "mtDNA" is passed down the matrilineal line, from mother to offspring of both sexes. Neither recombines, and thus Y-DNA and mtDNA change only by chance mutation at each generation with no intermixture between parents' genetic material.^[190] Autosomal "atDNA" markers are also used, but differ from mtDNA or Y-DNA in that they overlap significantly.^[191] AtDNA is generally used to measure the average continent-of-ancestry genetic admixture in the entire human genome and related isolated populations.^[191]

Scientific evidence links indigenous Americans to Asian peoples, specifically Siberian populations, such as the Ket, Selkup, Chukchi and Koryak peoples. Indigenous peoples of the Americas have been linked to North Asian populations by the distribution of blood types, and in genetic composition as reflected by molecular data, such as DNA.^[192] There is general agreement among anthropologists that the source populations for the migration into the Americas originated from an area somewhere east of the Yenisei River. The common

occurrence of the mtDNA Haplogroups A, B, C, and D among eastern Asian and Native American populations has long been recognized.^[193] As a whole, the greatest frequency of the four Native American associated haplogroups occurs in the Altai-Baikal region of southern Siberia.^[194] Some subclades of C and D closer to the Native American subclades occur among Mongolian, Amur, Japanese, Korean, and Ainu populations.^{[193][195]}

Genetic studies of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) of Amerindians and some Siberian and Central Asian peoples also revealed that the gene pool of the Turkic-speaking peoples of Siberia such as Altaians, Khakas, Shors and Soyots, living between the Altai and Lake Baikal along the Sayan mountains, are genetically close to Amerindians. This view is shared by other researchers who argue that "the ancestors of the American Indians were the first to separate from the great Asian population in the Middle Paleolithic."^{[196][197]} 2012 research found evidence for a recent common ancestry between Native Americans and indigenous Altaians based on mitochondrial DNA and Y-Chromosome analysis.^[198] The paternal lineages of Altaians mostly belong to the subclades of haplogroup P-M45 (xR1a 38-93%;^{[199][200][201]} xQ1a 4-32%^{[199][200]}).

The genetic pattern indicates indigenous peoples of the Americas experienced two very distinctive genetic episodes; first with the initial peopling of the Americas, and secondly with European colonization of the Americas.^{[202][203][204]} The former is the determinant factor for the number of gene lineages, zygosity mutations, and founding haplotypes present in today's indigenous peoples of the Americas populations.^[203]

Human settlement of the New World occurred in stages from the Bering sea coast line, with a possible initial layover of 10,000 to 20,000 years in Beringia for the small founding population.^{[42][205][206]} The micro-satellite diversity and distributions of the Y lineage specific to South America indicates that certain indigenous peoples of the Americas populations have been isolated since the initial colonization of the region.^[207] The Na-Dené, Inuit and Indigenous Alaskan populations exhibit haplogroup Q (Y-DNA) mutations, however are distinct from other indigenous peoples of the Americas with various mtDNA and atDNA mutations.^{[208][209][210]} This suggests that the earliest migrants into the northern extremes of North America and Greenland derived from later migrant populations.^{[211][212]}

A 2013 study in *Nature* reported that DNA found in the 24,000-year-old remains of a young boy from the archaeological Mal'ta-Buret' culture suggest that up to one-third of the indigenous Americans may have ancestry that can be traced back to western Eurasians, who may have "had a more north-easterly distribution 24,000 years ago than commonly thought".^[213] "We estimate that 14 to 38 percent of Native American ancestry may originate through gene flow from this ancient population," the authors wrote. Professor Kelly Graf said,

Our findings are significant at two levels. First, it shows that Upper Paleolithic Siberians came from a cosmopolitan population of early modern humans that spread out of Africa to Europe and Central and South Asia. Second, Paleoindian skeletons like Buhl Woman with phenotypic traits atypical of modern-day indigenous Americans can be explained as having a direct historical connection to Upper Paleolithic Siberia.

A route through Beringia is seen as more likely than the Solutrean hypothesis.^[213] Kashani et al. 2012 state that "The similarities in ages and geographical distributions for C4c and the previously analyzed X2a lineage provide support to the scenario of a dual origin for Paleo-Indians. Taking into account that C4c is deeply rooted in the Asian portion of the mtDNA phylogeny and is indubitably of Asian origin, the finding that C4c and X2a are characterized by parallel genetic histories definitively dismisses the controversial hypothesis of an Atlantic glacial entry route into North America."^[214]

See also

- Ceramics of indigenous peoples of the Americas
- Child development of the indigenous peoples of the Americas
- Chunkey
- Classification of indigenous peoples of the Americas
- Demographic history of the indigenous peoples of the Americas
- First Nations
- Origins of Paleoindians
- History of the west coast of North America
- Indigenous Movements in the Americas
- Indigenous peoples in Brazil
- Indigenous peoples of Siberia
- List of American Inuit
- List of Greenlandic Inuit
- List of indigenous artists of the Americas
- List of indigenous people of the Americas
- List of Mayan languages
- List of traditional territories of the indigenous peoples of North America
- List of writers from peoples indigenous to the Americas
- Native Americans in the United States
- Native American Languages Act of 1990
- Native American weaponry
- Native Americans in German popular culture
- Pacific Islander
- Population history of indigenous peoples of the Americas
- Pow wow
- Redskin (slang)
- Republic of Lakotah
- Zambo

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External links

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- The Peopling of the American Continents (<http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Chumash/EntryDate.html>), *Early California History*
- Indigenous Peoples in Brazil. Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) (<http://pib.socioambiental.org/en>)
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