



## AMERICAN INDIANS

Today 4.3 million people are estimated to be at least in part American Indian or Alaska native. They make up 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population. However, according to Census 2000, as many as 7.9 million Americans (2.8% of the total population) claim American Indian ancestry.

The American Indian population in the U.S. today struggles with economic hardships and social problems, like poverty and substance abuse, but at the same time, an increasing number are becoming doctors, lawyers and businesspeople. Famous people with American Indian roots include Elvis Presley, Val Kilmer, Johnny Depp, Tiger Woods and Shania Twain.

The U.S. government supports American Indian political, civil and cultural rights through many agencies. The main goals of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are to support Indians' education, economic development and resource (such as land) management. Many tribes have begun operating full-scale casinos, providing much-needed revenue and employment.

On September 8, 2000, the BIA issued an apology to American Indians for the agency's "legacy of racism and inhumanity" and its participation in "ethnic cleansing." The head of the BIA, Kevin Gover, a Pawnee Indian, expressed sorrow and shame over the government's past efforts to eradicate Indian culture and deprive tribes of their land.

### Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian

Photo by Robert C. Lautman



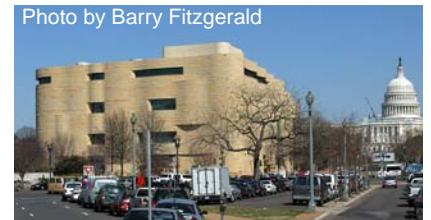
Dedicated to the preservation, study and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native Peoples of the Western Hemisphere, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian celebrated its grand opening on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on September 21, 2004.

The museum hosts one of world's finest and most comprehensive collections of Indian cultural materials: weavings, archaeological objects, textiles, basketry, painted hides and garments.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of the U.S. Capitol building on the National Mall, the museum's location symbolizes a deeper understanding and reconciliation between America's first citizens and those who have come to make these shores their home.

The opening of this museum marks a unique cultural achievement as Native Americans from North, Central, and South America realize a long-awaited dream to share and honor their vibrant cultures with visitors from throughout the world.

Photo by Barry Fitzgerald



Text source: website of the Museum at [www.americanindian.si.edu](http://www.americanindian.si.edu)

Even before touring the exhibits, visitors are likely to be impressed by evidence of "the significant presence and diversity of Native peoples throughout the Americas," say curators. Upon entering the museum, visitors will encounter the Welcome Wall, which offers greetings in approximately 200 Native languages. The Lelawi Theater introduces visitors to a 13-minute multi-media experience designed to prepare them for their museum visit.

Visitors can look forward to many other attractions, as well. A boat-building demonstration will take place in the center of the Potomac (as the museum's main entry space is called), and three Native boats will be under construction over the course of the first year of NMAI's public debut.

For a taste of authentic Native cuisine, visitors may turn to the Mitsitam Café. The word "mitsitam" means "let's eat" in the language of the Piscataway and Delaware peoples -- and the café invites visitors to do just that, serving "meals and snacks based on the indigenous foods and culinary traditions of the Americas," museum officials note.

*Excerpts from an article by Lauren Monsen, Department of State Staff Writer*

# Indians from the Turtle Mountains

Today 3.1 million American Indians and Alaska natives claim membership in a specific tribe. Over half a million of them live on reservations or other trust lands.

There are approximately 275 Indian land areas in the U.S. administered as Indian reservations. On each reservation the local governing authority is the tribal government.

There are more than 550 federally recognized tribes in the United States. It means that these tribes and groups have a special, legal relationship with the U.S. government.

Indians are generally subject to federal, state, and local laws. On Indian reservations, however, only federal and tribal laws apply to members of the tribe unless Congress provides otherwise. Any violation of state criminal law is, however, a federal offense on reservations. Most tribes now maintain tribal court systems.

*This image comes from the website of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board: <http://www.doi.gov/iacb/>*

It's probably best to imagine the life of American Indians on reservations today by taking a more detailed look at one of the tribes.

The homeland of the **Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians** is located in the Turtle Mountains in north central North Dakota. About 28,000 people live on the Reservation covering an area of 72 square miles.



The reservation land is covered by low, rolling hills, trees, brush, farmland, lakes, ponds and sloughs. The winters are cold and it is not unusual for snow to remain on the ground for up to six months. The summers are mostly pleasant with warm days cooling down in the evenings.

Inhabitants find employment in enterprises operated by the tribe: Turtle Mountain Manufacturing, Uniband Data Processing, Turtle Mountain Chippewa Casino and in the government, health and education services as well as in the construction sector and in agricultural work.

Although the majority of people are now of the Catholic faith, more and more are practicing traditional ceremonies, which are becoming part of marriages, graduations and funerals. There is a revived interest in tribal teachings. Elders who have preserved traditional customs, and who have maintained spiritual and cultural practices, are passing them on. Many young people are exploring their roots.

Many residents of the Reservation travel throughout the United States and Canada participating in the annual Powwows. These celebrations include dancing, singing, feasting, praying, teaching, and learning.

The governing body of Turtle Mountain Chippewa consists of the elected chairperson and eight council members. Tribal elections are held every two years.

*Texts on this page are based on Turtle Mountain Chippewa website ([www.tmbci.net](http://www.tmbci.net)) and Infoplease.com*

## Thanksgiving Day: Celebrating with Indians

In 1620, a boat filled with more than one hundred people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in the New World. The Pilgrims settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts. Their first winter in the New World was difficult. They had arrived too late to grow many crops, and without fresh food, half the colony died from disease. The following spring the Iroquois Indians taught them how to grow corn (maize), a new food for the colonists. They showed them other crops to grow in the unfamiliar soil and how to hunt and fish.



In the autumn of 1621, bountiful crops of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins were harvested. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so a feast was planned. They invited the local Indian chief and 90 Indians. The Indians brought deer to roast with the turkeys and other wild game offered by the colonists. The colonists had learned how to cook cranberries and different kinds of corn and squash dishes from the Indians.

*Source: Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A. Published by USIA, 1994.*

"We celebrate Thanksgiving along with the rest of America, maybe in different ways and for different reasons. Despite everything that's happened to us since we fed the Pilgrims, we still have our language, our culture, our distinct social system. Even in a nuclear age, we still have a tribal people."

-Wilma Mankiller, principal chief of the Cherokee nation

Young girl at Powwow



Photo Courtesy of the Indian Health Service/ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## ■ Cooking an Indian Treat

### Indian Fry Bread

#### Ingredients:

3 cups flour, white or half whole wheat and white  
1 1/3 cups warm water  
1 1/4 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt



#### Preparation:

Mix flour, baking powder and salt. Add warm water and knead until dough is soft but not sticky. Tear off a small piece, stretch and pat dough until thin, and poke a hole through the middle. Carefully drop into sizzling hot cooking oil. Brown on both sides. Remove from oil and drain on paper towels. Serve while still warm. With jam, powdered sugar, cinnamon sugar, or honey, it is a sweet treat!

NOTE: 1 cup in American recipes = 227 grams of dry product or 235 milliliters of liquid product

Find more American recipes in The Great American Potluck:  
<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/ckbk/index.html>

Photo by June Anderson, California Academy of Sciences, Traditional Arts Program  
[www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology/tap/respix-calind.html](http://www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology/tap/respix-calind.html)

## ■ Indian Languages

There were about 300 original Native North American (including Canadian) languages. Many became extinct, replaced by European languages. As many as 100 languages might still be spoken, although some only by a few elderly tribe members. Navajo is the most widely spoken Indian language in the United States with about 175,000 speakers.

Still, hundreds of Indian words can be found in everyday American English. They include words for:

**animals** such as: **skunk, raccoon, moose;**  
**objects** such as **canoe, toboggan, hammock;**  
**plants** such as **potato, tobacco, maize;**  
**events** such as **caucus.**

Few American Indian Nations developed writings systems, although some recorded their history by means of simple pictures drawn on skin or on wood. The most famous Indian writing system was developed by the Cherokees in the 19th century. In their system each symbol based on an English letter indicates a combination **consonant + vowel.**

Library of Congress



This is the header of *The Cherokee Phoenix* - the first Native American tribal newspaper to be published in North America.

## ■ American English

**American Indian, Native American...** How should you refer to this group of nations? According to *News Watch Diversity Style Guide* (San Francisco State University), when it is possible, national affiliation - such as **Navajo, Hopi, Cherokee** - should be used.

**Native American**, synonymous with **American Indian**, is sometimes a preferred term for indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Do not confuse this with the term **Indian American**, which refers to a U.S. permanent resident or citizen with ancestral ties to India.

When referring to American Indians in Alaska, it is acceptable to use for **Inupiat Eskimos** or **Yupik Eskimos**. Do not use these terms for **Aleuts** or **Inuits**.

**Hawaiian** and **Native Hawaiian** refer to a person having origins in any of the peoples of the Hawaiian Islands.

According to the National Museum of the American Indian, **American Indians** are also referred to as **Indigenous Peoples**.

<http://newswatch.sfsu.edu/>

Navajo code talkers at work



The Navajo language played a crucial role in the U.S. Army fighting in the Pacific during World War II. The so-called **Navajo code talkers** transmitted secret messages by telephone and radio in their native unwritten language of extreme complexity - a code that the Japanese never broke.

When a Navajo code talker received a message, what he heard was a string of seemingly unrelated Navajo words. The code talker first had to translate each Navajo word into its English equivalent. Then he used only the first letter of the English equivalent in spelling an English word. For example, the Navajo words "wol-lachee" (ant) and "be-la-sana" (apple) both stood for the letter "a."

About 400 Navajo code talkers served in the U.S. Army at that time.

# Activity Page

## Win Booklets!

To take part in a drawing for colorful English-language booklets find the answer to the following question:

**How many Native American tribes does the U.S. government recognize?**

Send your answer to:  
[zoom@usembassy.hu](mailto:zoom@usembassy.hu)

Please state your name, address and age.

Deadline: October 15

Winners will be notified by October 31.

## Good Luck!

# ZOOM

in on america

Zoom is available online at

<http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom.htm>

Please send requests for subscription and comments to:  
[zoom@usembassy.hu](mailto:zoom@usembassy.hu)

Regional English Language Office  
[rel@mail@usembassy.hu](mailto:rel@mail@usembassy.hu)

Information Resource Center  
[infousa@usembassy.hu](mailto:infousa@usembassy.hu)

Mailing address:  
U.S. Embassy  
Public Affairs Section  
1054 Budapest  
Szabadság tér 12.

## State Names

U.S. state names listed below come from Native American languages. Match the name and its origin:

Idaho	From the Chippewa word <b>meicigama</b> meaning <b>great water</b>
Alaska	From the Indian phrase <b>E Dah Hoe</b> meaning <b>gem of the mountains</b>
Arkansas	From the Chippewa word <b>Ouisconsin</b> meaning <b>grassy place</b>
Connecticut	From the Dakota Indian word <b>Ayuhwa</b> meaning <b>sleepy ones</b>
Iowa	After Cherokee Indian villages called <b>Tanasi</b>
Michigan	From the Aleutian word <b>Alakshak</b> meaning <b>great lands</b> or <b>peninsula</b>
Mississippi	From the Chippewa words <b>mici zibi</b> meaning <b>great river</b>
Oklahoma	From the Sioux word <b>acansa</b> meaning <b>downstream place</b>
Tennessee	From the Mohegan word <b>Quinnehtukqut</b> meaning <b>Long River Place</b>
Wisconsin	From the Choctaw words <b>okla</b> meaning people and <b>humma</b> meaning red

Source:  
[bensguide.gpo.gov](http://bensguide.gpo.gov)

Find Correct Answers at: [www.usembassy.hu/zoom\\_key.htm](http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom_key.htm)

## What Do We Know?

Use the construction "He is known/said/expected to..." and "It is known/said/expected/believed that..." as shown in the example:

1. We know that Sitting Bull defeated Colonel Custer's soldiers at Little Big Horn River.

A. Sitting Bull is known to have defeated Colonel Custer's soldiers at Little Big Horn River.

B. It is known that Sitting Bull defeated Colonel Custer's soldiers at Little Big Horn River.

2. They say Pocahontas saved the life of Captain John Smith.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

3. They believe that Tecumseh predicted the powerful earthquake in Missouri on Dec. 16, 1811.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

4. They expect Joanne Shenandoa, a successful Native American singer, to release a new album soon.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

## Glossary

(With reference to the page where they appear.)

**ancestry** - a line of descent (1)

**chairperson** - presiding officer of a meeting or an organization (2)

**dough** - a mixture that consists of flour and liquid (3)

**to eradicate** - to exterminate (3)

**extinct** - no longer existing (3)

**hide** - the skin of an animal (1)

**indigenous** - having originated in and living in a particular region or environment (3)

**to knead** - to press into a mass with hands (3)

**revenue** - income produced by a given source (1)

**slough** - a swamp or a place of deep mud (2)

**tribe** - a social group comprising families, clans or generations (1)