

Springfield Public SchoolsDr. Nate Quinn, Coordinator of
Cultural DiversityMs. Gwen Marshall, Cultural
Diversity Specialist**Native American History Month**

What are some typical Native American foods?

The most important Native American food crop was *Indian corn* (also known as *maize*, which comes from the Taino Indian name for the plant.) The majority of American Indian tribes grew at least some corn, and even tribes that did not grow corn themselves often traded with neighbors for it. Other important American Indian crops included beans, squash, pumpkins, sunflowers, wild rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, avocados, papayas, and chocolate.

<http://www.native-languages.org/food.htm>

Native Americans in the United States

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Native Americans in the United States are the **indigenous peoples** in **North America** within the boundaries of the present-day **continental United States**, parts of **Alaska**, and the island state of **Hawaii**. They are composed of numerous, distinct **tribes**, **states**, and **ethnic groups**, many of which survive as intact political communities. The terms used to refer to Native Americans have been **controversial**. According to a 1995 **US Census Bureau** set of home interviews, most of the respondents with an expressed preference refer to themselves as **American Indians** or **Indians**, and this term has been adopted by major newspapers and some academic groups.

Since the end of the 15th century, the **migration** of Europeans to the Americas, and their importation of **Africans** as **slaves**, has led to centuries of conflict and adjustment between **Old** and **New World** societies. Europeans created most of the early written historical record about Native Americans after the colonists' immigration to the Americas. Many Native Americans lived as **hunter-gatherer** societies and told their histories by oral traditions. In many groups, women carried out sophisticated cultivation of numerous varieties of staple crops: maize, beans and squash. The indigenous cultures were quite different from those of the **agrarian**, proto-industrial, mostly Christian **immigrants** from western **Eurasia**. Many Native cultures were

matrilineal; the people occupied lands for use of the entire community, for hunting or agriculture. Europeans had **patriarchal** cultures and had developed concepts of individual property rights in land that were extremely different.

The differences in culture between the established native Americans and immigrant Europeans, as well as shifting alliances among different nations of each culture through the centuries, caused extensive political tension, ethnic violence and social disruption. The American Indians suffered high fatalities from the contact with **infectious** Eurasian diseases, to which they had no acquired **immunity**. **Epidemics** after European contact caused the greatest loss of life for indigenous populations. Estimates of the pre-Columbian population of what today constitutes the U.S. vary significantly, ranging from 1 million to 18 million.

In 1830, the U.S. Congress passed the **Indian Removal Act**, authorizing the government to relocate most Native Americans of the **Deep South** from their homelands east of the **Mississippi River** to the West, to accommodate European-American expansion from the coastal United States. Government officials thought that by decreasing the conflict between the groups, they could help the Indians survive. American Indians have continued to live throughout the South. They have organized and been recognized as tribes

since the late 20th century by several states and, in some cases, by the federal government.

Contemporary Native Americans have a unique relationship with the United States because they may be members of nations, tribes, or bands of Native Americans who have sovereignty or independence from the government of the United States. Since the late 1960s, American Indian activism has led to the building of cultural infrastructure and wider recognition: they have founded independent newspapers and online media; **FNX**, the first Native American television channel (2011), community schools, **tribal colleges**, and tribal museums and language programs; Native American studies programs in major universities; and national and state museums. American Indian authors have been increasingly published; American Indians work as academics, policymakers, doctors and in a wide variety of occupations. Cultural activism has led to an expansion of efforts to teach and preserve indigenous languages for younger generations. Their societies and cultures flourish within a larger population of descendants of immigrants (both voluntary and involuntary): **African**, **Asian**, **Middle Eastern**, and **European** peoples. Since 1924, Native Americans who were not already U.S. citizens were **granted citizenship** by **Congress**.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States