

Caddo Indian Culture

Formed by many Southeastern Indian Tribes, the Caddo Indian Nation was made up of advanced agriculturalists with a rich heritage and culture. Today, the Caddo people maintain many of their traditional ways and continue to actively work to preserve this matchless tribal culture.

The Caddo Indians were not nomadic like many Native American groups. They stayed in permanent villages by clearing small areas of the forests for farming and homes. The Texas Eagle route traverses some of the traditional Caddo land, and the Caddo Indians were also known to have settled across Northern Louisiana and Oklahoma in dense pine forests along the Red and Mississippi Rivers. The banks of the Red and Mississippi Rivers provided these people with the nutrient rich land that they needed to grow abundant crops such as corn, beans and squash. They took advantage of the nearby rivers and became great fishermen. Though their diet consisted mostly of vegetables and fish, they also supplemented it with hunting.

Herds of buffalo and other large game did not migrate into this pine forest region, so the Caddo hunted deer, fox, rabbit and other smaller game. They traded goods with other tribes of Indians in the East Texas area for supplies and other foods. The Caddo Indians were known to be a friendly tribe, interested in trading with almost anyone; their only enemy being the Osage Indians to the North.

The Caddo Nation has a unique culture filled with many traditions. One distinctive tradition is the social dances and adjoining songs which many of their ancestors have preserved to this day. One of the most sacred dances is the Turkey Dance, which illustrates the accomplishments and bravery of the Caddo warriors and is very famous amongst the Caddo People. They would begin this dance in the afternoons and it would be completed by sunset; when turkeys come home to roost. The music that accompanied the dances is another cherished custom and something that sets the Caddo people apart from other tribes. Although other tribes had a song or two for each dance, the Caddo people have dozens. Another aspect of Caddo culture that is still alive today is pottery making, which features traditional Caddo drawings.

The Caddo Nation continues to pass along many traditions by educating others about their unique culture. They hold regular meets to teach and review Caddo songs and dances, to tell stories about their ancestors, and teach the children how to make traditional Caddo clothing. The Caddo way of life has changed with modernization and development of their ancestral lands, but they hold on and perpetuate the great culture and traditions of their tribe.

Source(s):

Caddo Nation. (2007). Caddo Nation Heritage and Culture. Retrieved January 27, 2011 from <http://www.caddonation-nsn.gov/history/culture.html>

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Author(s):

Written by Andria Godfrey (Graduate Student) and Emily Martin (Undergraduate Student) in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University, as part of a National Park Service Trails and Rails project funded by Amtrak, 2011.