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Northwest Coast Native Americans - Lifestyle (Way of Living)The climate, land and natural resources that were available to the Indian tribes resulted in the adoption of the Northwest Coast Native Americans culture.Name of Group: Northwest Coast Native AmericansLanguages: Chinookan, Athapaskan and PenutianGeography of the State of Northwest Coast Native Americans: Heavy rainfall, tall dense forests, oceans, mountains and rivers. Animals: Mountain goats and sheep, deer, moose, bear and elk. Fish: Fish and Sea animals including seals, whales, salmon and shell fishNatural Resources: Red cedar trees, forests, mountains, rivers and the Pacific OceanCulture and Lifestyle adopted: FishersClothing: Raincoats were made from the inner bark of the cedar treeTypes of housing, homes or shelters: PlankhousesFamous Tribes of Northwest Coast Native Americans: Haida, Chinook, Eyak, Coast Salish, Tlingit, Tillamook and ChimakumThe Native Indians who lived on the borders of lands often reflected two different types of lifestyles.Northwest Native Americans - LocationThe mild climate, fertile land and a large variety of natural resources that were available to the Indian tribes resulted in the adoption of the hunter fisher culture shared by the Northwest Coast Native Americans along the Pacific coast from British Columbia to the top of Northern California. The Northwest Coast culture area is 1,500 miles long and about fifty miles wide. The location of the Northwest Native Americans consists primarily of the coastal areas of Oregon, Washington, Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. The area also includes many islands, the most important being Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands.Northwest Indians - Other Tribes of the NorthwestThe other tribes of the Northwest Indians known to inhabit the area were the Calapuya, Chehalis, Chastacosta, Chelamela, Clallam, Clatsop, Kuitsh, Lummi, Nooksack, Snake, Tillamook, Willapa and Yamel.Northwest Native Americans - Lifestyle (Way of Living)This section on Northwest Coast Native Americans group provides facts and information about their languages, the Geography and Environment. The animals and the Plants, Trees and Crops provided their food, clothing, shelter and decorations. Their Houses, Shelters and Homes depended on the materials available to them and whether the home was permanent or temporary but the most usual type of accommodation was the Plankhouse. There are also facts and info about the Religion, Ceremonies and Beliefs of the Northwest Coast Native Americans group. Tribes included those who spoke the Athapaskan language including the Haida and Tlingit and those who spoke the Penutian language including the Chinook and the Coos.Northwest Native Americans - Animals and FishThe animals were very important to the Northwest Coast Native Americans. There was a variety of many different animals including mountain goats and sheep, deer, moose, bear and elk. Fish and Sea animals including seals, whales, salmon and shell fish. The uses of the animals were varied and included food, clothing, shelter and decorations. Dogs were the only domesticated animals and they were used to pull dog sleds.Northwest Native Americans - Houses, Shelters and HomesThe different types of Houses, Shelters and Homes depended on the materials available and whether the home was permanent or temporary. The homes of the Northwest Coast Indians included Plankhouses. Plank Houses were common and were permanent houses built as homes by the fishing tribes of the Northwest Coast, such as the Chinooks. Plank houses are made from long, flat planks of cedar wood lashed to a wooden frame and made good houses for people in cold climates who lived in areas with lots of tall trees.Picture of a Chinook Plankhouse Northwest Native Americans - Religion, Ceremonies and BeliefsThe Religion, Ceremonies and Beliefs were based on Totemism and Animism. Animism was a commonly shared doctrine, or belief, of the indigenous people of North America and Canada including the Northwest Coast Native American tribes. Animism is based on the spiritual or religious idea that the universe and all natural objects have souls or spirits. In this religion it is believed that souls or spirits exist not only in humans but also in animals, plants, trees, rocks etc. This belief is also extended to natural phenomena such as thunder storms and rain and geographic features such as mountains, caves or rivers also possess souls or spirits. The famous customs and traditions of these people included the use of Totem Poles and the Potlatch ceremony which often featured masked dancers. Tricksters feature in the legends and mythology of the Northwest peoples as do heroic figures or "transformers" who transform, or change, the world into its present state. There are also many legends about the Clans.Northwest Native Americans - PotlatchThe along the north-west coast there existed the curious custom known as potlatch. A Potlatch is an opulent ceremonial feast held by some Indians of the northwestern coast of North America to celebrate a great occasion such as a marriage or birth. The host of the Potlatch gives gifts to tribesmen and others to display his superior wealth. Personal property is also destroyed in another show of wealth and generosity. Those who gave away or destroyed the most property earned the greatest social prestige. Potlatch is a way for people to share their wealth with the community, to strengthen their leadership claims and to earn the respect of the tribe. In accordance with this custom a man might save for half a lifetime in order to acquire the rank of chief by finally giving away his entire goods and belongings at a grand public feast.Northwest Native Americans - Totem PolesTotem poles were important to the North Coast Native Americans. Family history was visually displayed outside the home of every Native Indian via a Totem Pole. Totem poles were made of logs which were carved with various symbols including animals, plants, birds, and religious spirits. Northwest Indians - Physical CharacteristicsThe physical characteristics of Northwest Coast Indians are dark brown eyes, prominent cheek bones, straight black hair, and scantiness of beard. The skin color of Native Indians varies from very light in some tribes such as the Cheyenne, to almost black in others, such as the Caddo and a yellowish color in such as the Flatheads.Northwest Native Americans - LanguagesThe languages of the Northwest Coast Native Americans included Chinookan, Athapaskan and Penutian languages. Penutian encompassed a large division of languages spoken in the Pacific northwest, near the Columbia River basin, including Chinookan, Tsimshianic and Utian.Northwest Native Americans - Geography and EnvironmentThe Northwest area includes the States of Oregon and Washington. The Geography and Environment can be generally described as a region with heavy rainfall, tall dense forests, oceans, mountains and rivers. All the Native Americans lived near the water, either the Pacific Ocean or an inland river or lake, and relied heavily on water for their survival. A combination of the cedar tree forests and salmon filled rivers provided a good living in an area which was rich in natural resources. Northwest Native AmericansInteresting Facts and information about Northwest Coast Native AmericansWay of Life, Housing and homesNorthwest Coast Native Americans tribes of IndiansFast Facts and info about Religion, Ceremonies and BeliefsAnimals, Plants, Trees and CropsHomework resource for kids on Northwest Coast Native AmericansPictures and Videos of Northwest Coast Native AmericansThe Northwest Coast Native Americans! Discover the vast selection of pictures and videos of Northwest Coast Native Americans. The pictures show the clothing, weapons and decorations of various Northwest Coast Native Americans that can be used as a really useful educational resource for kids and children of all ages. Our series of videos enable fast access to the images, pics, paintings and pictures together with information and many facts. We hope that this article on Northwest Coast Native Americans will assist in your studies or homework and that you will enjoy watching the videos featuring many pictures of the Northwest Coast Native Americans. A great educational resource for kids on the subject of Northwest Coast Native Americans. Northwest Coast Indians were found in Oregon, Washington, and even as far north as Alaska. Some of the tribes that inhabited those states were the Bella Coola, Haida, Kwakiuts, Makah, Nez Perce, Nisqualli, Nootka, Quinault, Puyallup, Salish, Snohomish, Spokane, Shuswap, Swinomish, Tlingit, and Tsimshian. The Northwest Coast Indians were considered rich compared to the other Indian nations. They were considered rich because they had both an abundance of food and sturdy shelter. As with most tribes, the women did chores each day. This included weaving baskets and mats, collecting berries, making clothing, and cleaning house. The mens day consisted of hunting and fishing. The Northwest Coast Indians built canoes from cedar trees. The tribe split trees in two, which was perfect for making a canoe. The canoes were 50 feet long and could hold up to 20 warriors and 10,000 pounds of fish. The Northwest Coast Indians did not live in teepees like other tribes, but built longhouses out of wide cedar planks. These longhouses could be very large and if it was built by the tribe, the chief was in charge of assigning who lived in each longhouse. If it was built by an individual, he and his family lived in that longhouse. However, if the owner of the house died, it was often burned to the ground for fear of the owners spirit haunting the family if they remained in the house. The Northwest Coast Indians used totem poles to tell stories, but they did not create the first totem poles. Totem poles were brought to them through trade and they loved them so, they started creating their own. Because the Northwest Coast Indians had no written language, the totem poles were a very important part of their culture. The totem poles allowed them to record stories, legends, and myths through images. Northwest Coast Indians Articles Home Page A plank house was a structure used by Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples to shelter extended families. The design and construction of plank houses varied widely. Generally speaking, however, plank houses were square or rectangular in shape and made out of wide planks of wood, often cedar.Where did the Northwest Coast tribe live?Historically, the Northwest Coast people inhabited a narrow belt of North American Pacific coastland and offshore islands from the southern border of Alaska to northwestern California. Their world stretched from Yakutat Bay, in the northeastern Gulf of Alaska, south to Cape Mendocino, in present-day California.What is the habitat of the Northwest Coast?The western edge of the Northwest Coast is the nations greatest example of temperate rainforest. High rainfallmore than a dozen feet on averageand mild temperatures have made these coniferous forests some of the planets most productive.What kind of houses did the Northwest Coast Indians live in?The dwellings of the Northwest Coast Indians were rectilinear structures that were built of timber or planks and, except for those in northwestern California, were usually quite large, as the members of a corporate house typically lived together in one building. What was the social structure of the northwest coast?The Pacific Northwest Indian peoples often organized themselves into corporate houses of a few dozen to 100 or more related people who held in common the rights to particular resources. As with the noble house societies of medieval Japan and Europe, social stratification operated at every level of many Northwest Coast societies. Did the northwest Pacific coastal Indians live in tepees?The Northwest Pacific Coastal Indians did not live in tepees as did the Yakima Indians of Eastern Washington. Instead, they lived in longhouses built of thick cedar planks. These homes were also called plank houses. What kind of houses did the Yakima live in?The Northwest Pacific Coastal Native Americans did not live in tepees as did the Yakima of Eastern Washington. Instead, they lived in longhouses built of thick cedar planks. These homes were also called plank houses. These early people chopped down and split massive cedar trees using beaver teeth and stone axes. The Chinookan peoples of the Lower Columbia River built a variety of shelters, depending on season and purpose. The best known are plankhouses, post-and-beam structures built using Western red cedar posts and planks for walls, roofs, and sometimes floors. Chinookan plankhouses were part of a Native architectural tradition that in the nineteenth century stretched from southeast Alaska to northern California. There was considerable variation along the coast in house form within the simple parameters of a rectangular post-and-beam structure with planks for cladding and roofing. The planks were hand split from cedar logs or standing cedar trees, but how the parts were arranged varied.Chinookan plankhouses were built over or in excavations between one to six feet deep. They typically were rectangular with gabled roofs, with doors usually at the gable end but occasionally on a side. Wall and roof planks were tied to the frame with cordage, with wall planks set vertically in trenches. In some areas on the Lower Columbia and elsewhere along the Northwest Coast, households owned more than one house frame, usually constructed and maintained in both summer and winter villages; tying the planks facilitated moving them from frame to frame. Early EuroAmerican travelers such as Meriwether Lewis and William Clark often saw what they took to be abandoned villages, with nothing but frames, but the people and their planks were simply elsewhere. Visitors also observed planks submerged in ponds, a practice no doubt used to drown vermin and to keep the planks from drying and splitting.The houses were variable in size and internal layout. They were anywhere from 30 to 400 or more feet long and commonly from 15 to 30 feet wide, although the Meier house near Scappoose was 55 feet wide and others were probably as wide. The biggest houses were concentrated in the Wapato Valley (also known as the Portland Basin). Floors could be either earthen or planked. Smaller houses usually had open interiors, unless they were divided by mats hung from rafters. Larger houses were generally segmented, although the Meier house was open.At the Cathlapotle town, near the confluence of the Lewis and Columba Rivers in Washington, two smaller houses were open while four larger houses were segmented in row houses, smaller houses built end-to-end to form a larger one. The largest Cathlapotle house was constructed of four of these, with abutting end walls set in a common excavated depression. Researchers are studying whether the occupants of these row houses were separate households or a single large household.Small houses generally had a single central hearth, and larger houses had a row of hearths along the structures central axis. Hearths were sometimes set in wooden frames or boxes four to ten feet square, but they could also be in pits or directly on an earthen floor. Platforms or benches, about six feet wide, lined the walls and were used for storage, sleeping, and other activities. There could be two of these platforms, constructed one above the other, similar to bunkbeds.The anthropologist Wayne Suttles described a Coast Salish house as a "food-processing and storage plant, and it was a workshop, recreation center, temple, theater and fortress." The description is apt for the Lower Columbia as well. These structures were food-processing and storage centers, and tons of foodhung fromrafters for smoke drying. The houses in the Wapato Valley were unique in having cellars or extensive subfloor storage pits, the only known such design in Native North America. The Meier cellar, the largest excavated, could hold 100 tons of wapato roots.Crafts and other activities occurred around the hearths as well as on the benches. Hearths were warm and had the best light. Archaeologically, hearth deposits are rich in work-related debris. As in the modern plankhouses, singing, dancing, and ceremonials were held in the open spaces around the hearths. Travelers' paintings and accounts show house interiors with painted and carved geometric and anthropomorphic designs that linked houses and their inhabitants to the rest of the cosmos.The houses were costly in time and material. The Meier house (55 by 90 feet) required 51 to 63 trees (53 to 81 tons of wood) and 1,400 to 3,000 person-days to build it. Over its 400-year use life, between 700 and 1,400 trees were required for maintenance and repair, since planks had to be replaced every few years and posts perhaps once a decade, but the houses required constant repair and attention.Building Cathlapotles House 4, one of the smaller houses (26 by 43 feet), required 16 to 21 trees weighing cumulatively 13 to 21 tons and 370 to 790 person-days. Maintenance necessitated an additional 160 to 400 trees over some 400 years. The requirements for Cathlapotles House 1 (33 by 185 feet) are staggering: 78 to 102 trees weighing between 65 and 130 tons, between 2,000 and 4,500 person-days for construction, and 900 to 2,000 logs for maintenance. One of the reasons for this investment is that the size and the quality of the house'sfittings expressed status and wealth.Putting the labor estimates in perspective, the permanent population of Cathlapotle may have been 600 to 700 people, and estimates for the population of the Wapato Valley in the early 1800s range from 3,000 to 10,000. Given the demands for wood and labor, the construction of these houses called for large social networks. There were at least 55 Chinookan villages between the Columbias mouth and the Cascades in the Columbia River Gorge, so there were several hundred such houses. The demand for wood for construction, maintenance, fuel for fires, and so forth must have had an ecological impact. One researcher has suggested that this demand could only be met through the deliberate tending and maintenance of tree stands.Archaeologists have excavated a number of these houses along the Lower Columbia. The oldest date between about 2,200 and 2,500 BP, and the basic plankhouse features are at least 2,000 years old. In addition to rectangular houses, archaeologists also report circular houses, but these are poorly known. It is likely that there are older houses in the area. A 7,000-year-old rectangular structure on the northern British Columbia coast is the oldest currently known along the coast, and rectangular houses dating between 5,500 and 5,000 years ago are present on the Fraser River above Vancouver, British Columbia. Houses were built in the Columbia River basin east of the Cascades at about the same time.These houses were the physical manifestations of the social groups, the households, and the people who lived in them. The durability of those households is indicated by the durability of the structures, which could stand for 400 years or more while in constant daily use. They also are evidence of the durability of the Chinookan way of life. The internal layouts and fittings were built in the same manner for at least 2,000 years, suggesting deep cultural continuity through time. Readers, have you ever wondered about the fascinating history and unique architecture of Northwest Coast Native American homes? These dwellings were more than just shelters; they were intricate expressions of cultural identity and a testament to the ingenuity of these indigenous peoples. Ive spent years researching and analyzing the different styles and techniques used in Northwest Coast homebuilding, and Im excited to share my knowledge with you. From the towering cedar plank houses of the Haida to the elegant longhouses of the Salish people, Northwest Coast homes were marvels of architectural design and construction. They were built using traditional methods that were passed down through generations, utilizing natural materials like wood, bark, and stone. Each home was a testament to the cultural values and artistic skills of its builders.The Diverse Landscape of Northwest Coast HomesThe Northwest Coast region, spanning from present-day southeastern Alaska to northern California, encompasses a variety of landscapes, including towering forests, rugged coastlines, and abundant river systems. This diverse geography played a vital role in shaping the architectural styles of homes among different indigenous groups. Adapting to Environment: The Impact of GeographyThe different environments influenced both the materials and the structure of the homes. In the wetter regions, like the Pacific Northwest, homes were designed to withstand heavy rainfall and winds. This led to the use of cedar planks for siding and roofs, as well as the development of steep roofs to shed water quickly. Similarly, in areas where timber was plentiful, houses were often larger and more elaborate. In contrast, in more arid regions, the use of brush and tule reeds for walls and roofs was more common.Distinct Styles: Reflecting Cultural IdentityThe homes of various Northwest Coast tribes had their own unique characteristics that reflected their cultural traditions. The Haida, known for their skilled artistry, created elaborate, multi-level houses known as iiin. These houses often featured intricate carvings and totem poles, which were essential for displaying family crests and lineage. Meanwhile, the Kwakiutl, who were situated on the northern coast of Vancouver Island, built large, rectangular houses known as big houses, which served as communal gathering spaces and showcased social status.Building Techniques: A Legacy of Skill and InnovationThe construction of Northwest Coast homes demanded a high level of craftsmanship and technical knowledge. These indigenous peoples used a combination of traditional tools and techniques, including axes, adzes, chisels, and bark-stripping tools. The materials used, primarily cedar wood, were carefully selected and worked with respect for the environment. Cedar, known for its durability and resistance to rot, played a key role in construction, as did redwood, which provided structural support for the frames. The Art of Plank ConstructionOne of the most remarkable aspects of Northwest Coast homebuilding was the use of cedar planks for walls and roofs. These planks were split from large cedar logs using wedges and mauls, then smoothed and shaped with adzes. The planks were then carefully joined together using wooden pegs and a method called scarfing where the ends of the planks were overlapped and secured. The result was a watertight, durable, and visually striking structure.The Significance of Totem PolesTotem poles, which are carved from large cedar logs, were an integral part of Northwest Coast culture and architecture. These poles were more than just decorative elements; they conveyed messages about family history, lineage, and spiritual beliefs. Totem poles were erected in front of houses, marking the territory and status of the family. Life Inside Northwest Coast HomesNorthwest Coast homes were designed for both comfort and functionality. They provided shelter from the elements and served as communal spaces for family and community gatherings. Large, open spaces within the houses were used for cooking, eating, and sleeping. The interior was often decorated with elaborate carvings, paintings, and woven mats, reflecting the artistic traditions of the people who lived there.Family Units and Communal LivingThe size and design of the houses reflected the social structures and family dynamics within each tribe. Extended family units, including multiple generations, often shared the same homes, emphasizing the importance of kinship and community. This communal living arrangement fostered a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, as families worked together to maintain and improve their home.Daily Activities and RitualsLife in Northwest Coast homes was a blend of everyday activities and ceremonial rituals. Homes served as spaces for cooking, sewing, storytelling, and other daily tasks. The large communal space also allowed for gatherings, feasts, and celebrations. These gatherings provided opportunities for sharing stories, honoring ancestors, and strengthening community bonds.A Legacy of Cultural IdentityNorthwest Coast homes were more than just shelters; they were powerful symbols of cultural identity and a testament to the ingenuity of these indigenous peoples. The construction techniques, materials, and architectural styles reflected the unique traditions, values, and beliefs of each community. These traditional homes played a vital role in maintaining cultural continuity and transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next.The Challenges of Preservation and ModernizationToday, the legacy of Northwest Coast homes faces challenges from both preservation and modernization. Many traditional homes have been lost to time, natural disasters, or the pressures of modernization. Efforts are being made to preserve existing homes and to document the traditional building techniques. However, the changing lifestyles of modern communities have also led to the adaptation of traditional styles and the integration of modern materials and technologies.The Importance of Traditional KnowledgeDespite the challenges, the knowledge and skills associated with Northwest Coast homebuilding remain vital for preserving cultural heritage. By documenting and sharing traditional techniques, we can ensure that future generations can continue to appreciate and learn from the legacy of these remarkable structures. Ongoing research and efforts to revive traditional practices are essential for ensuring the continuity and sustainability of Northwest Coast architecture.Northwest Coast Homes: A Window into the PastThe Northwest Coasts unique architecture continues to inspire awe and wonder. By studying and appreciating the history, construction, and cultural significance of these remarkable homes, we gain a deeper understanding of the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and artistic spirit of the Northwest Coast people. These homes serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of their cultural heritage and the importance of respecting and preserving the traditions of indigenous communities.FAQWhat are some common materials used in Northwest Coast homes?Cedar wood was the primary material used for construction. It was used for planks, beams, posts, and even roofs. Other commonly used materials include redwood for structural support, spruce for framing, and bark, grass, or animal hides for insulation and roofing.What are some of the most significant architectural features of Northwest Coast homes?The most prominent features include the use of cedar plank construction, steep roofs that shed water, elaborate carvings and totem poles, and large, open communal spaces within the homes.What are some modern adaptations of traditional Northwest Coast home designs?Modern adaptations often incorporate traditional techniques and aesthetics while using modern materials and technologies. For example, cedar wood may still be used for framing, but modern insulation and plumbing may also be incorporated. Similarly, contemporary artists may use modern materials and techniques to create contemporary reinterpretations of traditional carvings and totem poles.ConclusionNorthwest Coast Native American homes are more than just structures; they are living testaments to the resilience, creativity, and cultural identity of these indigenous peoples. Understanding the history and architecture of these homes provides valuable insights into the past, present, and future of these unique communities. To further understand their fascinating world, be sure to explore our other articles exploring the rich tapestry of Northwest Coast Native American cultures. As youve journeyed through the rich history and intricate architecture of Northwest Coast Native American homes, youve glimpsed a world where ingenuity and respect for nature intertwined. These dwellings, far from mere shelters, were expressions of cultural identity, woven with stories of ancestors and the interconnectedness of the environment. From the towering cedar planks of the longhouses to the carefully crafted details of the interior, every element carried significance, reflecting the deep connection between the people and their land. The design of the houses, often incorporating elements like totem poles and intricate carvings, served not only practical purposes but also as a powerful visual language, communicating stories, beliefs, and social structures. The legacy of these homes extends beyond their physical presence, echoing in the stories passed down through generations, the traditions upheld, and the artistic expressions that continue to resonate. As you reflect on the architectural brilliance and the profound cultural significance of these dwellings, remember that they serve as a testament to the adaptability, resourcefulness, and deep connection to the natural world that characterized the Northwest Coast people. Through their homes, they not only sheltered themselves from the elements but also created spaces that nurtured community, fostered cultural expression, and preserved a rich heritage. As you navigate the contemporary world, consider the lessons embedded within the design and construction of these homes. Consider the wisdom of using natural resources responsibly, the importance of honoring tradition, and the value of creating spaces that foster a sense of belonging and community. By appreciating and learning from the architectural legacy of the Northwest Coast, we can gain a deeper understanding of the resilience and ingenuity of indigenous cultures, fostering a greater sense of respect and appreciation for the diversity of human expression. Discover the fascinating history and unique architecture of Northwest Coast Native American homes, from towering totem poles to intricately carved longhouses. Geography & Travel Human Geography Peoples of the Americas North American Peoples Northwest Coast Indian, member of any of the Native American peoples inhabiting a narrow belt of Pacific coastland and offshore islands from the southern border of Alaska to northwestern California.The Northwest Coast was the most sharply delimited culture area of native North America. It covered a long narrow arc of Pacific coast and offshore islands from Yakutat Bay, in the northeastern Gulf of Alaska, south to Cape Mendocino, in present-day California. Its eastern limits were the crest of the Coast Ranges from the north down to Puget Sound, the Cascades south to the Columbia River, and the coastal hills of what is now Oregon and northwestern California. Although the sea and various mountain ranges provide the region with distinct boundaries to the east, north, and west, the transition from the Northwest Coast to the California culture area is gradual, and some scholars classify the southernmost tribes discussed in this article as California Indians.The Kuroshio, a Pacific Ocean current, warms the region; temperatures are rarely hot and seldom drop below freezing. The offshore current also deluges the region with rain; although it falls rather unevenly across the region, annual precipitation averages more than 160 inches (4,060 mm) in many areas and rarely drops below 30 inches (760 mm) in even the driest climatic zones. The northern Coast Range averages an elevation of about 3,300 feet (1,000 metres) above sea level, with some peaks and ridges rising to more than 6,600 feet (2,000 metres). In most of the Northwest, the land rises steeply from the sea and is cut by a myriad of narrow channels and fjords. The shores of Puget Sound, southwestern Washington, and the Oregon coast hills are lower and less rugged.In general, traditional Northwest Coast economies were oriented toward aquatic resources. The regions coastal forestsdense and predominantly coniferous, with spruces, Douglas fir, hemlock, red and yellow cedar, and, in the south, coast redwoodsupported abundant fauna and a wide variety of wild plant foods. The peoples of the Northwest Coast spoke a number of North American Indian languages. From north to south the following linguistic divisions occurred: Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, northern Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, southern Kwakiutl, Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka), Coast Salish, Quileute-Chimakum, Kwalhioqua, and Chinook. Along the Oregon coast and in northwestern California, a series of smaller divisions occurred: Tillamook, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos, Tututni-Tolowa, Yurok, Wiyot, Karok, and Hupa. Northwest Coast groups can be classified into four units or provinces. The northern province included speakers of Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and the Tsimshian-influenced Haisla (northernmost Heiltsuq or Kwakiutl). The Wakashan province included all other Kwakiutl, the Bella Coola, and the Nuu-chah-nulth. The Coast SalishChinook province extended south to the central coast of Oregon and included the Makah, Chinook, Tillamook, Siuslaw, and others. The northwestern California province included the Athabaskan-speaking Tututni-Tolowa as well as the Karok, Yurok, Wiyot, and Hupa. The Northwest Coast was densely populated when Europeans first made landfall in the 18th century. Estimates of density in terms of persons per square mile mean little in a region where long stretches of coast consist of uninhabitable cliffs rising from the sea. However, early historic sources indicate that many winter villages had hundreds of inhabitants. Geography & Travel Human Geography Peoples of the Americas North American Peoples The traditional Northwest Coast economy was a complex whole. One of its most important distinctions was the highly efficient use of natural resources. Aquatic resources were especially bountiful and included herring, oil-rich candlefish (eulachon), smelt, cod, halibut, mollusks, five species of salmon, and gray whales. However, the fisheries were scattered across the region and not equally easy to exploit. Certain species of salmon, for example, traveled upriver from the sea to spawn each year, but only in certain rivers and only at particular times of the year. Generally the important species for preservation for winter stores were the pink and the chum salmon. Because these species ceased to feed for some time before entering fresh water, their flesh had less fat and when smoked and dried would keep for a long period of time. Other salmon species, such as sockeye, coho, and the flavoursome chinook or king salmon, were eaten immediately or dried and kept for a short period, but their high fat content caused the meat to spoil relatively quickly even when dried. Therefore, the principal fishing sites were those along rivers and streams in which pink or chum salmon ran in the fall. In the spring other sorts of fish became available in tremendous schools: herring came in to spawn in coves; candlefish entered certain rivers; and, farther south, smelt spawned on sandy beaches in summer. People also went to sea to hunt marine mammals and to fish for offshore species such as halibut. Yurok man with a canoeYurok man with a canoe on the Trinity River in California, photograph by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1923.Water transport was highly important in the region for subsistence purposes and as a way to effect trade between tribes and later with fur traders. All groups made efficient dugout canoes. Northern groups, as well as the Kwakiutl and Salish down to Puget Sound, made dugouts with vertical cutwaters, or projecting bow and stern pieces, as well as those with rounded sterns and hulls. The Nuu-chah-nulth and some of their neighbours made vessels with curving cutwaters at the bow, vertical sterns, and angular flat bottoms. Northwestern California dugouts had upturned rounded ends, rounded hulls, carved seats, and foot braces for the steersman. Watercraft were made in different proportions for different purposes; for instance, large reinforced vessels were used to move people and cargo, while shorter, narrower craft were used for sea mammal hunting. Kwakiutl: canoesKwakiutl in canoes, c. 1914.Summer was a time for hard work; food had to be caught or gathered and processed for winter consumption. Usually homesites and settlements were limited to narrow beaches or terraces because the land fell so steeply to the shore or riverbank. Between the limited number of building sites and the uneven distribution of natural resources, it was most efficient for a house group to have several bases of operation. In summer they dispersed into small groups that moved among fishing and berry-picking sites and other established but minor residential areas as their resources became available. Most people spent the winter in villages with several sizable houses (each with its associated group) as well as at least one very large structure in which the highest-ranking group lived and where the village could hold a large potlatch. During winter people of higher status rarely worked at day-to-day activities (leaving that to slaves), instead using the time to create two- and three-dimensional art and conduct potlatches, dances, and sacred ceremonies that brought people together to socialize, trade, and negotiate relationships within and between communities. For instance, from Tlingit country in the north to at least as far south as Puget Sound and perhaps farther, several house groups would typically pass the winter together at a site in a sheltered cove that was protected from winter winds. During this period the relative prestige of each group and individual was factored into all interactions. These assemblages of multiple house groups at winter village sites are often called tribes, but it must be noted that such units were not politically integrated, for each of the component houses retained its economic and political autonomy. Tlingit totem poleTlingit totem pole and community house in Totem Bight State Park, Ketchikan, Alaska.As structures, Northwest Coast houses shared a few significant traits. All were rectilinear in floor plan, with plank walls and a plank roof, and all but those of northwestern California were large. In the north, most houses were built on a nearly square plan, reaching sizes as large as 50 feet wide by 55 feet long (15.25 by 16.75 metres). They were typically constructed around a deep central pit, with vertical plank walls and a gabled roof intermeshed for stability. To the south, in the Wakashan province, houses were typically rectangular and reached sizes of approximately 40 feet by 60 to 100 feet (12 metres by 18.25 to 30.5 metres); huge cedar posts with side beams and ridgepoles constituted a permanent framework to which were attached wall planks and roof planks that could be taken down, loaded onto canoes, and transported from one site to another. Some peoples in the Coast SalishChinook province also built houses of permanent frameworks with detachable siding and roofing, although they generally used a shed roof system with one slope instead of a peaked roof. Along the lower Columbia River, the typical house was built over a large rectangular pit that was fairly deep and lined with planks, as the earth provided excellent insulation against the cold and damp; only the gabled roof and its end supports showed above ground. At the southernmost limit of the culture area, the northwestern California house type was designed for single-family use. These homes were constructed over a central pit, with low side walls of redwood planks and a three-pitch roof somewhat reminiscent of a pyramid. The peoples of northwestern California also built a combined clubhouse and sweat house that was the focus of male activity; these multipurpose structures were common to many California Indian groups. The Northwest Coast Native Americans primarily used longhouses made of thick cedar planks for shelter. These longhouses, also known as plank houses, were rectangular structures that could be quite large and were typically shared by multiple families. The homes were built by chopping down and splitting massive cedar trees using beaver teeth and stone axes.What kind of shelter did the Northwest Coast have?The Northwest Coast Native Americans lived in longhouses built of thick cedar planks. These homes were also known as plank houses.What were the Northwest Coast houses made of?The Northwest Coast houses were made of wood, usually red cedar. The buildings were rectangular and could be up to 100 feet (30.5 meters) long. The Indians built a framework of cedar posts and attached planks to form the walls and roof.What was the housing like in the Northwest Coast?The housing on the Northwest Coast was characterized by rectilinear structures with plank walls and roofs. These houses were typically large, with multiple families living together in one building.What does the Northwest Coast live in?The Northwest Coast Native Americans historically inhabited a narrow belt of North American Pacific coastland and offshore islands from the southern border of Alaska to northwestern California. Their homes were primarily longhouses built of cedar planks.What houses did the Northwest live in?The indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest built longhouses for their homes. These longhouses were constructed with logs or split-log frames and covered with split log planks. The wealthy individuals in the community built extraordinarily large longhouses.What are Northwest Coast houses called?The houses built by the Northwest Coast Native Americans are called plank houses. They are a type of longhouse constructed using cedar planks.What is a Northwest house?A Northwest house refers to a type of house characterized by its location in the northwest corner of a property. On the other hand, north-facing homes typically have their entrances facing the northwest direction.What shelter did coastal tribes live in?Coastal tribes, including the Northwest Coast Native Americans, lived in houses made of cedar planks. In northern California, some tribes also built houses using redwood cedar planks.What is a wigwam house?A wigwam is a small house typically around 8-10 feet tall. It is a dome-shaped shelter made of wooden frames covered with woven mats and sheets of birch bark. The frame of a wigwam can be shaped like a dome, a cone, or a rectangle with an arched roof.Who lives in a wigwam? Wigwams were used mainly by Algonquian peoples, as well as other Indigenous peoples in the eastern half of North America. They were a type of house used by various tribes in precolonial times.What did the Northwest Coast use for clothing?The Northwest Coast Native Americans made clothing from shredded cedar bark. These garments included conical flaring capes for both sexes, dresses and aprons for women, and finely-woven rain hats.What did the Northwest Coast eat?The diet of the Northwest Coast Native Americans primarily consisted of berries, fish, mammals, and supplemented with herbs, birds, and shellfish.How did the Northwest Coast survive?The Northwest Coast Native Americans survived by utilizing the resources provided by the ocean and the lush coastal forests. They used canoes made from cedar or spruce trees for hunting otters, seals, and whales.Who lived in teepees and wigwams?Teepees and wigwams were used by various Native American tribes across different regions. While wigwams were mainly used by Algonquian peoples in the eastern half of North America, teepees were used by Plains Indians.What were longhouses used for?Longhouses were used as homes for large extended families. Multiple family units, including parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, resided together in one longhouse.Which tribe had a temporary shelter?The Seminole tribe used chickees as temporary shelters. During the early 19th century wars with the U.S. government, many Seminoles were forcibly removed to Indian Territory, but a large number fled to the Everglades and constructed chickees as their shelters.What is the climate in the Northwest Coast?The climate in the Northwest Coast is generally mild, with cool wet winters and warm dry summers. The region experiences moderate temperature and precipitation, with extremes being uncommon.What does a longhouse look like?A traditional longhouse is a rectangular structure with a frame made of saplings and a domed roof created by tying together the sapling tops. The structure is then covered with bark panels or shingles.Is Northwest house good or bad?A Northwest-facing house can be beneficial according to Vastu Shastra. It is associated with Vayu, the God of air, and symbolizes continuous movement. Living in a Northwest-facing house can bring health, wealth, and prosperity when combined with other Vastu principles.Is Northwest good for a house?Living in a Northwest-facing house can be beneficial for those seeking an active social life and easy prosperity. It is associated with the Vayu God, which symbolizes continuous flow of air and movement.Is it Northwest or northwest?Northwest is usually capitalized when referring to a region or direction, such as the Northwest region of a country or the compass point. When northwest is not capitalized, it generally indicates the compass point.What is a wigwam for kids?A wigwam is a dome-shaped shelter used by Native Americans and is a fun word to say out loud. It is different from a teepee, which has a pointy top, as a wigwam is curved like a dome.Where were wigwams used?The term wigwam is generally used to refer to these kinds of dwellings in the Southwestern and Western United States, as well as Northwest Alberta, Canada. The term wickiup is usually applied to similar structures in the Northeastern United States, Ontario, and Quebec in central Canada.What did the Chinook use for shelter?The Chinook people lived in longhouses made of planks from red cedar trees. These longhouses could Since it was very rainy on the Northwest Coast, trees grew very thick and tall. Red cedar trees were especially important for the first nations because they were used to construct both their shelters and vessels for transportation. First Nations Longhouses ---> The people of the Northwest Coast constructed large, sturdy and lasting longhouses with cedar. First. they raised strong frames made of cedar logs; then they attached overlapping cedar planks to the logs to protect them from the elements. Finally, they used huge wooden posts to hold up the roof and covered them with cedar planks. A longhouse was held together by wooden pegs, had one small door, no windows and a low roof to preserver heat. There was only one hole on the roof to let smoke out. The interior of longhouses is furnished plainly, with just a fire pit and a few beds on the side. Families often shared one house; each family had their own small cooking pot, and woven blankets were hung from the ceiling to separate families. Sometimes a village with only 30 houses could hold over 1000 people. Most nations constructed villages near a natural waterway or by the coast, with houses lined up side-by-side, all facing the water, and a totem pole in the front representing their family or clan. The people of the Northwest Coast depended heavily on ocean and water for resources, and the natural waterways were the main passages for transportation. As previously mentioned, cedar trees of the Northwest Coast are a key material in the construction of first nations canoes. Each canoe is carved from one log, and are made to be extremely durable and seaworthy in order to protect the passengers from the stormy waters of this part of Canada. They can travel hundreds of kilometres and the largest canoes are over 20 metres long and can contain over 50 passengers. They are often used on multi-day whale hunting trips.On land, the people of the Northwest Coast walked on foot and travelled on hunting trails. Elaborately carved and decorated canoe As an Ecotourism Specialist, I am fascinated by the rich cultural heritage of different indigenous communities around the world. One such group of people is the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest, who have a unique and ancient tradition of building shelter known as plank houses.What are Plank Houses?Plank houses, also referred to as longhouses, were the traditional homes of the Northwest Pacific Coastal Native Americans. Unlike the tepees used by other Native American tribes, the people of the Pacific Northwest constructed their homes using thick cedar planks. These planks were intricately carved and fitted together to create sturdy and durable structures.How were Plank Houses Constructed?The process of building a plank house was labor-intensive and required great skill. The Native Americans would chop down massive cedar trees and split them into planks using beaver teeth and stone axes. The planks were then carefully assembled, with each piece interlocking with the others to create a solid structure. The result was a spacious and weather-resistant dwelling that could accommodate extended families.Why Cedar Wood?Cedar wood played a vital role in the construction of plank houses due to its durability and versatility. Cedar is naturally resistant to rot and insects, making it an ideal material for long-lasting structures. Additionally, the rich aroma of cedar acts as a deterrent to pests, ensuring the safety and comfort of the inhabitants.The Functionality of Plank HousesPlank houses were more than just shelters; they were essential to the survival of the Northwest Coast people. The abundant cedar forests provided them not only