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Foods of California Tribes

California tribes had a variety of foods available year round, depending on their environment. Along the coasts of California and north into Canada the environment supplied a plethora of flora and fauna (both land and sea) and supported hundreds of thousands of people. Even those inland had a variety of foods to utilize. The Cahuillas who lived south of the Bernardino Mountains ate antelope they boiled, roasted or sun-dried, several types of acorns, cacti, deer, pinon nuts, rabbits, reptiles, screwbeans, and fish, while Chumash along the Pacific coast also ate fish, shellfish and marine animals. Hupas in the Hoopa Valley consumed a variety of fresh water animals such as eels, sturgeon and trout, in addition deer, elk, berries, nuts, roots, acorns. Costanoans of the San Francisco area speared fish, gathered shellfish and ate beached whales in addition to gathering acorns and a variety of fruits, insects and honey. They practiced controlled burning, which allowed for more effective growth of plants and expanded the grazing area for animals. Although Kuroks in the middle area of the Klamath River had access to hundreds of plants and animals, they had taboos against eating bats, blue jays, caterpillars, coyotes, dogs, eagles, foxes, frogs, gophers, grasshoppers, hawks, lizards, meadowlarks, moles, owls, ravens, snakes, vultures, wildcats, and wolves. Shastas on the California/Oregon border used venison almost daily and fished for eels, salmon, trout and gathered acorns, berries, seeds, bulbs and nuts.

Taken from Devon A. Mihesuah, *Recovering Our Ancestors' Gardens: Indigenous Recipes and Guide to Diet and Fitness* (University of Nebraska Press, 2005)

Traditional Indigenous Foods

[History of Traditional Tribal Foods](#)

[Foods Indigenous to the Western Hemisphere](#)

Geographic Areas

Foods of California

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Specific Tribal Foods

[Chahta \(Choctaw\)](#)

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