Paleo People

**Introduction:**

Archeologists think that the Paleo Indians were among the first to inhabit the Americas. This ancient tribe appeared in our continent at the end of the last Ice Age, entering the continent from Asia. They inhabited the southwestern United States and northern Mexico between 10,000 and 40,000 years.

Although they were here longer than all other following cultures combined, they left very little records of their lives. Archeologists have very little to go by as to the Paleo Indians beliefs, religion, language, celebrations, ceremonies, mournings, and culture such as dance and family relationships. They are believed to have lived between 10,000 – 6,500 B.C. and became extinct about 9,000 years ago, taking with them their secrets of their life.

**Housing:**

They often sought shelter in caves, but occasionally built crude shelters from brush and animal skin. They decided where to camp depending on where the animals, such as mastodons, caribou, bison, and mammoths, were.

Paleoindian houses were simple, temporary structures called "brush shelters." This type of house made sense for people who led a [**nomadic**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_nomadic.asp) lifestyle. Although Paleoindian houses were very simple, they were also strong enough to withstand harsh weather.

Most Paleoindian houses were small, circular structures. They were made of poles that leaned in at the top, tipi-style. The poles were covered with brush, and the brush was covered with mud or animal hides. Animal hides probably covered the doorway, too. Sometimes rocks were used to support the bottoms of the poles. These types of homes were called, “Brush Shelters”. Other times, especially when traveling in winter months, Paleo Indians found shelter in rock alcoves or caves.

**Daily Life:**

Although little is known about the culture of the Paleos, archeologists have formulated a few ideas on the lives of Paleo Indians. Paleo-indians lived in small groups of 20-30 that in addition to mom and dad included brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. Like many tribes, it is believed that the Paleo Indians were nomadic, people who primarily were hunters-gatherers. Nomadic means they migrated or moved from place to place in search of food. They traveled from place to place carrying their belongings on their back

**Clothing:**

They used animal skin and plants for clothing.

**Food:**

The Paleo-Indians were hunter-gatherers. They hunted animals, gathered wild plants and migrated from place to place in search of food, and trapped smaller animals. A tribe of Paleo Indians may have even worked together to herd larger game over a cliff, killing it for food. In addition to the game they trapped or killed, the Paleo Indians also ate seeds, fruits, roots, and possibly even insects. [Fire hearths](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_fire_hearth.asp) were used for cooking. They also provided heat and light.

**Tools and artifacts:**

They are known for inventing spears with stone points that could be thrown by using an atlatl, but before they created spears

The Paleo-Indians used stone tools. They used stone points to hunt animals and metates and manos to grind seeds. Paleo-indians didn't make pottery but they shaped willow and cottonwood twigs into animal figurines (split twig figurines) and made carvings (petroglyphs) and paintings (pictographs) on rocks and stone.