**Archaic Indians**

**Introduction:  
6000 to 500 B.C.**

|  |
| --- |
| During the Archaic period, the environment gradually became warmer and drier. Many species of animals that had lived during the Ice Age and Paleo Period became [**extinct**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_extinct.asp), including mammoths, [**mastodons**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_mastodon.asp), and ancient bison. As a result, people living throughout North America had to adapt to new conditions. |

During the Archaic period, people mostly traveled within territories that belonged to their group. But sometimes they moved to new areas outside their territories, where they met other Archaic groups.

This map shows how Archaic people living in southern Arizona migrated north to the [**Mesa Verde region**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_mesa_verde_region.asp), where they met other Archaic people who were already living there.

**Housing:**

Because Archaic people traveled in search of food, their homes had to be very simple and easy to build. So they built [brush shelters](file:///P:\Native%20Americans\Archaic%20Housing.jpg) that were very similar to the brush shelters people lived in during the Paleoindian period.

To build their houses, Archaic people leaned poles around a shallow depression that they dug into the ground. Then they covered the poles with brush and mud.

[**Archaeologists**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_archaeologist.asp) often find [**fire hearths**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_fire_hearth.asp) and storage pits both inside and outside Archaic houses.

Some houses during the Archaic period were built in open areas. Others were constructed in rock [**alcoves**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_alcove.asp), which protected them from the weather. An alcove is a recessed area in a stone cliff. Alcoves provide natural shelter from the weather. In the past, people sometimes built their homes in alcoves. A pueblo built inside an alcove is called a "cliff dwelling."

**Daily Life:**

Early Archaic people lived in larger family groups than the Paleo-Indian people. Parents were leaders, each having different responsibilities for the group's well being. In hunting and gathering societies, men and women have different responsibilities. Children learn their responsibilities at an early age, because the survival of the group requires everyone's effort.

**Clothing:**

Much the same as Paleo people they used the hides of animals to make clothing.

**Food:**

They were still [**nomadic**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_nomadic.asp) people who practiced a [**hunter-gatherer**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_hunter_gatherer.asp) lifestyle. But as the large animals died out and the climate changed, people began hunting smaller animals that we know today including deer, elk, and bighorn sheep. People also ate smaller animals such as rabbits and rodents.. They ate more wild plant foods as well. Late in the Archaic period, people even began experimenting with growing [**domesticated**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_domesticated.asp) plants. Domesticated is the opposite of wild, meaning they planted it on purpose.

Late in the Archaic period, people began experimenting with gardening. They planted corn and squash seeds that they got from Archaic people who had moved to the region from southern Arizona.

The earliest evidence of corn and squash in this area dates from 1000 to 2000 B.C.

**Tools and artifacts:**

People continued using spears during the Archaic period. But they also had a new tool that they used with their spears. This new tool is called an [**atlatl**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_atlatl.asp) (pronounced ÄT-lä-tul).

An atlatl is a spear thrower. It allows hunters to throw spears with great force and accuracy. It consists of a long, narrow piece of wood with a small hook on one end and a handle on the other end. The drawings below show an atlatl and an atlatl with a spear and [**projectile point**](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary_projectile_point.asp). You can see how the spear fit onto the atlatl before it was thrown.

They used stone tools such as axes for wood working and grinding stone for preparing food.

Archaic technology was more complicated and had much more variety than Paleo-Indian technology.