



Introduction to Indigenous cultures in Jasper

The land we call Jasper National Park is home to over 20 Indigenous groups. These groups have long-standing connections to this land that remain to this day.

By learning about Indigenous cultures and honouring their traditions, we can contribute to reconciliation and build a more inclusive and respectful community.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Indigenous Peoples in Canada belong to three main groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

- **First Nations**

Indigenous Peoples (both status and non-status) who live in non-Arctic regions of Canada. There are over 630 First Nations communities. Each community is part of 50 larger nations.

- **Inuit**

Indigenous Peoples from Canada's northern regions, often above the Arctic Circle, living in 53 communities.

- **Métis**

A distinct group with roots in both Indigenous and European fur-trading communities.

Indigenous Peoples live in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and cities across Canada. Many are still advocating for formal recognition by the Canadian government.

Jasper's history

Jasper has a complex and layered history tied to Indigenous Peoples. Learning about and honouring this history truthfully is an ongoing process.

Residents are encouraged to deepen their understanding of this history and engage in reconciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation
jasper-alberta.ca



Indigenous Connections
parks.canada.ca



Important note on language

Historically, the term *Indian* was used to describe Indigenous Peoples.

Today, this term is considered outdated and inappropriate, though it remains in some legal documents. The respectful and appropriate term is *Indigenous*.

Indigenous beliefs and practices

While each Indigenous nation is unique, many share common principles and practices.

Sustainability

Decisions made today should ensure a sustainable future for generations ahead.

Equity

Many Indigenous teachings use the circle to represent equity, where no one is above or below others. For example, talking circles ensure everyone's voice is equally valued.

Offering tobacco

Offering tobacco when asking for advice or help shows respect and good intentions.

Smudging

Smudging is a ritual where herbs or plants such as sage or sweetgrass are burned to create cleansing smoke.

The smoke is fanned toward individuals, items, or spaces to bring clarity and focus. It is often performed at the beginning of events.

Smudging is a moment to slow down, be mindful, and come together with positive intentions.

Singing, drumming, and dancing

Indigenous celebrations often include singing, drumming, and dancing.

Non-Indigenous people are welcome to join in respectfully. If unsure about etiquette, observe others or research the event beforehand to understand what to expect.



The purpose of smudging

- Clean our minds to think good thoughts.
- Clean our eyes to see the good in others.
- Clean our ears to hear only kind words.
- Clean our mouths to speak respectfully about others.
- Clean our whole selves to reflect goodness in our actions.