Journey Through Our Heritage

Sacred Sites and Sacred Foods
Great Sand Dunes (Colorado)

For a very long time, humans have been aware, lived at, and visited the Great Sand Dunes. The oldest record of humans at the Great Sand Dunes is 11,000 years ago. Nomadic hunters and gathers were some of the first people to come to the Great Sand Dunes looking for the prehistoric bison and mammoths who grazed nearby. The Ute’s word for this sacred place is Sowapophe-uehe, “the land that moves back and forth”.

Mount Blanca (Sisnaasjini - Dawn or White Shell Mountain) (Colorado)

The mountain is known to the Navaho people as the sacred mountain of the East. They believed that the Creator put them on the land among four holy mountains, representing the four cardinal directions. Mount Blanca is located near Alamosa in San Luis Valley, Colorado.

Pagosa Springs (Colorado)

Pagosa Springs is located at an altitude of 7,000 feet, and is one of the most beautiful places on this planet. The largest contiguous wilderness areas in the United States, surrounds Pagosa Springs. Traditionally the Utes and Navajos fought over ownership of the springs, and in 1880 the US government claimed ownership. A few years later the bathhouses were built, giving birth to the town of Pagosa Springs.
Mesa Verde (Colorado)

Mesa Verde was one of the first preservation sites of prehistoric man. It was opened in 1906. Today this site is very important to the research of the Anasazi culture. Over 4,000 archeological sites are protected by Mesa Verde. The pueblo people lived here from 600 A.D. to 1300 A.D.

Chimayo (New Mexico)

Each year hundreds of people travel to El Santuario de Chimayo to be healed. In 1810 a Chimayo Friar was performing penances and saw a light burst from the hill. A crucifix was found, and when it was taken from Chimayo to Santa Cruz it repeatedly disappeared. It was believed that the crucifix wanted to stay at Chimayo, and so a chapel was built to house it.

Chimney Rock (Nebraska/Colorado)

Chimney Rock Colorado can be found between Durango and Pagosa Springs Colorado. Over 1,000 years ago, Chimney Rock was home to the ancestors of the Pueblo Indians as well as a major landmark for the Oregon Trail, the California Trail and the Mormon Trail in the North Platte River Valley, Nebraska. In addition, these twin spires are believed to have held significant spiritual importance to the Pueblo Indians of Colorado.
Blue Lake (New Mexico)

In the northern mountains of New Mexico lies Blue Lake, which is a sacred place for the Taos pueblo. It is believed that the Taos people were created from the waters of the Blue Lake. Blue lake is a central part of the Taos pueblo’s daily life, culture, and religion.

Sand Creek (Colorado)

On November 29, 1864 the Colorado Territory Militia attacked and destroyed a peaceful Cheyenee and Arapahoe village in southeastern Colorado. An Estimated 70-163 indigenous people were killed, two-thirds of them were women and children. This tragedy known as the Sand Creek Massacre was a part of the Indian wars of the United States. This location has been designated a National Historic Site.

Ludlow (Colorado)

The Colorado National Guard attacked a tent colony of 1,200 coal miners and their families who were on strike in Ludlow Colorado on April 20, 1914. Between 19 and 25 people died violent deaths. The United Mine Workers organized the strike against the three largest companies, Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, and the Victor-American Fuel Company.
Zion (Utah)

The Anasazi people were the first occupants of Zion Canyon about 1,500 years ago. The first Mormon occupant was Isaac Behunin who built a log cabin, and was soon joined by famers who established farms along the narrow valley. Zion was Utah’s first national park. Zion has great canyon walls that reach toward the sky and unique sandstone cliffs that range in many colors.

Tulum (Yucatan Peninsula-Mexico)

Tulum was one of the last cities inhabited by the Mayans. Traditionally Tulum was known as Zama, meaning City of Dawn because it faces the sunrise. Tulum was an important trade hub because it has access to both land and sea trade routes. There are numerous depictions in murals in Tulum that make it appear that it was an important site for the worship of the Diving or Descending god.

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is one of the most famous prehistoric sites in world. It consists of earthworks surrounding a circular setting of large standing stones. Stonehenge was believed to have been erected about 2500 BC. There still exist today, a controversy on whether it is a man-made site because the massive stone structures are too overwhelming for any person or people to construct themselves. During the time it was believed to have been erected, there were not cranes or large technology to create such a phenomenon.
Pyramids of Giza (Egypt)

The Pyramids of Giza is an ancient necropolis which has three main pyramids, built in the 4th dynasty of ancient Egyptian culture. These pyramids were built as tombs for kings. Originally, it was an exclusive privilege to have a pyramid tomb, but this tradition only occurred in the Old and Middle Kingdoms because they were large targets for grave robbers. Egypt now has over 90 pyramids.

Teotihuacan (Mexico)

Teotihuacan a vast archaeological site located in the Basin of Mexico. It is most known for the pyramid of the Sun and Moon, where indigenous ceremonies are still held today. It is believed that this city was established around 100 BCE. In the early half of the first millennium, Teotihuacan was the largest city in pre-Columbian America and had more than 200,000 inhabitants.

Ghost dance

The Ghost Dance was a religious movement that incorporated numerous Native American beliefs systems. The main figure of this movement was Jack Wilson, known as Wovoka to the Paiute people. Jack Wilson was considered the profit of peace and believed in a peaceful end to white American expansion. He preached about clean living, an honest life, and cross-cultural expansion.
**Sacred Foods**

**Three Sisters (North America)**

The Three sisters refer to the three main agricultural crops that were harvested by some of the tribes of North America; corns, climbing beans and squashes. These three crops are grown close together because they help each other grow. The beans use the corn stack as a structure to wrap around as it grows, the beans give the soil nitrogen which the other plants need, and the squash covers the ground keeping out weeds. The three sisters were one of the earliest examples of what is called companion planting (growing different species of plants together to mutually benefit each other). There are many legends that talk about the origins of the Three Sisters, they were considered to be gifts from the Great Spirit.

**Seven Warrior Foods of the Aztec (Mexico)**

The Seven Warrior Foods were the staple diet of the Aztec (Mexica) people. They are a good idea to anyone that wants a healthy diet. These foods are corn Tlaolli, beans Etl, squash Tzilacayochtli, amaranth Huauhtli, nopal Nopalli, chili Chilli, and chia Chian,

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**Corn (Maize) Tlaolli**

Corn is one of the most important sources of food on this continent. It has no wild form that naturally grows, and is the oldest plant grown by humankind. Corn is unable to reproduce itself alone. It is thought that corn started to spread across the Americas between 1700 and 2500 BCE, and domesticated in Mexico about 5,000 BCE. Corn is a good source of carbs, protein, and vitamins.

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**Beans Etl**

Beans come in many shapes and sizes, and have been eaten all over the world for thousands of years. They are a rich source of fiber, and can lower cholesterol. There is evidence that suggests that beans were being cultivated in Mexico and Peru as far back as 7000 BC.
Squash Tzilacayohtli

Squash is seen as a vegetable, but is actually a fruit. There are many types of squash and they are grouped into summer and winter squash. All are high in vitamin A, potassium, phosphorus, calcium and vitamin C. Squash is native to North and South America.

Amaranth Huauhtli

Amaranth is a leaf vegetable and a grain. Before the domestication of agriculture, hunters and gathers ate amaranth. It is thought that it was domesticated about 5,000 years ago in Mexico. Amaranth contains more iron than spinach, is rich in folic acid, and it protects against heart disease, ovarian cancer, and depression.

Nopal Nopalli

Nopal is a vegetable which is made from the pad segments of the prickly pear cactus. It originally grew in the volcanic regions of Meso America. Nopal is believed to normalize blood sugar, treats diabetes, and boosts insulin.

Chili Chilli

Chili peppers became a part of the human diet about 7500 BC, and archaeologist found evidence in Ecuador that they were domesticated 6000 years ago. They are self-pollinating, meaning that they pollinate themselves and produce viable off-spring. Chiles contain an alkaloid compound called capsaicin, which makes them spicy, but is also believed to be anti-bacterial, anti-carcinogenic, analgesic, and anti-diabetic. They are also very high in vitamin C.
**Chia Chian**

Chia seeds come from the Salvia Hispanic, which traditionally grew in Southern Mexico. Today we consider Chia a super food. It was believed that an Aztec warrior and runner could sustain themselves for a whole day with one tablespoon of Chia. Chia is high in Omega 3, calcium and fiber.

**Pomegranates**

The pomegranate is a very ancient fruit, and is talked about in the book of Exodus. It is sacred to many different people. For the Hindus, it symbolizes fertility and prosperity. In Iran, pomegranates are one of the five most sacred foods to the Mandaens and symbolize life, fertility and re-birth.

**Chocolate**

Chocolate is sacred to many of the ancient peoples of Meso America. The Mayans were the first people to consume chocolate. It was used as a mood enhancer, and drank as a bitter drink. Chocolate is also important to Mayan religion, and their creation myths.