

Grand Canyon National Park's Ranger Audio Tour Stop # 5 **Native American Connections**

For hundreds of years this amazing canyon has been a sacred place for Native American People. While we, as visitors, often see it as a place of grandeur, of beauty of inexplicable dimension, most indigenous people of the area have an enduring relationship with the canyon. For some of today's pueblo people, the canyon represents a place where they emerged to live in this world and a place their spirits go to the next world. For other native people, the canyon is a living sacred being, tied to many traditions still practiced today.

As we look in awe at the buttes, temples and mesas which are at home in the canyon, we see a place where many find peace and tranquility. The canyon forms part of tribal histories for many of the American Indian tribes of the region; the Havasupai and Hualapai Indian reservations bound the Grand Canyon on the south and west sides of the park; the Navajo reservation adjoins the canyon along the eastern border. In addition to these tribes, the Hopi, Southern Paiute, Zuni and Yavapai-Apache peoples all have historic relationships to the canyon..

Archeologists have found evidence that people have used the resources of Grand Canyon for upwards of 12,000 years. Artifacts like pottery, sandals, chipped stone tools and grinding stones, along with food remnants, and the ruins of masonry homes help piece together the lives of these early people. This scientific study of the past is enhanced by the Native American oral histories passed down through generations and shared by members of today's tribal society. It is through these oral traditions that we know Grand Canyon is a sacred place rich with meaning.

Twenty three miles east of the Grand Canyon Village is Tusayan Museum and Ruins which provides an opportunity for visitors to catch a glimpse into these past generations. Split twig figurines, pottery, and baskets made in the area are complemented by sea shell bracelets, and Macaw feathers indicative of widespread trade. In the museum, artifacts from the past join with traditions of current tribes to enhance our understanding of the people who first called the Grand Canyon home.

Explore the canyon and experience our heritage.