

Aboriginal Cultural Areas

Abstract

Canada may be divided into six broad Aboriginal cultural areas based on major geographic regions. Tribes in the same region share a greater number of cultural affinities than tribes from different regions. However only in the Arctic do the lines of geography, language and culture coincide so closely. Nunavut's boundary strongly reflects that of the cultural zone of the Aboriginal people of the Eastern Arctic. The Inuit are descendants of the Thule, who came from Asia and lived in the Arctic for thousands of years. Their language, Inuktitut, is spoken by most of the population.

This map illustrates the six major aboriginal cultural areas of Canada. Notice that the Nunavut boundary closely reflects that of the cultural zone of the people of the Eastern Arctic. The Inuit also live in the northern regions of the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. The spoken language, Inuktitut, is limited to Nordic regions, while the other native cultural areas of Canada are much more heterogeneous.

The Arctic, characterized by its cold environment and scarce resources, has produced a highly specialized culture which was centred primarily on the hunt for seals and other marine mammals in coastal regions and caribou in inland areas west of Hudson Bay. Small, widely dispersed bands of hunters have traditionally followed seasonal migration patterns in search of these prey.

During the twentieth century, the Inuit have settled in small communities. The communities of Nunavut are scattered along the coasts of Hudson Bay and Baffin Island and on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Zoom in to locate the Nunavut communities.

Map Sources

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Canada can be divided into six native cultural areas, corresponding to the principal geographic regions of the country. Tribes in the same region share a greater number of cultural affinities than tribes from different regions. Natural Resources Canada. 1980. Canada-Indian and Inuit Communities and Languages [map]. Fifth Edition, National Atlas of Canada.

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Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

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Statistics Canada. Canadian Statistics. Population. Components of Population Growth
<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo33c-eng.htm>

Provincial/Territorial Government

Government of Nunavut. Communities
<http://www.gov.nu.ca/communities.htm>

Government of Nunavut Labour Force Survey, 1999
<http://www.gov.nu.ca/English.pdf>