

The Caddo

Health and Disease

Healthy Lifestyle

The Caddo farmed fields on the edges of woods, strung out for miles along streams and rivers. They ate very well off the land, hunting and gathering in the water as well as the woods and supplementing their diet with farmed crops. The abundance and variety of food, and the constant exercise required to obtain it, kept the Caddo healthy.



Here, the Caddo go about their daily business, including farming corn, cooking meat, gathering baskets of food and relaxing under shade arbors.



A Time of Crying

Visiting Caddo country briefly in 1542, Europeans brought Old World crops like peaches and watermelon, which the Caddo quickly adopted. They also brought smallpox, measles and cholera to which the Caddo had no resistance. Three generations later, these diseases had killed as many as 95% of the Caddo. What do you think it felt like to be Caddo during this time?

Waves of disease swept through Caddo villages periodically, until there were fewer than 1,000 Caddo left. In 1859, the remaining Caddo were forced onto a tiny reservation near Anadarko, Oklahoma.

A Living People

The Caddo survived their low point and rebounded to a current population of more than 5,000. Modern Caddo no longer live on a reservation; they live in houses and apartments all over America. Many still retain ties to their past by speaking the Caddo language, practicing customs and rites and attending dances and celebrations.

Learn Caddo words for foods

Beans=dabas

Bread=dush kut

Corn=kisi

Grapes=kee-swee

Meat dish=ha-bush-coo

Onion=dahaw

Pumpkin=ka-kee-kus-nee



Visitors to the Caddo Nation Web site can learn many Caddo words, including these for common foods.

Minnie and Charley Parton

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WILDLIFE