Migration to the Americas

Atlantic Route Theory

15,000 - 12,000 years ago

Pacific Coast Theory

Who Were the Paleo Indians?

This map of the Americas shows FOUR possible routes that humans took.

ANIMALS of this TIME

During the Paleoindian period, people hunted large animals that are now extinct (causes: over hunting, climate change, disease), including mammoths, mastodons, and an ancient form of bison. People during the Paleoindian period also ate a variety of wild nuts, fruits, and greens (leaves).

The artifacts generally consist of hunting tools such as stone spear points, scrapers, and flakes of stone produced in the production or repair of spear points and other tools.

The Paleoindians may have moved every 3–4 days and covered 150 to 200 miles a year. A thin population of humans spread over both Americas by 11,000 when the Clovis culture appeared.

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Most Paleoindian houses were small, circular structures. They were made of poles that leaned in at the top, tipi-style. Fire hearths were used for cooking. They also provided heat and light.

Naia's found in a cenote north of Tulum, Mexico. Buried for 12,000 or 13,000 years, she is one of the oldest and perhaps the most complete ancient American skeleton ever found.

Many Paleoindian sites are small, temporary camps, and no larger than 0.2 hectares.

The tools of the Paleoindians were made of stone, bone, and wood. The most common tools were spear points and scrapers.

Sample Paleo Indian Sites for further investigation

- Arlington Springs Man – (Human remains)
- Blackwater Draw – (Archaeological site)
- Bina Lake Site – (Archaeological site)
- Butte woman – (Human remains)
- Calico Early Man Site – (Archaeological site)
- Clover (Florida) – (Archaeological site)
- Cody complex – (Culture group)
- Cueva de las Manos – (Cave paintings)
- East Fork Site – (Archaeological site)
- Lehm Man Mammoth Hill Site – (Archaeological site)
- Lindenmeier Site – (Archaeological site)
- Luza Woman – (Human remains)
- Mammoths Rockshelter – (Archaeological site)
- Maxwell Site – (Archaeological site)
- Mummy Cave – (Archaeological site)
- Naia – (Human remains)
- Paisley Caves – (Archaeological site)
- Peñon woman – (Human remains)
- Post Pattern – (Archaeological culture)
- San Diego Complex – (Archaeological site)
- San Lorenzo – (Archaeological site)
- South Dakota – (Archaeological site)

THE CONDITIONS: Around 20,000 years ago small groups of Asian hunter-gatherers (FORAGERS) lived in the East Asian Arctic (Siberia) during the Last Glacial Maximum (Ice Age). The early populations of people who migrated into the Americas are commonly called Paleo (old) Indians.