



Native Americans of 1770

California was once home to the largest and most diverse **indigenous populations** in the Americas. Most people lived where fish, wildlife, and wood were plentiful — along the coast, the Central Valley, the Sierra Nevada **foothills**, San Francisco Bay, and the coastal **plains** of Southern California. Smaller populations were found in arid and cold regions, such as northeast California, the Great Basin, and the southeastern **deserts**. Although groups living along the Colorado and Owens Rivers cultivated crops, most California Indians relied on hunting and gathering. The territory and trade routes for California Indians extended beyond the **borders** that exist today with the states of Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona, and the country of Mexico.

Image below: It is estimated that 300,000 Native Americans were living in California when the first Europeans arrived. This portrait of five Native Americans was made by a Russian artist in 1822.

