

Native to Greater LA Badge Ambassadors



GIRL SCOUTS of GREATER LOS ANGELES

www.girlscoutsla.org

Native to Greater LA Badge (Native Americans)- Ambassadors

“When we tug at a single thing in nature, we find it attached to the rest of the world.”

— [John Muir](#)

Before the 405, the 101, the 5 or the 10, there were plants and animals. Before Hollywood, Los Angeles, Malibu, and Long Beach there were people that lived here for hundreds of years. There are unique plants and animals and people, native only to the region that we call home. Some have vanished in the mists of time, however if we listen to the stories told by the buzz of bees, the crashing of the sea and the voices in the wind, we might just be surprised to still find miracles native only to greater LA. Each level of Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors will learn about one of these elements; eventually tying all together the knowledge of Greater LA’s unique natural and cultural history.

For Ambassadors- As a Cadette and a Senior, the Native to Greater LA focused on the unique plants and wildlife in the micro climate areas of Southern California. Now as an Ambassador Girl Scout, you will explore the cultural history of the people that have existed in these regions. We will focus on the Native American people that lived throughout the Los Angeles area, their cultures, and the places still found today that are culturally and historically significant. Keep in mind how native plant life and the animals in these regions would have affected the people and their culture as you learn about their way of life. By learning more about what makes up our past we can learn more about where we are heading in our future. You will complete at least one option for each of the 5 steps in order to achieve this badge.

1. **Coastal living-** You could imagine that if you had anywhere to pick to live, along the coast is a prime spot! This has proven true even in history. One group of Native Americans that lived along the North West boundary of Los Angeles was the Chumash people. Living in a range from current day San Luis Obispo down to about the Pacific Palisades and also occupying most of the Channel Islands. The Chumash primarily lived along the coast and utilized the resources available to them there for their way of life. Explore at least one of the following options of this step to learn more about this way of living.
 - a. The Chumash were known for their exquisite craftsmanship and were very artistic people. They made beautiful baskets woven from a native reed found in coastal wetlands called Juncus or Basket Rush. They also made boats called Tomols that were used for crossing the Pacific Ocean between the mainland and

the Channel Islands and for fishing and trading with other tribes. Research the process of making a Tomol canoe and weaving a basket. Go with your troop or family to rent kayaks or attend a GSGLA program or camp where Kayaking is an activity. Try this sport and write an article on what you imagine it would be like to paddle across the ocean between the Channel Islands. For an added adventure plan a trip out to the Channel Islands to view this beautiful adventure in person.

- b. The Chumash people had many resources available to them for food. With all that the ocean provides they had a diet rich in seafood, shellfish, birds, eggs and could hunt inland for deer, rabbit and other game. However, the staple food for the Chumash was made from the acorn! Acorns naturally have tannins that have a terrible bitter flavor and can be very upsetting to the human stomach. Research the process in which the Chumash prepared the acorns to be able to be eaten. Then try your hand at cooking something similar with a corn meal instead of acorn meal. Some ideas are cornbread, tortillas, or if you feel ambitious make some homemade tamales! YUM!
 - c. Stories are an important part of most cultures, including Chumash culture. Find the story of the Rainbow Bridge, an important legend that tells of the beginning of the Chumash people and their origin. Write a legend of your family's origin and where you came from. Share with as a group or with friends. As an added adventure plan a trip out to the Channel Islands to view this sacred of places to the Chumash!
- 2. Inland living**- The Chumash people lived in the northern region of Los Angeles however the majority of Los Angeles was occupied by the Tongva tribe. The Tongva were also called Gabrielinos in Spanish (which is pronounced gab-ree-uh-lee-noh), when the Spanish Franciscan missionaries established the Mission San Gabriel Arcangel. The Tongva people occupied the coast from Santa Monica to Orange County and inland to San Bernardino and Kern Counties. There is historical evidence that Humans have occupied the Los Angeles region for at least 8,000 years before present with excavations in Palos Verdes dating back to more than 7,000 years. However, most historical evidence shows the Tongva culture probably settled around the Sonoran desert between 3 and 5 thousand years ago and spread throughout the region from that epicenter. Although much of this culture has been lost over time, there is still much to learn about this historic LA culture. Pick at least one of the following steps to learn more about these people and their way of life in historic Southern California.

- a. There are some resources online, articles and books about the lost language of the Tongva people. It is hard to know exactly how this language sounded or exactly how it was spoken for there are few resources left to use for translation. However, do some research about the Tongva language, where it originated from and learn about some words we still use today such as “Tujungá” and “Cahuenga”. Then with a friend or your troop, create your own language! Obviously languages are very complex, but think of something similar to “Pig Latin” for a place start.
 - b. The Tongva lived in houses made of reeds and willow that grew along the Los Angeles River and other rivers in the area. Visit the Santa Fe Springs Interpretive Center (check website for park hours) to view an exhibit about the Tongva and a replicate of their house structure called a ki or kiches. Think of the resources you would use to build a house or dwelling if you were lost in the wilderness. Learn about ways to construct a shelter in the wilderness and the resources you would be able to use. For an added adventure plan a wilderness trip with your Girl Scout troop to explore what it is like to live outdoors!
 - c. Similar to the Chumash, the Tongva also used canoes for transportation and trade on Catalina and the Channel Islands. Both cultures used natural asphalt to line the inside of their vessels to waterproof any seams and prevent leaks. Visit the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits to learn more about asphalt and its uses from these cultures. What else would you use asphalt for or what are some uses in today’s culture?
3. **Desert living**- From the Northern borders of GSGLA and along the East, existed Native Americans that called the desert their home. Just as many people occupy these areas today in Santa Clarita, Palmdale/Lancaster, Antelope Valley and out into San Bernardino, Native Americans also shared this historic home for thousands of years. Learn about the cultural history of these areas by exploring at least one of the following steps.
- a. The Tataviam were the main group of Native Americans who lived in the Santa Clarita Valley. Visit the Vasquez Rocks/Agua Dulce Park to explore Tataviam sites. (Check website http://parks.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpr/Parks/Vasquez_Rocks_Natural_Areafo_r for any park closures or seasonal times of operation). Make a painting/drawing of the unique landscape of this area.
 - b. The Tataviam’s main staple of food came from the Yucca plant that grows commonly on the hillsides of this area. Learn more about the Tataviam at the

Antelope Valley Indian Museum in Lancaster, CA and how they collected and prepared this food. If this distance is too great to travel, do some research online and plan a hike where you can see Yucca growing naturally. Then do some research on how to cook Yucca root and try it with your family or troop!

- c. The name Tataviam means “People who sun themselves”. Apparently the men in this culture were fond of relaxing this way. The Chumash people referred to them as Alliklik meaning “grunters”. Pick a name for your troop or family. What would it mean and why? What do you think other families or troops would name you and why? What symbols would represent the name you give your group? Then design a logo/seal/flag for your troop or family that you could display to show who you are.
4. **Mountain living-** The Serrano Native Americans were one group of people that occupied the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains. Serrano was the name given to these people by the Spanish meaning “Mountain People”. The Serrano referred to themselves as Takhtam or just “people”. Another name for this group of Native Americans was Yuhaviatam, meaning “people of the pines”. Living in the mountains, the Serrano people had much access to fresh water, game animals like rabbit and deer, and many edible plants. The Serrano highly respected the native Grizzly Bear believing they were great grandfathers, which they never hunted or used bear fur for garments. Learn more about this mountain culture by picking at least one of the following options to complete this step of the badge.
- a. The Serrano Native Americans used bows and arrows and traps to hunt game animals. Research what the Serrano used to make their bows and arrows and then learn more about the sport of archery in present day. What kinds of materials are used to manufacture archery equipment today? Try your aim, and participate in learning archery with your troop or family. Just please make sure you learn from a certified archery coach on property that is approved to instruct and perform archery. (Archery is a powerful sport involving firearms, please follow all GSGLA safety activity guidelines when participating in this activity.)
 - b. Living in the mountains, the Serrano people had access to many food items. One unique item specific to their region are pinons or pine nuts. Women would grind down the pine nuts and make a kind of tortilla with the flour. Try your hand at cooking with your troop or family using pine nuts as an ingredient. (Be sure to make a nut free option for those with allergies!)
 - c. Plan a trip to Big Bear or the surrounding area with your troop or family. Take a day trip and have a picnic, or plan a camping trip and stay overnight! Explore this area and imagine what it would be like to live here. What would you do in

the winter to survive? What kind of house would you build? Research how the Serrano people did these things and write a short story about being a Serrano girl living in this culture.

5. Become a steward of Native American culture

- a. **Documenting history-** You probably learned about the California Missions if you went through Elementary school in California. However, the information you learned about the Missions and Native American culture was also probably 4th grade appropriate. History always has many different perspectives and is often a concept based on the most common perspective of the time or within the view of the person recording the historical event. Basically, there are two or more sides to every story. Pretend you are a famous history journalist creating a documentary on one of the Native American cultures you have learned about in this badge. Visit a local mission along with a Los Angeles museum such as the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum and the Los Angeles Natural History museum. What perspective do you think is taken when providing information about Native American cultures at these places? You can also visit California State Parks in your LA neighborhood to find information. Do your research on how Native American culture has been recorded and delivered and then create a well educated, culturally sensitive, and informative documentary on the Native Americans from your area. You can use this as a tool to help educate others about Native American culture. Share this video with your high school, city's council or local heritage club for sustainability of your work!
- b. **Teach a younger troop-** Children seem to be fascinated by nature about Native Americans and their culture, but how many truly get to learn about the people that once lived in their hometown? Plan an experience for a younger troop or group of kids where they will learn facts about the Native American culture in your area. Be sure to teach them about what kind of food they ate, the style of houses they lived in, clothing they would wear, and maybe even stories or legends that were told. This is also a great opportunity to teach some outdoor or camping skills too!
- c. **Attend a Pow-wow-** Find a Native American Pow-Wow in Los Angeles/GSGLA's boundaries and attend with your troop or family. Try to volunteer at the event and interview a person(s) participating in the Pow-Wow about their heritage. What is your heritage? Do you have any customs or traditions that are practiced? Have you ever attended a cultural event for your heritage? Share your stories with your troop, family or friends.