



# AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native  
Tourism Association

*Introducing America's First Nations to the World*

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is AIANTA?** The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a national non-profit association of tribes, tribal businesses and entrepreneurs who promote leadership in education, training and technical assistance for Indian Country tourism.

**When and how was AIANTA formed?** AIANTA was formed in 1999 at the First Annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A year later, a group of representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Transportation Department, Interior Secretary's office and tribal tourism officials began meeting to plan AITC on a regular basis. In 2002, the AITC planning group filed incorporation papers in Wisconsin to become AIANTA and Western States Tourism Policy Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AIANTA. In 2009, AIANTA was incorporated in New Mexico and launched the organization's first Native American Trade Show Booth in the Discover America Pavilion at ITB Berlin, the largest international travel tradeshow in the world. In 2011, the Internal Revenue Service granted AIANTA's status to become a 501(c)(3) organization. That same year, AIANTA signed an MOU with the U.S. Department of the Interior agencies to create project partnerships.

**What is the mission of AIANTA?** AIANTA's mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian and Alaska Native tourism that honors and sustains tribal traditions and values.

**How is AIANTA funded?** AIANTA is funded by memberships, donations, sponsorships and grants. We accomplish our work through a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**How does AIANTA benefit the USA?** AIANTA's goal has always been to help Indian Country link its historical interpretations to landscape, thus pointing out that authentic tribal stories and perspectives are intertwined in the fabric of American history. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council's economic research, in 2012, the travel and tourism industry grew its total contribution of \$6.6 trillion to the United States' Gross Domestic Product and increased job growth by five million to 260 million in one year. Indian Country tourism plays a significant role in that number, from a national and international standpoint.

**Why is the work of AIANTA so important?** AIANTA supports an American Indian tourism industry that promotes cultural and historical authenticity. We believe that the true history of our peoples can only be told from our voices and perspectives. By developing and implementing programs and providing economic development opportunities, AIANTA helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.



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**Does AIANTA have partnerships with other organizations?** AIANTA continues to grow partnerships with the National Park Service, National Congress of American Indians, the National Geographic Society, Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Amtrak, Tauck Tours, George Washington University, Brand USA, Bureau of Indian Education, Eastern National, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**How many tribes are there in the USA?** There are 566 federally recognized tribes in the USA, each with a unique story to tell. AIANTA has identified six geographic regions to allow visitors to explore them more easily.

**What are the six AIANTA regions and some of the highlights of each?**

- ⤴ The Southwest Region boasts red rocks, the Rocky Mountains, sagebrush deserts, adobe dwellings, and magnificent jewelry and pottery.
- ⤴ The Pacific Region features lush green rain forests, an inland sea, the Cascade Mountains, salmon runs, volcanoes, and beautifully carved boxes and masks.
- ⤴ The Plains Region, with its immense rolling hills and valleys, Badlands and buffalo herds, offers fabulous beadwork and feathered headdresses.
- ⤴ The Midwest Region has magnificent Great Lakes and northern woods for fishing and paddling, and features intricate floral beadwork and exquisite baskets.
- ⤴ The northern section of the East Region is renowned for its vast forests, rivers and mountains, and its baskets and stone carvings, while the southern portion is home to beaches, swamps and alligators, plus intricate patchwork and sweet grass baskets.
- ⤴ The Alaska Region, with its dramatic vistas, glaciers, meadows, grizzly bear and moose, produces fine baskets and beautifully carved walrus tusks.

**Which is correct -Indians and Indian Country, or Native Americans and Native America?**

While all of the above are correct when discussing American Indians, the most commonly used terminology is Indian Country and American Indians. Indian Country refers to Native North America while American Indians distinguish between North American Indians and Indians from India.

**What is the name for the traditional attire worn by American Indians?** Generally, American Indians use the word "regalia" when referring to traditional clothing worn on ceremonial occasions.