



Ancestral Lifestyles

Life for the people who lived in Grand Canyon was harsh and difficult at times. The people relied on the environment and each other to survive. Their descendants today share stories and experiences that allow us a glimpse into the past.

People organized into kinship groups. While it is not known the size of these groups, they were all part of the larger canyon community.



These social groups came together when necessary — to farm, hunt, trade, collect food, or build structures. People also joined together in times of ceremony and celebration.

Above: As common in a Puebloan kitchen as microwaves are today, the mano and metate were used to grind corn, beans, and other grains.



Home Sweet Home

The people of Bright Angel Pueblo called the canyon home. They were among the first to explore and experience the uniqueness of the canyon, the river, the plants, and the animals; indeed the spirit of this place. The lessons and values they were taught during those long-ago days have influenced every generation that followed.



Above: A Zuni woman making bread, perhaps from grain she has ground, sifted, and is now using as a staple in the diet she feeds her family.

Ancient Craftsmanship

Although securing basic necessities occupied much of their lives, people also found time to express themselves and their beliefs through creative art.



Decorated pottery and crafted tools exhibit a simplistic beauty reflecting the covenant between the people and the spirituality of the landscape for which they are “Earth stewards.”



Above and left: Pottery, such as this Tusayan black on white pitcher, as well as pieces, or sherds, tell of people who used household goods for both function and beauty.



Inspired by Earth & Sky

For physical and spiritual strength, people looked to their natural environment. The plants and animals the people encountered and used in their daily lives were viewed as sacred beings of the canyon. Celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars also served as sources of inspiration.

Above: Moonrise over Yaki Point. The Puebloans tracked heavenly bodies as a means of planning wide-ranging ceremonial and daily activities, such as crop planting.