**Menominee Indian Fact Sheet**

***How do I cite your website in my bibliography?***
You will need to ask your teacher for the format he or she wants you to use. The authors' names are Laura Redish and Orrin Lewis and the title of our site is Native Languages of the Americas. We are a nonprofit educational organization working to preserve and protect Native American languages and culture. You can learn more about our organization [here](http://www.native-languages.org/faq.htm). Our website was first created in 1998 and last updated in 2015.

url:[**http://www.bigorrin.org/menominee\_kids.htm**](http://www.bigorrin.org/menominee_kids.htm)

**Native American Facts For Kids** was written for young people learning about the Menominee tribe for school or home-schooling reports. We encourage students and teachers to visit our main [Menominee](http://www.native-languages.org/menominee.htm) website for in-depth information about the tribe, but here are our answers to the questions we are most often asked by children, with Menominee pictures and links we believe are suitable for all ages.

***How do you pronounce the word "Menominee"? What does it mean? How is it spelled?***
*Menominee* is pronounced "Me-NOH-muh-nee." It means "wild rice people" in [Ojibwe](http://www.native-languages.org/ojibwe.htm). The Ojibwe gave the Menominees this name because wild rice was their major food crop. ***Menominee*** and ***Menomini*** are both accepted spellings, but the official name of the tribe is spelled 'Menominee.'

***Where do the Menominees live?***
The Menominee Indians are original residents of [Wisconsin](http://www.native-languages.org/wisconsin.htm) and the upper [Michigan](http://www.native-languages.org/michigan.htm) peninsula. Today most Menominees live on a reservation in Wisconsin.

***How is the Menominee Indian nation organized?***
The Menominee Indians live on a ***reservation***, which is land that belongs to them and is under their control. The Menominee tribe has its own government, laws, police, and services, just like a small country. However, the Menominees are also US citizens and must obey American law. In the past, the Menominee tribe was led by a chief, or *okemaw*, who was the hereditary head of one of the tribal clans. Today the *okemaw* is elected by Menominee tribal members, just like a mayor or governor.

***What language do the Menominee Indians speak?***
Most Menominee people speak English today. Some older Menominees also speak their native ***Menominee language***. Menominee is a musical language that has complicated verbs with many parts. You can read some prayers in Menominee [here](http://198.62.75.1/www1/pater/JPN-menomin.html) and read a Menominee picture glossary [here](http://www.native-languages.org/menominee_animals.htm). If you'd like to know an easy Menominee word, "posoh" is a friendly greeting.

Today Menominee is an ***endangered language*** because most children aren't learning it anymore. However, some Menominee people are working to keep their language alive.

***What was Menominee culture like in the past? What is it like now?***
Here's a link to the [Menominee Nation homepage](http://www.menominee-nsn.gov/). On their site you can find information about the Menominee Indian tribe in the past and today.

***How do Menominee Indian children live, and what did they do in the past?***
They do the same things all children do--play with each other, go to school and help around the house. Many Menominee children like to go hunting and fishing or camp outdoors. In the past, Indian kids had more chores and less time to play, just like colonial children. But they did have [dolls](http://www.native-languages.org/dolls.htm), toys and games to play. Here is a picture of a [Menominee snowsnake](http://www.mpm.edu/wirp/4286.html). Menominee Indian kids would throw snowsnakes to see who could make theirs glide the furthest. [Lacrosse](http://www.delvallacrosse.com/lacrosse_history.htm) was also a popular sport among Menominee teenagers. Like many Native Americans, Menominee mothers carried their babies in **cradleboards** on their backs. Here is a website with pictures of [Native American cradle boards](http://www.native-languages.org/cradleboard.htm).

***What were Menominee homes like in the past?***
The Menominee Indians used two different types of dwellings**:** dome-shaped ***wigwams***, and rectangular ***lodges*** with bark covering. Here are some pictures of[wigwams, birchbark houses, and other Native American homes](http://www.native-languages.org/houses.htm). Most Menominee villages also included a sweat lodge and a larger great hall. Today, Native Americans only build a wigwam or lodge for fun or for ritual purposes. Most Menominees live in modern houses and apartment buildings, just like you.

***What was Menominee clothing like? Did they wear feather headdresses and face paint?***
Menominee women wore woven skirts. Menominee men wore [breechcloths with leggings](http://www.native-languages.org/breechcloth.htm). Shirts were not necessary in the Menominee culture, but both genders wore mantles in cooler weather. The Menominee Indians also wore [deerskin moccasins](http://www.native-languages.org/moccasins.htm) on their feet. Later, Menominee people adapted European costume such as cloth blouses and jackets, decorating them with fancy beadwork and embroidery. Here some photographs and links about [Native American regalia](http://www.native-languages.org/clothing.htm) in general.

The Menominee Indians didn't wear [feathered headdresses](http://www.native-languages.org/headdresses.htm#warbonnets) like the [Sioux](http://www.native-languages.org/dakota.htm). Traditionally, the Menominees wore fur caps or peaked hoods, though important Menominee men sometimes wore a splayed feather headdress. Menominee women wore their hair long, but men, especially warriors, often wore a [Mohawk](http://www.bigorrin.org/mohawk_kids.htm)hairstyle or shaved their heads except for a ***scalplock*** (one long lock of hair on top of their heads). Here is a website with [Indian hairstyle](http://www.native-languages.org/hair.htm) pictures. Menominee men and women both painted their faces with bright colors for special occasions. They used different patterns for war paint, religious ceremonies, and festive decoration.

Today, some Menominee people still wear moccasins or a beaded shirt, but they wear modern clothes like jeans instead of breechcloths... and they only wear feathers or roaches in their hair on special occasions like a dance.

***What was Menominee transportation like in the days before cars? Did they paddle canoes?***
Yes--the Menominee Indian tribe used both ***birchbark canoes*** (made of birch bark stretched over a wooden frame) and ***dugout canoes*** (made from hollowed-out logs). Here's a website about the different types of [Indian canoes](http://www.native-languages.org/boats.htm#canoes). Canoeing is still popular within the Menominee nation, though few people handcraft their own canoe anymore. Over land, the Menominees used dogs as pack animals. (There were no horses in North America until colonists brought them over from Europe.) The Menominees also used sleds and snowshoes to help them travel in the winter. Today, of course, Menominee people also use cars... and non-native people also use canoes.

***What******was Menominee Indian food like in the days before supermarkets?***
The most important Menominee food was wild rice, which women harvested from their canoes. Menominee men hunted deer and fished for sturgeon and other fish. Menominee Indians also raised squash and beans, gathered nuts and berries, and tapped trees for maple syrup like Wisconsinites do today. Here is a website with more information about [American Indian food.](http://www.native-languages.org/food.htm)

***What were Menominee weapons and tools like in the past?***
Menominee hunters and warriors used bows and arrows, clubs, and stone axes. Menominee fishermen used spears and nets. Here is a website with pictures and information about [American Indian weapon types](http://www.native-languages.org/weapons.htm).

***What are Menominee arts and crafts like?***
Menominee artists are known for their [quilling](http://www.native-languages.org/quillwork.htm), [pottery](http://www.native-languages.org/pottery.htm), and [floral beadwork](http://www.native-languages.org/beadwork.htm). Like other eastern American Indians, Menominees also crafted ***wampum*** out of white and purple shell beads. Wampum beads were traded as a kind of currency, but they were more culturally important as an art material. The [designs and pictures](http://www.nativetech.org/wampum/wamppics.htm)on wampum belts often told a story or represented a person's family.

***What other Native Americans did the Menominee tribe interact with?***
The Menominee Indians belonged to a trading network that stretched from the Great Lakes region into the plains. The Menominee liked to trade wild rice for corn, tobacco, and buffalo hides. The closest allies of the Menominee tribe were the [Ojibway](http://www.bigorrin.org/chippewa_kids.htm) and [Winnebago](http://www.native-languages.org/hochunk.htm) tribes. The Menominees were often at war with the [Sac and Fox](http://www.bigorrin.org/sf_kids.htm) tribes.

***What kinds of stories do the Menominee Indians tell?***
There are lots of traditional Menominee legends and fairy tales. Storytelling is very important to the Menominee Indian culture. Here is a story about [how the porcupine got his quills](http://www.menominee.edu/culturemain/porcupine.html). Here's a website where you can read more about [Menominee mythology](http://www.native-languages.org/menominee-legends.htm).

***What about Menominee religion?***
Religions are too complicated and culturally sensitive to describe appropriately in only a few simple sentences, and we strongly want to avoid misleading anybody. You can visit this site to learn more about [Menominee Indian mythology](http://www.mpm.edu/wirp/ICW-138.html) or this site about [Native American religious belief](http://www.native-languages.org/religion.htm) in general.

***Can you recommend a good******book for me to read?***
You may enjoy [Speaking Out](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0516048295/natilangofthe-20), which is an inspirational book by a Menominee Indian author about the Native American experience. If you want to know more about Menominee culture and history, two interesting sources are [Indian Nations: The Menominee](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0817254587/natilangofthe-20) (for younger kids) and [Menominee](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0866256032/natilangofthe-20) (for older kids). You can also browse through our recommendations of [Indian books](http://www.native-languages.org/books.htm) in general.

Thanks for your interest in the Menominee Indian people and their language!