

Iroquois

by

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No one knows where the Iroquois came from, but the legend is that Great Spirit told them to go to the northeast. They originally settled in northern New York State. Here they had abundant fish from the lakes and rivers and the forest proved them with a lot of game, such as bear, deer, rabbit and wild fowls. But due to the very cold winters, they really depended on dried food, especially corn. It was their main source of food, because they could grow it and then save it for the winter. They ate corn in soups, in breads and in puddings. Their favorite food

was succotash, which was made out of corn and beans. Corn was also served with greens and nuts and it was at times flavored with berries or maple sugar. The whole corn plant was used by the Iroquois. The husks were made into dolls and were also woven into mats and hammocks. The corn cob was made into a pipe. They also planted beans, squash, beans, tobacco and sunflowers. In the cold weather the men wore a tunic like shirt with fringed edges. They also wore leggings in both the hot and cold seasons. For special occasions the men wore a short kilt over the leggings. The Iroquois men also wore a ual hat. It was sort of like a knit cap that had one or two feathers standing straight up in the middle of the cap. All the warriors cut off their hair except for a strip of hair in the middle of their heads, called a roach. Today we call this hairstyle a "Mohawk" cut. The women wore their hair long and braided. They wore long deerskin blouses that went down to the knees and leggings like the men. They also wore a loose cape like blouse with fringes on the sleeves in the winter. The Iroquois are famous for the type of house they lived in, called the longhouse. The house was very, very long and narrow. Most longhouses were from 50 to 150 feet long and between 18 to 25 feet wide. The roof was arched and the walls were made from sheets of bark. There were no windows in the longhouse. Many families of one clan lived in each longhouse. Each family had only a small space. Each family

had a bunk where they all slept together using a large bearskin. Above the bunk, there was a platform where they kept the family belongings, such as pots, supplies and weapons. There were many small fires all the time and there were several openings in the roof to let the smoke out. Two families shared each fire. Each longhouse was ruled by a woman and all property belonged to the Iroquois women.

