

# Aboriginal Contributions

*Aboriginal peoples used their rich natural resources to make food, tools, shelter, clothing, and means of transportation. Many of their inventions are still in use today. Here are some examples.*



## Food and Medicine

### Corn

Aboriginal peoples were the first to grow corn and use it as a staple. Now corn has become an important crop in many parts of the world. In fact, we have to thank the Aboriginal peoples for the popular snack we now enjoy so much – popcorn!

### Sunflower

The sunflower was an important source of nutrients for Aboriginal peoples. Today, sunflowers are grown in many parts of the world for their seeds, which not only are a great snack food after roasting but can also be pressed for oil.

### Chewing gum

Chewing gum is believed to have been invented by Aboriginal peoples. They collected the sap from spruce trees to make gum for chewing. Later, they added sugar to the gum. Now, chewing gum has become popular throughout the world.

### Maple syrup

Aboriginal peoples in Eastern Canada were the first to discover the sweet sap from maple trees and make it into syrup, which they called "sinzibuckwud". They taught the early settlers how to make maple syrup, too.

### Medicine

Aboriginal peoples used herbs and plants to make medicines and teas for healing diseases. They used petroleum jelly, for example, as a skin ointment. They made tea with the entire blackberry plant to cure cholera and an upset stomach.

## Clothing and Eyewear

### Parka

The parka – a heavy jacket with a hood, often lined with fur or fake fur – has an Inuit origin. The Inuit in the Arctic made it from caribou or seals to protect themselves from wind chill while hunting and kayaking.

### Snowgoggles

Aboriginal peoples in Northern Canada made goggles from bone, ivory, and antlers to protect themselves against snow glare.

## Transportation

### Snowshoes

To travel over deep snow, Aboriginal peoples used spruce and rawhide thongs to make web-like shoes so that their feet would not sink into the snow.

### Toboggan

Aboriginal peoples of Eastern Canada used bark and animal skins to make toboggans for hauling heavy objects over ice and snow. Today tobogganing has become a popular winter activity.

### Canoe

Aboriginal peoples made different kinds of canoes for different needs. The materials used ranged from birchbark to cedar bark to dug-out logs. They were very manoeuvrable, especially along narrow waterways.

### Kayak

The word “kayak” means “man’s boat”. The Inuit were the first people to make kayaks to fish, travel, and hunt animals such as seals and caribou. Originally, kayaks were made by stitching animal skins together and stretching them over a wooden frame. Like canoes, they were also very manoeuvrable.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Aboriginal Contributions

**A quick quiz: give short answers.**

1. Which Aboriginal group invented kayaks? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was used to make parkas? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was "sinzibuckwud"? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What were snowgoggles made from? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What kind of clothing did the Inuit make? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What word means "man's boat"? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was used as a skin ointment? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which two kinds of bark were used to make canoes? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What plant was used to cure cholera and an upset stomach? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What were the two main materials for making snowshoes? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What can sunflower seeds be made into, besides snack food? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What did Aboriginal peoples get from spruce trees to make gum? \_\_\_\_\_

**Shelly is singing about some Aboriginal inventions. Choose one example from below and learn more about it. Then write a short description about the item.**

[illegible]