

Maritimes refers to the region that later became the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Atlantic Canada includes the Maritimes plus the land that later became Newfoundland and Labrador.

Distribution

In most First Nations and Inuit communities, everyone helped with production, and everyone shared equally in what was produced. In some regions, such as the Maritimes, resources were plentiful year-round, and there was little danger of anyone going without food or shelter. In more-northern regions, communities often had to struggle to survive hard winters. People did what they could to help one another in these times.

Since the land and water were the sources of all life, being able to hunt, fish, and harvest over large areas was very important to people. In some regions, nations had very clear ideas of the boundaries of their territories and defended their lands from other nations. In other regions, people from different nations freely moved back and forth over the same areas. For example, the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq often shared the forests and rivers where they lived.

First Nations and Inuit also had trade networks. For example, the Innu often traded with the Algonquin [al-GONG-kwin] for corn. The Algonquin got corn by exchanging moose and beaver hides for corn grown by the Wendat [WEN-dat].

No One Owned the Land

First Nations and Inuit did not have a tradition of *private ownership*—the idea that one person has complete control over an area of land. To them, thinking that a person could own the land was like thinking that a person could own the air.

In some societies, certain families had the right to harvest or hunt in particular areas, but even then they did not own that area of land. It was only theirs to care for on behalf of the whole group.

Activities



Think It Through

Use these questions to examine First Nations and Inuit economies.

- What did people need and want? (This is the base of the economy.)
- How were goods and services produced?
- How were goods and services distributed?