

## Gathering Acorns

Acorns come from oak trees and there are many different kinds of oak trees. There are 20 species of oak trees that grow in California. Some of them are valley oak, blue oak, black oak, and live oak. The valley oak is the largest oak tree found in California and can grow to be over 100 feet tall. They can live for around 300 years!

The valley oaks are found in the Central Valley of California and also near the coast along rivers and streams. The blue oak trees grow where it is hot and dry in the foothills. The live oak trees grow in the mountains and near the rivers and streams too.

The acorn was the most common food eaten by most California Native Americans, feeding three fourths of the Native American population. A family would consume between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds a year. The hulled acorns were put in a mortar and broken down into a flour by a pestle. The flour was brushed from the mortar with a soap root brush. A hole was made in the sand by a stream, lined with leaves and the acorn flour poured into it. The flour was leached by pouring hot water over it. This was done several times to remove tannic acid.

