

EMBERA WOUNAAN

POPULATION (estimation)
22,485 Embera inhabitants
6,892 Wounaan inhabitants



LANGUAGE
Emberas speak Embera dialect, while Wounaans speak Nómara dialect.



HOUSING
The typical house of the Embera-Wounaan is built on pillars so it is not in contact with the surface. Also, houses are built on river banks, and there is almost no furniture.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Emberá-Wounaan are monogamous. The father is the main authority; however the mother also inspires deep respect.



HANDICRAFT

They are skillful in carving tagua (Phylephas seamanii) and cocobolo wood (Dalbergia Retusa), and are well-appreciated by Darien craftsmen. Tagua is commonly known as vegetal ivory and its seeds are ivory-colored chicken egg sized.



Beautiful and fine baskets made of palm fibers called "chunga" are their most famous handicrafts.



LEISURE AND TRADITIONS

The most prominent of their traditions is Female Puberty Ceremony (also known as "Chicha Cantada"), in which there are dances and music played by accordion, flutes, drums and maracas. This music and its rhythm are quite similar to a lament.

LOCATION

The tribe is located inside of Chagres National Park, which is an hour and a half away of the city. You can get there with a short trip in canoe while enjoying through beautiful natural landscapes along the Chagres River, in the province of Darien, which is also considered as an ecological bridge in Central America.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Embera Wounaans are governed by two types of authorities: the traditional government, that includes General Chieftains ("Caciques") and the Regional Congress; and, the national government, which is composed by governors, mayors and magistrates recognized by the Government of the Republic of Panama.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Both Emberas and Wounaans practice agriculture, hunting and fishing, which are mainly male activities.



They trade banana and corn, which are transported in canoes through rivers until arriving at the marketplaces. In the last decades, since tourism has been stepping up, handicraft demand has been increased as well.



COSTUME

Emberá Wounaan females are recognized as the most beautiful American indigenous. The upper part of their bodies is uncovered and wear just a colorful narrow skirt. Women also use in their breasts gorgeous Chaquira necklaces made also of silver coins, and adorn their hair with natural red flowers called "Papo". On the other hand, men wear loin-clothes ("laparrabos"). Both women and men do body-painting using natural colorings.

Other Tribes: Teribe (Nazo), Bokotá, Bri Bri and Parará-Punu.

5 indigenous regions (comarcas): Cémeco, Wargandi, Madugandi, Kuna Yala, Ngobe Buglé

During so many years, indigenous comarcas have been visited by national and international tourists, who have been welcomed warmly with flutes, drums and maracas. Usually, indigenous people have fish and banana or cassava for meal. Enjoying with them its delicious cuisine and its original dances in which they represent animal life, is surely an unforgettable experience.

Visitors can purchase handicrafts, take a look of indigenous housing and get into their lifestyle. Moreover, tourists can enjoy the experience of having their faces and body painted with vegetable coloring "jagua" that lasts for about 8 days.



We invite you to know the main Indian tribes of Panama, distributed throughout the Isthmus, which are peaceful, friendly and open-minded to visitors.

You can also enjoy ethnotourism groups that travel around several provinces by air or by roads, while deciding which ethnic group or region you would mostly like to visit.

With no doubt, what you will always find in these ethnic groups is a clear smile in its dark-skinned faces with limp hairs. Panamanian Indians are waiting for your visit. Surely, they will treat you with hospitality and kindness.



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PANAMANIAN INDIAN TRIBES

