



California Department of  
Parks and Recreation



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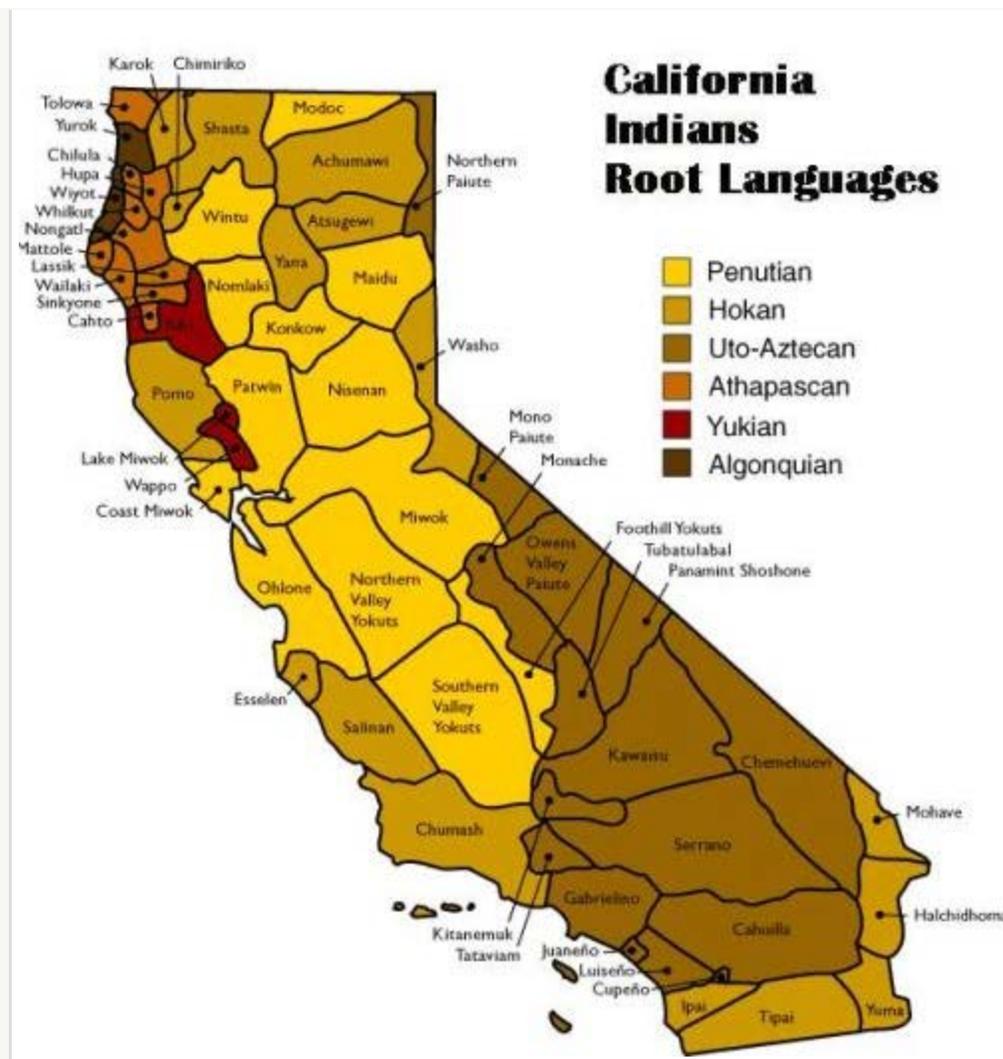
## California Indians Language Groups

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The Cultural Heritage of California begins no less than 12,000 years ago when the first of several waves of people arrived and settled here. California's prehistoric population one of the largest and most diverse in the Western hemisphere is exhibited by the no fewer than the sixty-four distinct languages they spoke, more than any other comparable area in the world outside of New Guinea.

"Before white contact, California had more linguistic variety than all of Europe. Today California Indian languages are indeed in the ultimate crisis in a life-and-death struggle," writes linguist Leanne Hinton. "We may see ninety percent of these languages, or perhaps all of them, disappear in our lifetimes" (Hinton, 1994). This online presentation of California Indian Root Languages and Tribal Groups is to provide information to all who want to learn about California Indian languages.





Hinton, Leanne. *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1994.

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