

## What is a Powwow?

Powwow time is the Native American people's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships and make new ones.

This is a time to renew thought of the old ways and to preserve a rich heritage.

There are several different stories of how the Powwow was started. Some believe that the war dance societies of the Ponca and other Southern Plains tribes were the origin of the Powwow.

Another belief is that when the Native Americans were forced onto reservations the government also forced them to have dances for the public to come and see. Before each dance they were lead through the town in a parade, which is the beginning of the Grand Entry.

Dancers have always been a very important part of the life of the American Indian. Most dancers seen at Powwows today are social dances which might have had different meanings in earlier days.

Although dance styles and content have changed, their meaning and importance has not. The outfits worn by the dancers, like the styles of clothing today evolve over time, it is not a stagnant culture, but a vibrant and changing way of life.

I hope that everyone enjoyed the presentation and I would like to thank you, once again, for inviting us here today. We have fun sharing our culture with you. In closing I would like to say:

**Yaw^ko**

(Thank you and be well)



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## Powwow Etiquette

**Bring your own seating** when attending pow-wows, because public seating is the exception rather than the rule. Lawn chairs are the most common way of solving this.

**Ask permission before taking pictures of dancers.** Many people are sensitive about pictures, so it is always good to be on the safe side and ask.

**Always stand during special songs.** This includes Grand Entry, Flag Songs, Veteran Songs, Memorial Songs, Prayer Songs, or any other song that the M.C. designates. It is also customary to remove any hats that you have on for the duration of that song.

**Remember you are a guest.** Have fun, ask questions and meet people. Everyone there is welcome!

**Never come to a Pow Wow intoxicated, bring alcohol or drugs!**

**Place your blanket on the bench you want to sit** at ahead of time. Nothing is worse than not having a seat after the dancing has begun! Never sit on someone else's blanket without their permission.

**Give respect to the Head Man and Lady.** Don't begin dancing until they do, and honor them in their Special with a dollar bill given to them in a handshake.

## Men's Categories

### **Fancy Dance or Fancy Feather Dance:**

A dance featuring vivid regalia with dramatic movement. Aside from bright color and non-traditional materials, fancy dancers are also distinguished by use of a two-bustle design on their regalia. There are two styles of the roach: In the North, it is the same as the grass dance roach, in the South, the roaches have rockers, two feathers on springs that rock back and forth.

### **Grass Dance:**

A dance, featuring regalia with long, flowing fringe and beadwork designs. Dance movements are more elaborate than the traditional dancers, but less flashy than the fancy dancers. Their movements are meant to be reminiscent of prairie grasses blowing in the wind.

### **Northern Traditional:**

A dance featuring traditional regalia, authentic design and materials, single or no bustle, and movements based on traditional dances simulating battles or a journey.

## Women's Categories

### **Fancy Shawl:**

A dance featuring women wearing brilliant colors, a long, usually fringed and decorated, shawl, performing rapid spins and elaborate dance steps.

### **Jingle Dress (healing dance):**

The jingle dress includes a skirt with hundreds of small tin cones that make noise as the dancer moves with light footwork danced close to ground.

### **Traditional:**

A dance featuring traditional regalia of cloth or leather, featuring authentic design and materials, and dancers who perform, with precise, highly controlled movement.

Buckskin and Cloth refers to the type of material of which the dress is made. The Southern leather regalia is similar to its Northern cloth counterpart. The dance steps are the same for both regalia categories.

