

SAN NAMIBIA



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Tsumkwe area, better known as Nyae Nyae, in the Namibian Kalahari. San people live there for 23 000 years. They call themselves Ju/'hoansi: « ordinary people ». 30 000 people, 2% of Namibian population with the lowest per capita income. Many communities still rely on state-run food aid. Majority of San live in communal areas and work as labourers in farms.



San people live in small camps, with 5 or 6 shelters. There are no big villages in the bush. A band uses the resources of its own « N!ore »: an area that provides enough food and water to live there all year long. San marry into different n!ores.



In the past, dome shaped rain proof homes were built to be used as shelters and storage, as San were mobile people. Now that they are sedentary, they still use them for week end, to go back to nature while they live in permanent buildings made with a mix of dung, clay and straw, or bricks.



Clothing in the past were made of tanned animal hides, mainly duiker, springbok and steenbok. After soaking the dried hides in water, hair is scraped off with a knife and the hide then soaked in a tanning medium. Then it is buried with dung for few days, and then kneaded by hand to soften it. Today those clothes are mixed with modern textiles.

Women love to decorates their skirts with owl eyes motifs, looking like boldly colorful geometric circles.



Beaded traditional headdresses are part of the beauty in the San culture. Decorative and attractive clothes are appreciated.











« When i was young, tatoos were made on our legs by rubbing charcoal into small parallel cuts in the skin.. it was to signal the end of puberty, and we were allowed to wear perfume ! »



In the 70's , bushmen were asked to work as tracker for the south african army in their war against the independentists SWAPO. When SWAPO had the power in the 90's after the apartheid times, the Sans were not chased by the government. it was part of the « National Reconciliation politics.



«When the Boers arrived they asked us to wear some clothes. So we changed our way of life...But now, thanks to tourism, we come back to our traditions. We like tourism as we get incomes from it, and it allows us to to show them to our own kids who learn our songs, our games , our dances, how to make skin animal clothes ... »



Hunting in the Nyae Nyae conservancy is supposed to be controlled. But San people still hunt, using traditional methods. Poisoned arrow with Euphorbia sap only needs to nick the animal skin for the poison to enter the bloodstream. Hunter follows the animal until it collapses from the poison...it can last for days when it is a big animal like giraffe or greater kudu...



Bows are made of light bush wood, arrow shafts from reed grasses and link shafts from brandy bush with false umbrella thorn gum for glue. Hunting with those weapons require skill, endurance and attentiveness. The owner of the arrow that brings down an animal has first claim on the carcass. Once an animal killed, the Sans believes that putting blood on the bow will avoid to kill a man during the hunting .



Mr N!ani #oma , he likes to remember the good old times when he was able to run after steenboks, oryx, and giraffes for hours. Now he cannot walk anymore. He would have loved to kill elephants, but his arrows were too small for it!



-What's your favorite meat?
-Giraffe!



A San superstition says that if a hunter is lazy and that he does not hunt, he becomes the shame of the clan. Once dead, to avoid that something similar with another hunter happens, a piece of charcoal is introduced in his anus, as a punishment!



A superstition says that while hunting, if your face meets a spider net, you'll have bad luck...



Chameleon has a strange reputation in San people. They say that if it spits on you, your skin will fall, if you eat below a tree, and that some Chameleon dungs fall in your food, you'll die, if it bites you, you'll die, if you want to kill someone, put some bones in his cup of tea!



In order to find water in the Kalahari Desert, Sans look for a specific root called the “bi! bulb”. “Bi!”, in bushman language means “milk. Firstly the plant is dug out of the ground, using hands and a stick.



The tuber can also be used to wash your body with its pulp full of water.



Squeeze the plant to drink the water. Before, San used to burry ostrich eggs containing water all along their tracks!



Oryx Cucumber, called Tc'a. A variety of 100 species edible plants that provide the staple Ju/'hoansi diet.



Exchanges and gifts of craft and food underpin social structures in San culture. Hxaro is a complex system binding family and non-family members in long distance exchange relationships. Beadworks is the most frequent Hxaro gift. On the picture, they share tobacco, matches, and cakes.



The San apothecary and knowledge of medicinal plants application are extensive. The man on the picture shows the plant (*Terminalia sericea*) he uses when he has a cold. He swallows it, or put it around his forehead.



Collecting food is traditionally women's work. Tubers, bulbs, leaves, birds eggs and sometimes tortoise are collected using a digging stick. Kalahari has the largest biodiversity in the world amongst the deserts.



Namibia has launched a bill on access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge to prevent exploitation of indigenous resources, such as devil's claw, a plant used by the San people to treat rheumatism and arthritis, and hoodia which is used for suppressing hunger.



The bush fire is advancing across the dry grassland, destroying wild melons which provide a vital source of water for the Bushmen during the very dry season. To escape the fire, they will search for a sandy area, and wait till the flames pass around, always keeping their calm.



Grashoek primary school. San kids do not learn at school the San language. It happens only in their families, as the teachers are Ovambo. Literacy among namibian San is low at 20%.When they speak, San use 4 clicks sounds in the Khoisan language : / = ! # and another one called the Kiss, as it makes the sound of a kiss! There are more than 20 different languages in the San culture. They all click, but cannot understand each others.



Education is very important in San culture as unemployment is very high in the community.

A love text in San language written by a teenager to her girlfriend, using the ! and # characters.





Teenagers do not dream to go to Windhoek, the namibian capitale, as they have heard that black people may killed them them as they may see the Sans as primitives primitives.



Sans do not count after 10. If you ask them how they say 26 or 52, they need to think about it.
« After 10, we use to say ' a lot ' ».



Originally ostrich eggshell beads decorated clothes, bags, and perfume containers. First the eggshell is broken in small pieces.



then it is the time of shaping ostrich eggshell blanks



A hole is made by hand in every piece, that will become necklaces.





The necklace is polished on a stone to make it smoother. It takes 2 days to make one, with 3 eggs.



Art cooperative allows the women from all around the are to earn money. They use it for the education of the kids, and for health care.


 Republic of Namibia
 Ministry of Health and Social Service
CHILD'S GROWTH CARD

CHILD IDENTIFICATION

Health Facility Name: _____

Child's Name: Luw Fama

Sex: F

Child Clinic Yes: _____

Date of Birth: 19/12/06

Date First Seen: 2/1/07

Birth Order: _____

Mother's Name: Ikocce lukxo

Father's Name: Lama Nhani

District: GFTN

Location: _____

Village/Town: _____

PARTICULARS OF BIRTH

BIRTH	BIRTH
Normal	Hospital
Instruments	Clinic
	Home

Caesarian Section: _____

Head circumference: _____

Birth weight in kg: _____

Length: _____

Neonatal problems: _____

IMMUNIZATION

Age	Vaccine	Date due	Date given	Given by
Now Born	Polo 0		<u>2/1/07</u>	<u>kb</u>
	BCG		<u>2/1/07</u>	
8 weeks	Polo 1 + DPT 1	<u>2/2/07</u>	<u>2/12/07</u>	
10 weeks	Polo 2 + DPT 2	<u>11/1/07</u>	<u>11/1/07</u>	
14 weeks	Polo 3 + DPT 3	<u>7/4</u>	<u>7/4</u>	
9 months	Measles	<u>7/1/07</u>	<u>3/10</u>	
5 Years	DT + Polo			
	BCG			
10 Years	TT + Polo			
	BCG			

HIV is on the rise amongst the San people and also malaria. Tuberculosis is widespread and the San people have one of the highest rates of multi drug resistant tuberculosis in the country.



Making fire without lighter or matches is essential when you are in the bush, to protect from the animals or cook.





San love to smoke in huge pipes or very small ones. They like tobacco that they can find in local shops, but if they do not have tobacco, they just smoke the braises!



San are mostly protestants in the area, but still believe in a god: !xu. They have a supernatural world, parallel to the real world. Supernatural force: is called n/o. The spirits of the relatives stay in contact with the living people... .Magical energy that can be used by humans for healing for example. san also burn a special plant "n≠hcing≠am" to make the rain fall.



The songs are important in the San culture, as they allow communication with the ancestors. They always take place around a fire.

Animals, love, hunt are the main themes. They have special songs for the rain dances too.

Songs are used by healers during rituals, or just for entertainment.

Women always hand clap to create a counterpoint rhythm.



If you want to tell your love to a San woman, take this little bow and send an little arrow in her... butt! if the girl does not agree, she'll slap you! If she agrees, youll have to ask the permission to marry to the parents or grand parents.



In San culture, a beautiful girl must first be a good gatherer!
Most of the men told that they like a woman smaller than them, rather fat than thin, with big lips, and small eyes!



The San hunter-gatherer culture is in transition, and remains under threats from social prejudice, poverty, dispersal, and also assimilation into other cultures

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