

Tribes in this region obtained food by harvesting salmon, shellfish and whales from the sea. Compared with other Indian cultural groups in Canada, they had elaborate social structures that included a nobility, commoners and slaves. Today, Pacific Coast Indians are known throughout the world for their distinctive and powerful art forms, especially the totem pole.

Mackenzie and Yukon River Basin Indians

The sixth cultural group, the Indians of the Mackenzie and Yukon river basins, had a more difficult way of life than many other tribal groups. Their territory took up more than a quarter of Canada's total land mass, encompassing what we now know as the northern regions of the Prairie provinces and parts of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. There were 12 principal tribes: the Chipewyan, Beaver, Slave, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Hare, Kutchin, Han, Tutchone, Kaska, Mountain and Sekani.

