

ABENAKI GAMES AND TOYS

Abenaki kids in the Woodland period had toys to play with, just like you do. These games were fun, but they also helped kids learn the skills they needed when they were adults. Abenaki children learned how to take care of their families, how to hunt and fish, how to prepare food, and how to survive in the harsh climate. Many of these games are still played today!

The Abenaki played a version of both lacrosse and hockey. They had a different word for hockey, though. They called it shinny. You could move the ball, which was usually a stone or even a block of wood, with a stick or you could kick it, but you couldn't touch it with your hands.



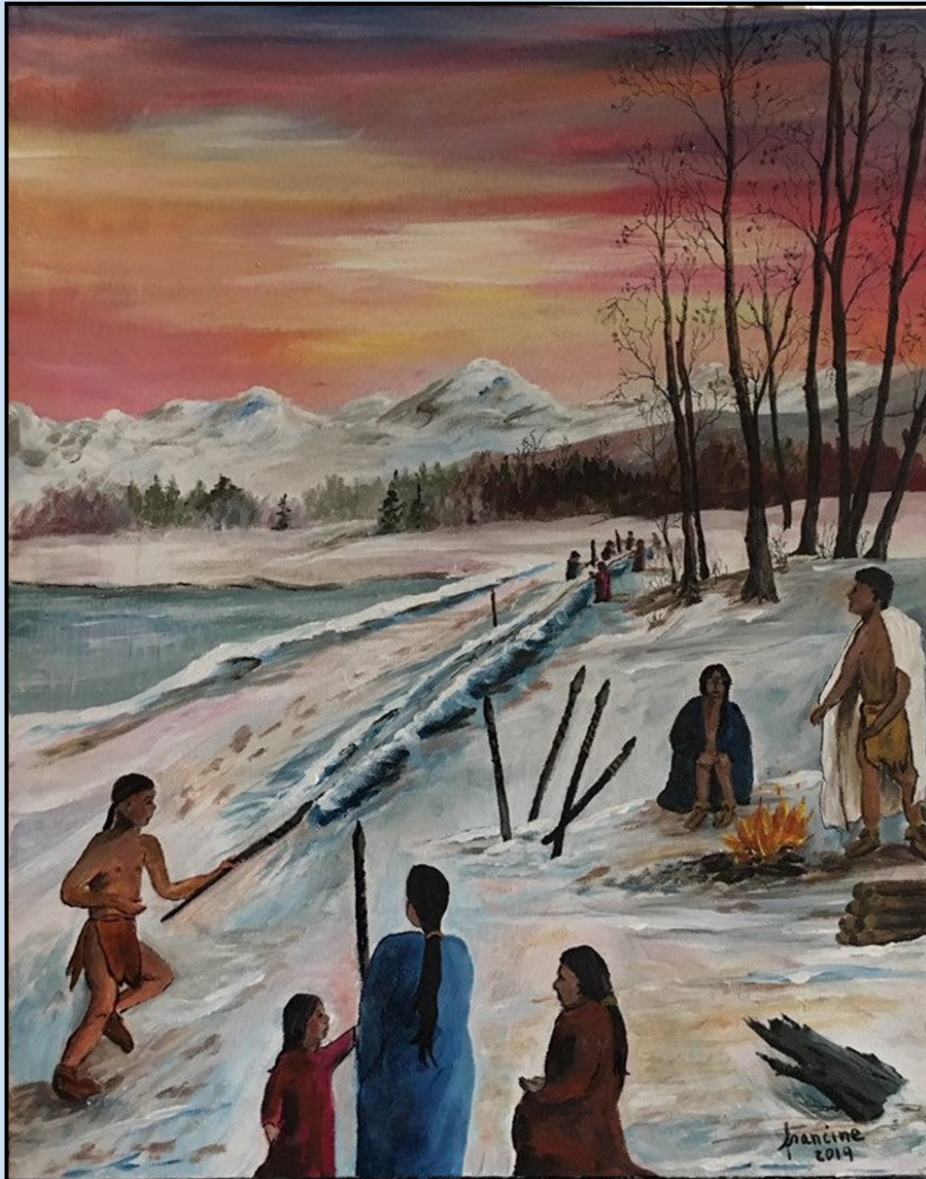
Did you know that the Abenaki have played lacrosse for thousands of years? Sometimes entire villages played in games that lasted several days! Lacrosse sticks were made from real sticks with rawhide nets. No one had lacrosse pads or helmets, of course, so the game could get pretty rough.

All of the Abenaki toys were made from natural resources that they could find around them from plants and animals. Abenaki children had dolls made from corn husks. They played with spinning tops carved from wood, bone, or antler. This traditional toy is a birch bark triangle and ball. The object of the game was to hold one corner of the triangle and try to flip the ball into the hole.





Snow Snake



Imagine it is a cold winter day in your village. You hear someone calling out for a game of snow snake. You grab your snake—which is a carved piece of wood that you have decorated—and meet your friends at a spot where there is a hard, flat crust of snow.

Someone drags a log through the snow to make a path. Each person takes their turn throwing their snake down the path, just like skipping a stone on the water. The person whose snake glides the farthest wins!

Playing snow snake was a good way to practice throwing a spear, which you will need to do when you start hunting for your family.

Abenaki people still play snow snake today. Maybe you can teach your family to play it too!



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