

A GUIDE TO THE MIWOK VILLAGE

KULE LOKLO
A REPLICA OF A
COAST MIWOK INDIAN VILLAGE
AT POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE
MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ENTRANCE

WELCOME TO KULE LOKLO!

Have you ever wondered what life here was like over 200 years ago? How Native Americans kept warm or how they hunted and gathered food? Most of us have questions like these; it seems we are naturally curious about our predecessors.

To help answer these important questions, Kule Loklo, a Coast Miwok village replica, has been built using Native American tools and methods. No Coast Miwoks survive today to tell us about their culture or lives so we must rely on archaeology and a few eye-witness accounts for our information.

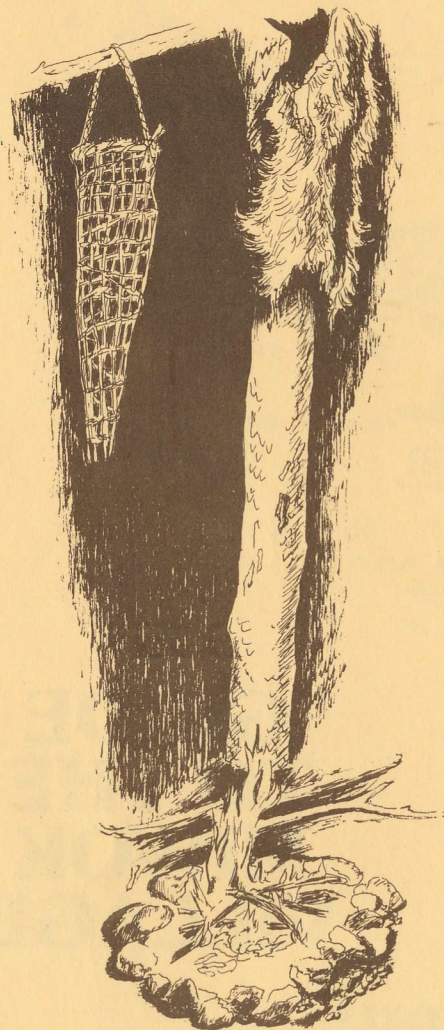
Take a short walk around the village using the cover map and the following descriptions of the structures to orient yourself. Of course, this will not answer all of your questions but it may get you started on your journey into the past.

Before you begin, try visualizing life as it may have been 200 years ago. Use all your senses . . . listen, feel, taste, smell and look very closely as you saunter around the village. Your trip will be even more enjoyable because Kule Loklo has a very special magic.

Have fun!

PLEASE REMEMBER:
THESE STRUCTURES HAVE
BEEN BUILT WITH ABORIG-
INAL TOOLS & METHODS.
THEY ARE FRAGILE. PLEASE
DO NOT CLIMB ON THE
BUILDINGS.

BE GENTLE!

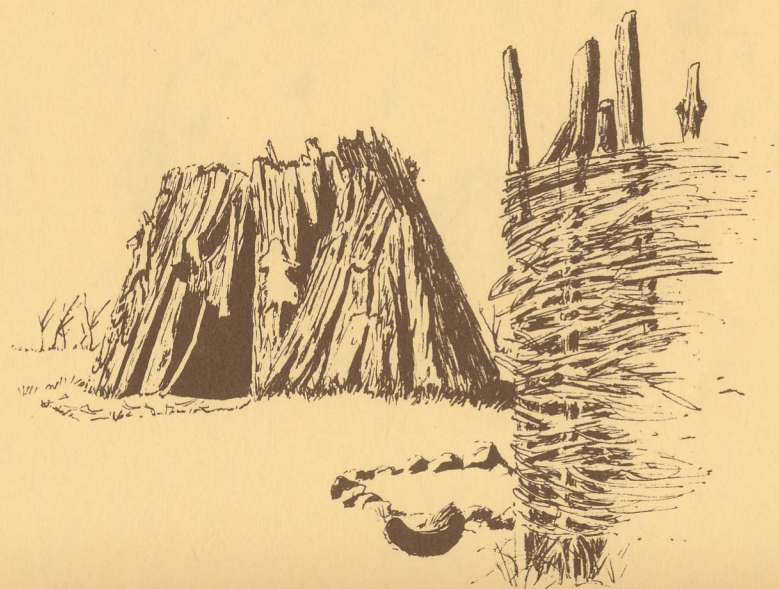


The Coast Miwok words for Bear Valley were Kule Loklo and, while the Miwok might not have put these words together in quite the same way, we have chosen that name for this replicated village. Since the structures here often need to be replaced their location in the village may not coincide with this map, but the following descriptions should help you identify them.

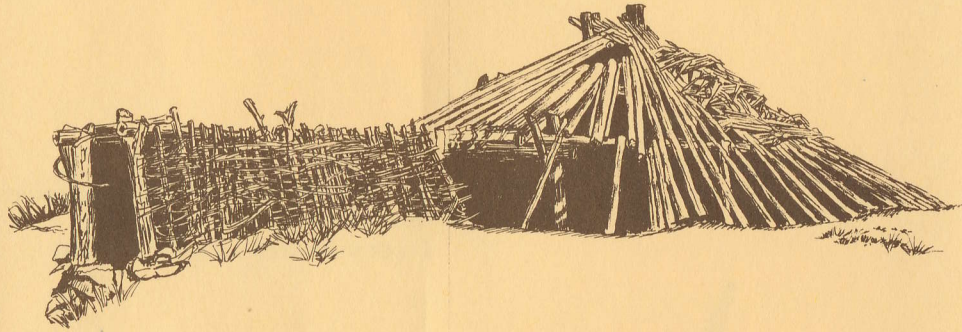
REDWOOD BARK HOUSE The small houses in which a family might sleep and store material goods are called *kotcas* (ko-cha). Kotcas were built from different materials depending upon where they were located. Miwoks living near the ocean in forested areas often used redwood bark. The bark was stripped from the trees with an elk-horn wedge. The strips of bark were then laid upon sturdy poles of Douglas fir which were lashed together with vines. The floor of the kotca was dug out slightly and would be covered with soft woven tule mats and skins. A small central fire warmed the interior where a family of four might sleep. These redwood houses are remarkably watertight and will last several years.

ACORN GRANARY (Redwood Type) Redwood bark was used for food storage bins as well as for dwellings. The large oak trees surrounding Kule Loklo supplied a main food source. Tan oaks grow near the drying racks. Their acorns ripen in the fall at which time they were collected and stored in acorn granaries. Granaries were filled to the top and covered with tule mats and bark. Elevating the granary floor protected the acorns from moisture. An average family might consume 500 pounds of acorns in a year. When built properly, these granaries provided safe storage for acorns for many years.

Step upon the stump and have a look inside!



DANCE HOUSE The semi-subterranean dance house or ceremonial gathering place was the largest and most central structure in a village. Dances, an integral part of village life, were held for both religious and non-religious reasons. Volunteers and school children hand-dug Kule Loklo's dance house with digging sticks and abalone shells, moving the earth with baskets. Upright posts support redwood beams. Look at the frame and the roof covering. Notice that a layer of brush covered with earth and clay completes the roof. Miwok dance houses had two entrances. Dance participants often entered through the rear opening, adding an element of surprise to the ceremony. Dance houses were built to last for several years. To protect this one, a brush barricade surrounds the dance house to discourage people from walking on the roof.



The Dance House, under construction.

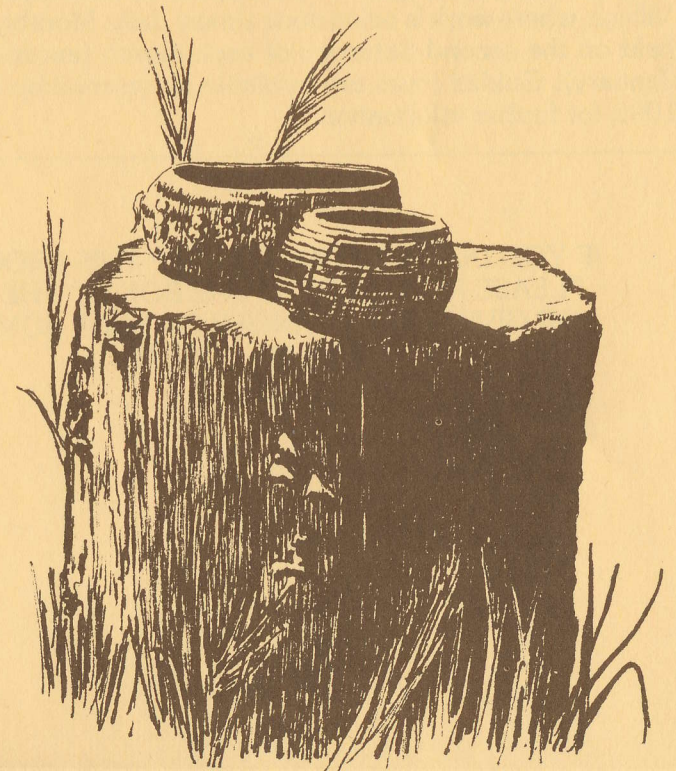
TULE HOUSE In areas like Point Reyes, where redwood was not always available, kotcas were often made from the tule plant. First, a frame was constructed with willow poles. Miwoks stripped the bark and lashed the frame together. Tule (too-lee) was gathered from nearby marshes. To keep out winter rains, the walls were sometimes thatched up to two feet thick. Every spring the Miwoks burned down and rebuilt the tule houses to prevent parasite infestations.

SUN SHADE Brush shades protected the Miwoks from the hot sun while they pursued daily tasks like flint knapping, basket making and grinding of acorns. The flint knapper fashioned tools, like arrowheads and knives, from obsidian (volcanic glass), chert or flint. On most Saturdays a volunteer demonstrates flint knapping techniques. On the ground by one of the sun shades you will find obsidian chips from his work. *Be careful! They're sharp!* Napa and Sonoma counties contain the closest source of obsidian. The Coast Miwok probably traded shells and clam disk beads, common coastal commodities, for the valuable obsidian. Today we still travel far to collect it so *please leave it here* for others to enjoy.

The Miwok, especially adept at basket and net weaving, not only wove practical containers but created beautiful feathered baskets, as well as traps for catching and carrying fish and birds.

ACORN GRANARY A willow-frame structure covered with grasses instead of tule was used for storing acorns. A stump underneath supports the weight of the acorns. A skin on top will keep the water out. A sticky sap applied to the granary legs discouraged rodents and other small animals from getting inside. Herbs like bay leaves were mixed in with the acorns to repel insects.

Please do not make holes in our granaries to see what is inside. They are empty.



LEACHING PIT The sandpit on the ground was used for *leaching*, a method of removing bitter tannic acid from the ground acorn meal. The ground meal was placed on broad leaves laid over the sand. Water poured over the meal percolated down through the leaves and sand, removing the acid. The Miwoks prepared different types of food like bread, soup and mush from the leached acorn meal.

SWEAT HOUSE In almost every village one of the most important structures was a circular sweat house used mainly by the men. Some villages contained women's sweat houses too. The men used it for social gathering and gambling, story-telling, passing on the tribe's oral history, body curing, preparation for a hunt, and as a work center and sauna. Tule or skins covered the entrance and kept heat in, and a seal skin shielded the smoke hole in inclement weather. Our sweat house has been modified for easier access, but you will still need to watch your head!

DRYING RACKS Tule, and certain other plant materials, need to be dried or cured for several days before they can be used. We are not sure how the Coast Miwoks accomplished this, but we constructed drying racks using native plant materials. After about a week of curing, the tule can be more easily used in weaving mats, rope making, and many other uses.

Visitors are encouraged to participate in activities at the Miwok Village, where work is being done almost daily. Monthly workdays are held on the second Saturday of each month (except December & January). Guided tours are available by reservation only. Call 663-1092 for further information.

IF YOU DO NOT PLAN TO KEEP THIS BROCHURE,
PLEASE RETURN IT TO THE BOX BY THE TRAIL
OR GIVE IT TO A RANGER SO THAT SOMEONE
ELSE MAY USE IT.

THANK YOU!

We hope that Kule Loklo has captured your imagination. Perhaps it has also helped you create an image of past life here. To assist you further, Park Service staff and volunteers are usually available to answer any questions.

Kule Loklo has been here since 1976. It is a place that changes with the seasons, growing a little bit each year. New structures are built. New paths are worn. New feelings are created. Countless volunteers of all ages have helped to make this project come alive. You can help too. You are a part of all this, so we hope you will come back and visit us again.

Text by Greg Gnesios & Don Neubacher
Illustrations by Anne Jurika
Cover illustration by Sylvia Thalman

