

# Agriculture



**Captain John Smith  
Chesapeake National  
Historic Trail**



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Over time, people developed better tools to make the work of hunting and foraging for food easier. But the biggest change in how humans got their food was when agriculture, or farming, began. Around 4,000 years ago, people in the Chesapeake began growing squash and gourds. These plants came from South America, and the seeds were traded over entire continents. About 1,000 years ago, tribes started to rely on crops as a large part of their diet. Corn and beans became especially important. Because of this, American Indians began spending most of the year in more permanent towns with larger populations living together. This allowed them to plant seeds, tend to the fields, and harvest crops as a community.