



An American Tour: 14



Florida's *Miccosukee Indian Village*

Just 30 minutes west of Miami in Dade County, you can experience how the Miccosukee Indian Tribe existed and still exists in the “Heart of the Everglades”.

The Miccosukee Indians were originally part of the Creek Nation, which was an association of clan villages that inhabited the areas now known as Alabama and Georgia. The arrival of the Europeans in the 1500's placed the Creek people at the center of a three-way struggle for colonial supremacy on the Southern frontier. The Miccosukees, who were already familiar with the Florida peninsula through hunting and fishing expeditions, and in an effort to escape both encroaching whites and their upper Creek brothers, were among the first to settle in Florida sometime after 1715.

Complex Miccosukee town life soon evolved in the permanent settlements that they established in the Apalachee Bay Region and along the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers. Families built and occupied solid dwellings, engaged in skilled handicrafts and participated in a sophisticated social life. To survive in their new environment, the Miccosukee had to adapt to living in small groups in temporary “hammock” style camps spread throughout the Everglades' vast river of grass. Fishing and hunting continued to provide the main staples of their diet; however, the Miccosukee had to learn to harvest the native fruits of the hammocks, along with the coontie and cabbage palms of higher ground. Corn, which played an important role in tribal customs became very difficult to grow.

The Miccosukee Indian Village is an authentic family camp with sleeping and working chickees surrounding the cooking chickee, with its symbolic star-shaped ceremonial fire. The Village existed long before the Tamiami Trail was built. The Tribe purchased this property from its owner in the 1970's and added a museum, boardwalk and alligator arena. For the Miccosukee, the camps traditionally belong to the clan matriarch. Miccosukee clan membership derives from the mother's side of the family. [In 1994, there were 369 enrolled Miccosukee tribal members]

And, just 15 minutes west of Miami, Miccosukee Resort & Gaming is located along the southeastern edge of the beautiful Florida Everglades. Guests are provided with luxurious hotel, convention and special event accommodations; five dining options, from the signature steakhouse featuring exotic specialties, to the acclaimed International Buffet; daily live entertainment, dancing, and big name shows and sports events; all the amenities, recreation, and conveniences you can imagine; and 24-hour-a-day gaming action with monthly jackpots in excess of \$22,000,000.

[<http://www.miccosukeeresort.com>]

