



## Do ách'i t'íí

The Jicarilla Apache has lived and survived as a part of nature since time immemorial. The European influence has affected many values and ways of living life that have diminished the Jicarilla Apache's efforts to maintain their unique identity. The information provided here is from the accounts of elders and other tribal members who remember what was passed to them by their parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts. The Jicarilla Apache people believe in the interconnection of all things and that one must live in balance with the natural environment. Therefore, certain rules and guidelines are set forth that point an Apache to the route of harmonious existence. The people of the Jicarilla Apache consider the following guidelines important when visiting friends, on an outing on the reservation, or attending one of the very important ceremonies. It is important to note that the English translation is sometimes inadequate to communicate the full meaning of these distinctions.

*When visiting an Apache, one must:*

- ✓ Have patience and be open to listening and learning.
- ✓ Not honk, but knock on the door (unless mean dogs are present), and never refuse food when offered or ask for anything else that has not been offered. If food is refused, the host(ess) will think you do not like them.
- ✓ Take one's hat off when eating and do not place it on the table.
- ✓ Avoid standing when an elder is present. Always sit even if it's on the floor/ground.
- ✓ Avoid looking straight into the eyes of an Apache or staring.
- ✓ Stay until a story that's being told is finished. Avoid standing.
- ✓ Keep silent when someone is telling a story. Keep away from asking questions.

*When one is being visited by an Apache, one must:*

- ✓ Go outside to meet your visitors if they honk. Get after your dogs if they are barking.
- ✓ If possible, provide a space for your visitors to park by parking your own vehicle to the side.
- ✓ Offer assistance to elders who may need help walking, sitting, etc.
- ✓ Welcome your visitors by telling them to come in, sit down, there's plenty of room.
- ✓ Offer food and drinks.

- ✓ Refrain from sweeping. It is a sign that you want your visitors to leave.

*When one (non-Jicarilla Apache) is traveling and sight-seeing on the Reservation*

- ✓ Do not litter. What you bring in, you take out.
- ✓ Stay on main roads: J-roads and State Highways.
- ✓ Ask permission to take photos of individuals.
- ✓ Refrain from removing potsherds, feathers, arrowheads, stone tools, unusual rock formations, or other unique features that contribute to the beautiful landscape.
- ✓ Do not harvest plants, berries, piñons, and other plants. The Tribe imposes a monetary fine if one is found on the reservation without a permit.
- ✓ Hiking and mountain biking require a permit from the Game and Fish.
- ✓ Check with the Jicarilla Game and Fish for other rules that may apply.

*When living a life of a Jicarilla Apache, one must consider the following:*

- ✓ Refrain from closing curtains in your house during the day. Let the sun shine in or the evil will move into your home.
- ✓ Wear colorful clothes to show the world that you are a happy person.
- ✓ Cover mirrors in your house when lightning is really bad. Do not stand outside when lightning is present or eat food. Cover food until it's over. This is what causes cancer.
- ✓ Be kind to animals. A dog most of all which was made long ago to look out for our people and protect us.
- ✓ A horse was made for us too: taking the stars for eyes, clouds for the stomach, ice for feet, arrowhead for under the hoof, rain for mane and tail, and the wind for breath. There is a song for the horse.
- ✓ Do not cut your hair at night or your fingernails. Do not throw it just anywhere or the evil birds (crows and buzzards) might pick it up.
- ✓ Do not sit under a tree that has been struck by lightning or touch the wood.
- ✓ Keep away from using the Lightning struck wood for firewood. Have respect that it has already been burnt.
- ✓ It is taboo to burn your clothes while you are still alive.
- ✓ Do not run your horse when it is lightning or do not run.
- ✓ If you must ride your horse or walk in the rain, there is a weed that you stick on yourself. It is sticky.
- ✓ Avoid walking in a snake's path.
- ✓ Avoid stepping in bear tracks or imitating the bear. It will make your feet wide, make you sick, and can make you fat.
- ✓ Do not go counterclockwise in anything you do out of respect for being alive. Being in balance requires going clockwise in all you do.

- ✓ Apaches object to anyone going to the moon or to the heavens. All the sicknesses were sent to the moon and man may bring it back.
- ✓ Avoid throwing animal parts around your home or outside such as bones, hides, heads, or antlers. You will create your own bad luck.
- ✓ Do not say a person's name after they die, instead refer to him/her as that person who belonged to that family. To say a person's name constantly can bring loneliness and depression and it may cause that person to follow the deceased.
- ✓ Avoid having a coiled rope laying around. It attracts snakes. It may also cause umbilical cords to wrap around a fetus.
- ✓ A pregnant woman should not look at the moon, it will cause blotches. Use the baby's first feces to remove it.
- ✓ Refrain from looking at your reflection when your face is painted.
- ✓ Do not play sick. It may come true.
- ✓ Do not eat with knives, meaning putting it in your mouth.
- ✓ Avoid looking at a moon eclipse. It will hurt your eyes and make you sick.
- ✓ When at your home (shelter), avoid making flint arrowheads or leaving flint tools about. It attracts lightning.
- ✓ Avoid lying on your back with your hands or arms crossed. It attracts ghosts that may sit on your chest.
- ✓ Do not be in a hurry, for your own safety. Some Apaches will say you are rushing to go down under.
- ✓ Wearing your hair loose (except at keesda) is a sign of losing a spouse.
- ✓ Stay away from a whirlwind because it will twist your body inside. It can cause dizziness or twist your face commonly known as Bell's Palsy.
- ✓ Do not call your spouses' name. Your ears will dry up.
- ✓ Stay away from bringing antlers into the home because the male in the house will take on the behavior of the buck deer or bull elk and hunt for more mates.
- ✓ In a sacred place, say positive things about yourself and others. Negative words will come true.
- ✓ Wasting food or playing with it will affect your having any food at home.
- ✓ Avoid sleeping with your head to the east like the dead, it can cause nightmares and restless sleep.
- ✓ Do not play with fire or you will pee in your bed.
- ✓ Honor your words because words are powerful and they may come back on you if you do not do what you say.
- ✓ Avoid pointing at stars with fingers, point with your thumb or you will get warts.
- ✓ Share your last piece of bread with children and not alone so you will always have plenty.
- ✓ Do not walk or run in circles around people, homes, or teepees or you will invite the whirlwind or get dizziness.
- ✓ Avoid sleeping in the evening because a dark shadow will enter the home.
- ✓ Whistling at night will cause a ghost to whistle back.

- ✓ Avoid dancing like a whirlwind in circles or you will invite whirlwinds.
- ✓ Apaches respect and honor the land (Mother Earth). Be respectful of animal life, plant life, and water by not destroying it with trash, graffiti, and four-wheelers.
- ✓ Do not continue to cry for your loved ones after death. If you love them enough you will let them go. They are in a place that is happy and free of sickness.

## **CHILDREN**

CHILDREN ARE SACRED AND ARE THE FULFILLMENT OF APACHES EXISTENCE ON THE EARTH. It is said by elders, that children that have proper upbringing will listen to their elders. When a child proves himself/herself as having this proper upbringing a teacher or mentor will appear and provide all the information answering the question, "Why?" A person who can answer this question is considered a person of wisdom and knowledge. This person is considered a true Apache.

- ✓ When a child is born, an older relative will bless that child by praying for good health and long life. At this time, an appropriate name will be given.
- ✓ ADULTS MUST NOT push a child away! A child may think he/she is not wanted and the Creator will take the child back. If one accidentally pushes a child, give him/her a hug immediately.
- ✓ Children are not allowed to put a basket or bowl on their heads because it is believed that this will stunt their growth.
- ✓ ONE MUST NOT part their hair or a child's hair like the sign of lightning because you are calling the lightning.
- ✓ ONE MUST NOT tattoo your skin, only the snake has markings on their skin. Markings can cause negative consequences on you or your body.
- ✓ At the first thunder of the season, a child may be stretched to encourage growth, or he/she may be stretched by the medicine man at a keesda.
- ✓ Bears or bear hides are not to be handled by children. If this happens, check with the Bear Dance Group or elder.
- ✓ Children are not to go outside wearing red on days when it is lightning. It is said that red attracts lightning. Avoid running or standing under trees at these times. Abalone shells or turtle shells deter lightning.
- ✓ When it is lightning, spit four times to it and tell it to stay up high. It can scare children and later make them sick.
- ✓ Snakes are not to be touched nor the snake skins and are to be avoided. It causes illness inside and outside by affecting your mind negatively.
- ✓ Eagle feathers are not to be touched unless they are properly cleansed by a medicine person. Feathers are cleaned with no sinew on it and aired out or smudged.
- ✓ Owl or owl feathers are not to be handled. It is bad luck.

- ✓ Avoid the shadow of the buzzard. It can make you sick.
- ✓ Coyote or coyote skins are not to be handled. Coyotes are thought to represent bad luck and make one crazy.
- ✓ Avoid building shelters, that are big enough to crawl into, inside a home. It is said that this will cause health problems.
- ✓ Avoid whirlwinds. If an item is picked up by a whirlwind, sprinkle it four times with water before you pick it up. If a medicine man/woman is around, ask him/her.
- ✓ Children are to be taught patience. Patience is a value that is highly valued. The ability to wait is looked upon with great admiration.
- ✓ Apaches are a giving people. Sharing and giving is a sign of achievement and generosity. Ceremonies use "Give-aways." Go-jii-ya and Keedas use this concept.
- ✓ Children are to be taught respect for elders. Experience is felt to bring knowledge. Gray hair or other signs of age are highly valued.

### **GO-JII-YA (September 14 & 15)**

Go-jii-ya is the tribal harvest festival where special focus is placed on the participation of young men. It is rooted in the story of the Jicarilla where there was a race of all the animals and birds around the world. Today, there is a relay race that takes place at Stone Lake between the Llanero (Red Clan/Flat Landers) and the Ollero (White Clan/Mountain Valley People).

- ✓ The Llanero women and small children are not allowed in the Kiva or on the race track after it has been blessed on the 14th, because it is said by the Red Clan that they affect the strength of the runners. The Ollero believe that they give strength to the men by dancing and entering the kiva. The Ollero women dance on the race track before the race. Llanero women dance only when the race is over.
- ✓ People who are not participating in the race are not to cross the race track after it has been blessed on the 14th.
- ✓ The losing clan gives fruit and vegetables after the race is completed.
- ✓ One does not throw the fruit and vegetables but gives them in an appropriate manner.
- ✓ The spectators should give their support by yelling only. Clapping is not an Apache way to encourage runners.
- ✓ Jicarilla women take care of their camps and feed anyone who comes to their camps. Giving and sharing are traditional values that are highly regarded. Givers are blessed with more in return. It is a sign of generosity.
- ✓ The Jicarilla people are a matrilineal tribe. This means that one follows his/her mother's side when it comes to Apache ways including clan.

- ✓ Women and young children are not allowed to attend the tryouts.
- ✓ Photos and recording devices are NOT PERMITTED. Only tribal members can take photos for their own personal use.
- ✓ The Bailoomas or Clan Leaders say what is permitted or not permitted at the Go-jii-ya. Political Leaders are expected to honor the words of the Clan Leaders.

## **KEESDA COMING OUT FEAST**

Keesdas are put on by the families of a young girl who has begun her menses. A young man is requested to aid in the keesda by dancing with the young girl for four nights. There is more to the significance of the young man's participation. These puberty ceremonies are undertaken to provide a long and good life for the young pair.

- ✓ The tipi is a sacred place. The young and old should behave accordingly. People should show respect by looking, listening, and learning.
- ✓ Families should eat out of one bowl to strengthen family ties. The language is passed on to the children this way.
- ✓ Families should bless their food by offering a portion to Mother Earth and praying for the young maiden and brave.
- ✓ A widow/widower should stay out of the tipi in respect for the family unless he/she has been properly returned to their family, and to the tipi by a medicine man.
- ✓ It is disrespectful to run in and out of the tipi when the medicine man is singing, praying or telling stories.
- ✓ It is disrespectful to run around the tipi. It is like running in a circle and calling the whirlwind.
- ✓ Do not flash your flashlight or headlights on the tipi. It may call lightning.
- ✓ Parents and extended families must show respect by keeping their children in line and teaching them proper behavior.
- ✓ One must not go just to eat, but also to pray and dance in the tipi for the maiden and the brave and give thanks for the food.
- ✓ One must be thankful for whatever they are given to eat and not ask for more or for anything else.
- ✓ Out of respect and gratitude, one is expected to dance in the tipi during the night.
- ✓ Non-Indians may go to a keesda when invited or accompanied by an Apache.
- ✓ The morning after the last night of praying, the family paint their faces for protection and as a blessing. It is proper to wash your face only after mid-morning and before late afternoon. Children must be taught not to make fun when they see this, but to be proud.
- ✓ In the old days, families bring their own eating utensils, bowls, etc., and eat off the ground or on their vehicles.

- ✓ Do not use cell phones, tablets, video games, or other electronic devices at a keesda or ceremonies.
- ✓ Many elders say that the midnight "give-away" during the fourth night of the keesda is improper. Give-away means boxes of candy, chips, fruit, crackers, etc.
- ✓ Photos or recording devices are NOT PERMITTED.

## **BEAR DANCE**

The Bear Dance is very sacred and can only be sustained through strict adherence to Apache customs. Only members of the Tribe including non-Indians married into the Tribe are permitted to attend a Bear Dance. Non-Indian attendance is not preferable. The people respectfully request that they refrain from doing so.

## **DEATH OF APACHES**

Historical accounts of how Apaches took care of their dead were based on the circumstances of the time. The dead were placed in areas such as crevices in the hills or mountains and buried the next morning at sunrise. Only the old were allowed to dress and handle their loved ones.

Children are not permitted to attend a funeral because they are tender of spirit, body, heart, and mind. They are not strong enough to handle the grief of their families and may dream about what they see.

Historic documents relate how the influence of the churches has caused changes in handling the death of loved ones. Most families will adhere to a four-day rule of a burial taking place within this timeline. Embalming and steel caskets are encouraged to preserve the body.

Most families also will conduct a face painting ceremony and as in a keesda, one doesn't wash his/her face until mid-afternoon and before late afternoon. During these times, respect for the family's privacy is expected.

## **CLOSING**

The etiquettes and taboos shared in this brochure are meant to familiarize non-natives with Apache ways while visiting with elders or attending Jicarilla Apache gatherings. The information is not intended to delineate all taboos or etiquettes of the Jicarilla Apache. The Jicarilla Apache Cultural Advisory Committee

is aware that many Apaches have accepted modern ideas that may be contrary to the old beliefs. The request was simply to recognize those who continue to carry and believe in the traditional ways of the Jicarilla Apache culture. These individuals have made significant efforts to preserve their cultural practices and protect their tribal sovereignty, especially in light of recent attempts to dissolve agreements with the US government. It is important not to overlook their contributions.

In the words of a former Jicarilla Apache Cultural Advisory Committee President, respected Tribal Councilman, and Llanero Bailooma Calvin T. Veneno:

*" . . we at this time want to preserve what we got left for our young people. It is almost forgotten, our grandpa's knowledge, their wisdom, their songs and words. Our elders, our ancestors, received these gifts from the Creator, and from Mother Earth. . . Our Grandpa's have told us, to never give up, keep our culture, keep practicing our old ways . . . Again it is for our people that we are seeking to preserve our precious way of life, because that is what is helping us keep our Jicarilla tribe strong and stand united as a tribe. We need to understand and respect each other, as long as we have Jicarilla blood in us."*

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