



Seashore Supermarket

Seashore: Food, Tools and Money

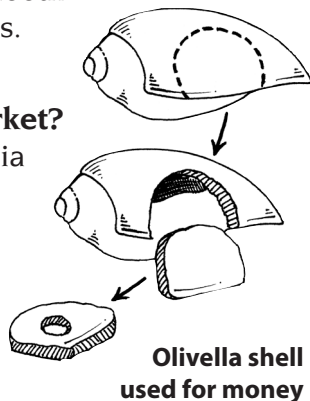
Imagine life where most of your needs came from the sea or could be bought or traded with seashells crafted into money.

The ocean provided diverse resources for native coastal people in early California. Seals and sea lions provided meat for food, skins for blankets and bones for tools. Whales provided food when they washed ashore, and their large rib bones were used for building and tools.

Abalone shells turned into beautiful pearlized ornaments, served as dishware and were inlaid in asphaltum on walnut shell gaming pieces and on canoes. Abalone meat was pounded and prepared much as it is today. Clams provided food, and their shells made excellent scrapers for woodworking, basket-making and hide-tanning. Clam shell pieces were perforated, strung, and ground down into clam-shell disk beads. Fish were a staple food, and sharkskin was used like sandpaper to smooth woodworking projects.

Who Used the Seashore Supermarket?

Many Native California groups made use of the ocean, but some depended on it. The Chumash, the Ohlone, and the Tolowa all excelled



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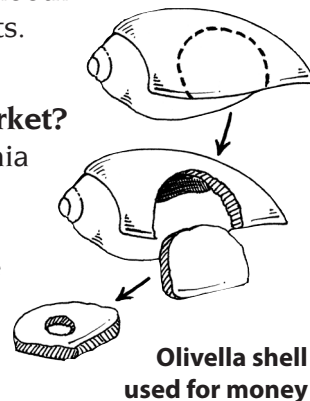
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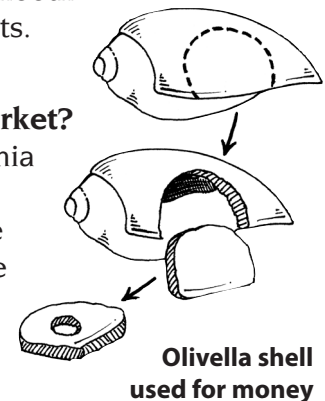
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Who Used the Seashore Supermarket?

Many Native California groups made use of the ocean, but some depended on it. The Chumash, the Ohlone, and the Tolowa all excelled



at harvesting their resources from the sea.

The Chumash, an ocean-going people, built wooden and asphalt boats called *tomols*, crafted abalone shells and bones into fishhooks, and used shell disk beads made from olivella sea snails as money.

The Ohlone used marine, bay and estuary resources. They made tule reed boats and manufactured shell beads from olivella and clamshells. The beads were then traded with inland groups for obsidian and other supplies.

The Tolowa of the north coast dug out redwood canoes for river and ocean use. They used dentalium mollusk shells for money, measuring out the shell strings using tattoos on their arms.

What's In a Shell Midden?

A shell midden is a site where natives harvested seafood and left the shells in huge mounds. Archeological sites like shell middens are protected by law.

How Can You Help?

- All collecting or digging is prohibited.
- Leave sites undisturbed so that others can discover and enjoy them.
- Please report any digging or collecting to park staff.
- Visit any of the coastal California state parks to learn more.



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