

The spanish encounter the native americans

[History](#)



07 September The Spanish Encounter the Native Americans The Spanish encounter of Native Americans was probably one of the most significant events in the history of humanity. The history presents very interesting facts about how Spanish appeared in America. Primary sources provide abundant information about the encounter and its details. However, no two historical encounters are the same, and the differences between the Native Americans encountered by Columbus and those encountered by Cortes in Meso-America cannot be overstated. They meet different people with different level of development. More civilized and developed, Native Americans encountered by Cortes in Meso-America exemplified the next, more advanced stage of evolution, compared to their counterparts living in the Caribbean. The issue is worth-discussing as these differences among Native American peoples imply the need to study their development and evolution in more detail.

What Columbus saw upon his arrival at the Caribbean was rather simple and unsophisticated. Friendly people who, as Columbus and the Admiral perceived, could be easily converted into Christianity, met them on the island (Columbus). They had nothing against adopting new values and religion. They were completely naked and looked very poor (Columbus). They had no weapons and did not seem to be aware of their existence (Columbus). Without iron, their javelins were merely sticks, with a few wearing fish-bones at the ends (Columbus). Obviously, architecture and buildings they had none. Later, when Columbus sailed to explore other islands, he discovered remarkable villages, with houses made like tents with high chimneys (Columbus). All villages were small, comprising not more than fifteen tents (Columbus). Columbus's diaries do not provide any information <https://assignbuster.com/the-spanish-enconter-the-native-americans/>

regarding their religion; most probably, they had none. However, throughout his writing, Columbus mentions the need and importance of converting the Natives into Christian faith.

By contrast, the Native Americans encountered by Cortes in Meso-America exemplified a more civilized, advanced stage of human evolution. More sophisticated and technically developed, Native Americans in Meso-America had a complex social hierarchy (Cortes). Cortes described the place where Native Americans lived as “ great city”. Cities were built following complex architectural patterns and traditions (Cortes). For example, the great city had four entrances formed by artificial causeways (Cortes). Streets were straight and wide (Cortes). Unlike Native Americans living in the Caribbean, the Native Americans in Meso-America had their religion and weapons. Cortes describes temples and the clergy living in them. Moreover, Cortes’s encounter with the native people was not as friendly as the one between Columbus and Native Americans. Whether or not social advancement makes the use of weapons and military conflicts among peoples more probable is difficult to define. However, it is clear that hostility between natives and newcomers was partially a product of their social status, which gave them power and decisiveness to protect their land.

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