

# [Samoan culture](https://assignbuster.com/samoan-culture/)

[Art & Culture](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/art-n-culture/)

Keenan Schwalger Mrs. Kay Berry English 1010 10/19/10 Samoancultureplays a large part in the lives of those with Samoan heritage. Samoan culture is kept strong in a Samoan house hold by keeping the culture alive. This is done by keepingfamilyunity, the art of traditional tattooing, and eating traditional foods and cooking traditional ways. Family life in Samoan culture is huge. They value family very much. It is one of the most important parts of their life. They mostly live with their extended family all in one house in Samoa, or very near them here in the US.

Traditionally the Grandmother and Grandfather will live with one their children and sometimes if needed, so will a couple of the Aunts and Uncles. The idea of sending a parent or grandparent to live innursinghome is unheard of in Samoan, and most other Polynesian cultures. It is expected that they will take care of their family. Clarence Schwalger, a Samoan living in Saint George Utah says that “ the entire Samoan culture is based around the family”. It is not unusual to see a large Samoan family living in one house. Most Polynesians, including Samoans have very large families, with more than 5 children up to 10 or more.

Family is so important that when they have a family reunion the entire family will fly from even New Zealand just to be with the family for a week. It doesn’t matter if they go into debt to go. It is that important to them. Some families can have a family reunion every 2 to 3 years. Any special occasions in the family can be an excuse to get together. Baptism, blessings, weddings, and funerals are all important occasions that bring extended families together. Being together as an extended family is what Samoans love best. The tattoo is a very important, symbolic and, respected part of the culture.

It is known as the turning from a boy to a man. The Samoan tattoo is called the Pe’a, and starts on the lower back and run all the way down to the lower thigh. Many of the designs represent animals and have many meanings. “ The triangles on the back resemble the Samoan flying fox. The flying fox is actually a bat, and when it looks forfood, it circles in flight. Samoans believe the circular flying represents the cycles of life. ” (Channell, 18). In Samoa these tattoos are given to the chief of the family and he is the one who is fully tattooed.

The tattooing is a very painful process and is done by taking pieces of sharpen bone and ink and taping the tattoo in with a mallet. The tattoo designs are beautiful designs consisting of many geometric shapes put together in a way they flows. The tattoo is much respected. Once started, it must be completed or it will bring shame upon the young man, and his family. After it is completed, the young mans gains new status among his people. With the receiving of his tattoo, he has now taken on the responsibly of being a man, and also to be an example and leader of his family. In Samoa, eating is a large part of the traditional culture.

Almost all Polynesians eat in family groups and often invite others to join in their large meals. They almost always cook more than is needed just in case someone drops in for dinner. A Sunday feast called to'ono'i is prepared in a large cooking pots big enough to feed almost an army. In Samoa, traditional meals are cooked in an umu, which is an in ground cooking pit. Food is cleaned, and traditionally wrapped in banana leaves and put on the tops of rocks that have been heated. The food is then covered by more leaves, and the entire oven steams together for several hours.

Hot rocks cook amazingly well, and are even used to cook meats as large as a pig. This type of cooking is veryhard work, and is so tradition calls that the men do all the cooking. There is an old saying that goes something like “ most people eat until they are full, but Samoans eat until they are tired. ” This is evident by the largeness of the people. Samoans love to eat. The main diet in Samoa consists of chicken, fish and local fruits and vegetables. This is slowly starting to change however, with the introduction offast foodrestaurants such as McDonalds.