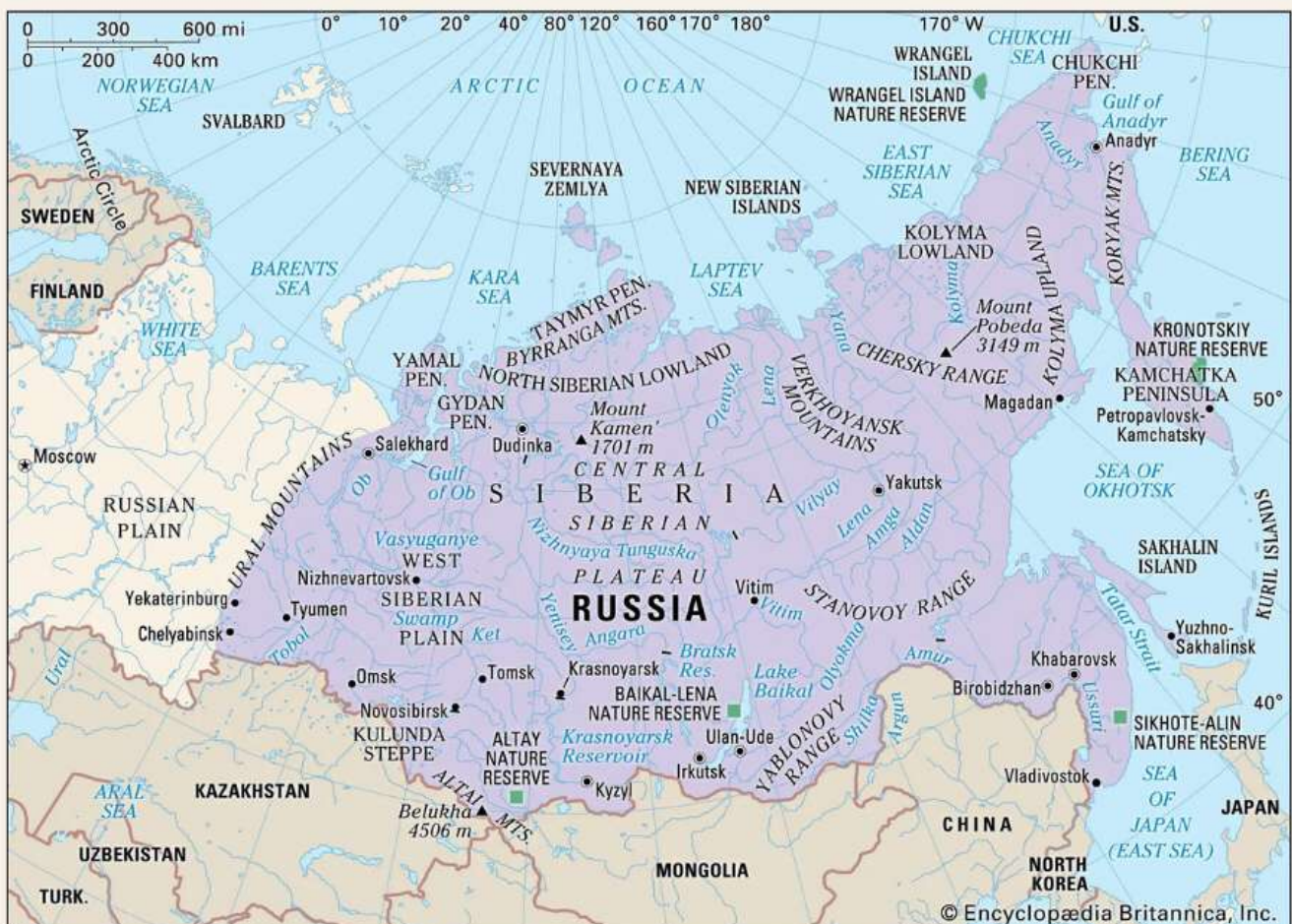


Intro to the Indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Russian Far East



Geography

Siberia is an extensive region that stretches from the Ural mountains to Pacific Ocean. It comprises ~77% of Russia' territory. Siberia covers most of North Asia.



History

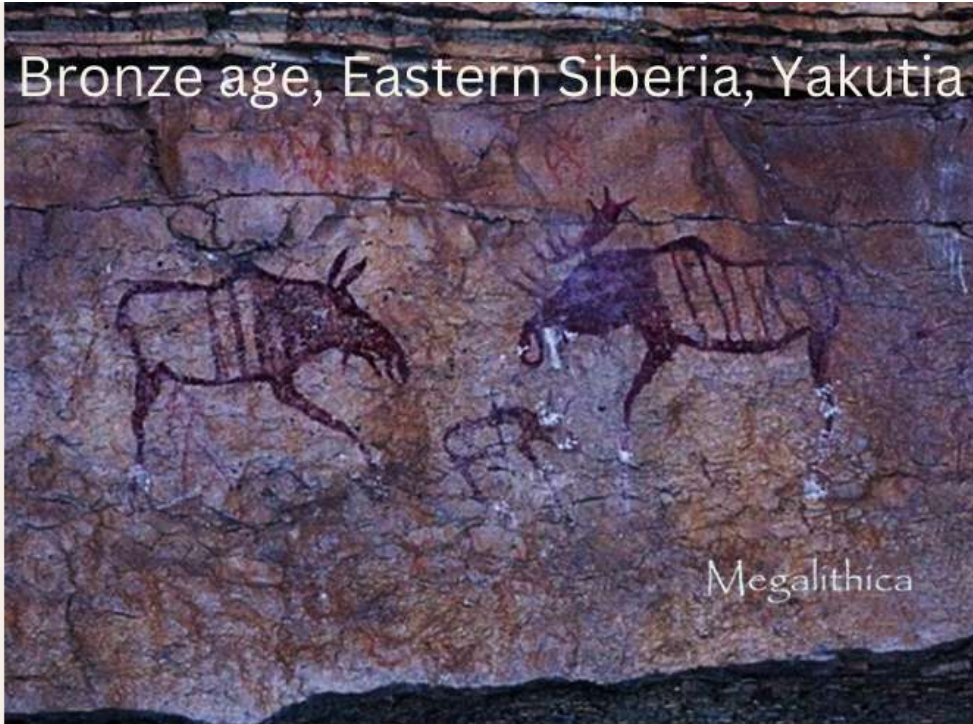
Siberia was first populated by humans in the Late Paleolithic. The cultures of western and southern Siberia were pastoralists, while the eastern taiga and the tundra were dominated by hunter-gatherers until the Late Middle Ages.

Siberia and the Russian Far East has been home to a great number of various civilizations: Scythians, the Sibir khaganate, Xiongnu, Bohai and more. In the 16th century, the Russian empire started its expansion to the east.



Pazyryk culture,
Southern
Siberia

Bronze age, Eastern Siberia, Yakutia



Kulay culture, Western Siberia



Ethnic Diversity

- Indigenous people of Siberia and the Russian Far East constitute less than 5% of the total population of Russia.
- Ethnic groups by language family: Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Uralic, Chukotko-Kamchatkan, Nivkh, Yukaghir, Ainu, Escaletic.



Dolgan girl,
Yakutia

Beliefs

Shamanism, Animism, Tengrism, Totemism,
Buddhism, Islam, Christianity

Most indigenous Siberian cultures retain a traditional nature-based belief system recognizing an innate spirit in all things.

The word “shaman” is derived from the Evenki language. Shaman have traditionally been called upon to heal the sick, solve problems, protect groups from hostile spirits, make predictions and mediate between realms and guide dead souls to the afterlife.



Way of life



Altaians, horse breeding



Nenets, reindeer herding

Russian colonization

In 1581, cossacks with Ataman Ermak attacked the Sibir Khaganate, after which the local tribes subjugated to Ermak. Further Russian expeditions built forts and cities in different parts of Siberia, from which Russians ruled over the new land. The conflicts between Russians and Indigenous groups ranged from smaller skirmishes to fierce wars (ex. Chukchi-Russian war). Russian colonizers imposed tribute called "Yasak" on Native Siberians.

Moreover, Russians raped native women, slaughtered men for not paying enough "Yasak" and brought various diseases. In the late 17th century, smallpox epidemics reduced the total indigenous population of Siberia by nearly 50%. The Russian empire tried to assimilate Siberians by forcible Christianization and Russification.

Although the Soviet Union brought significant social and economic progress to Siberians, every nomadic community was obliged to adopt a sedentary way of life, while their children were forcefully separated from their families and placed in boarding schools.

At the same time, authorities introduced control over traditional hunting and fishing, and confiscated land for infrastructure and industrial developments. Due to the atheistic ideology of Soviets, many indigenous spiritual leaders were arrested and perished in prisons and labour camps.



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