



jiimaan (canoe)

Birchbark canoes are one of the most recognizable symbols of Native American and First Nation cultures. All of the raw materials (birch bark, cedar and spruce root, plus spruce pitch, bear grease, soot mixed together to seal the seams) come from the Boreal Forest in the northern part of the continent.

Traditional canoe building knowledge passed orally and by demonstration from generation to generation to create canoes that were durable, functional, and elegant. To produce quality canoes efficiently, labor was divided – men made the wooden parts and assembled them, women lashed and gummed the seams. Jiimaanan can be different shapes according to their function. Ricing canoes, for example, are flatter to navigate shallower water and are propelled with poles to protect the fragile plants. Anishinaabe/Ojibwe crafted birchbark jiimaanan (canoes) for the fur trade. A North Canoe was equal to about 25 beaver hides worth of trade goods.



