

Visitor's Pow Wow Etiquette

Remember that you are a guest at the Pow Wow. You are observing ancient ceremonies and traditions that have survived every possible adversity. Below are items you need to know for proper behavior. All rules listed are important, but the first rule below is the most important.

Please listen to the Master of Ceremonies

No alcohol, drugs or firearms are allowed on Pow Wow grounds under any circumstance.

Stand and remove your hat during Grand Entry, Flag Song, Invocation and during Memorial Songs, Veteran's Songs and Closing Songs.

The area for dancing and ceremonies is called the arena. The arena boundary consists of a circle designated by poles and tape. The arena is off limits to all, unless invited.

Please do not walk across the arena once it has been blessed for dancing.

There are times when the emcee (Master of Ceremonies) will instruct you not to film or photograph. Please be respectful and honor this instruction. Also, if you see a dancer who is especially striking, ask if you may take a picture after they have left the arena. It is customary to honor a dancer's regalia whose photo you have taken with a small gift or donation. Please note: Should an Eagle feather fall to the ground absolutely no videotaping or photography is allowed during the recovery ceremony.

Please do not touch anyone's dance regalia without their permission. A dancer's clothing is regalia, never a costume, and is a prized possession. Some regalia are handmade. Every article has special meaning. The final version of the regalia may have taken years to complete at no small expense. The regalia is an expression of spirit, and has been prayed over and blessed. Honor it, the person wearing it, and the living history it represents.

Native Americans come in all sizes, shapes and colors. From the milky skinned, blue-eyed blond, to the green-eyed redhead, to the dark brown and black – they are all Native in their heritage, blood and heart. Do not be so rude as to ask someone if they are an 'Indian' or 'How much Indian are you anyway?'

Look, listen, learn and enjoy.

All audiotape recording must be done with permission of the emcee and/or the head singer of each drum.

If you are not wearing traditional regalia, you may dance on social songs, i.e., Two Step, Blanket, Intertribal Songs, Round, etc. If you are asked to dance by an elder, do so. It is rude and disrespectful to say "I don't know how." How can you learn, if you turn down the elders? The Pow Wow is all about honoring the circle, not letting others do the honoring for you. Some may feel self-conscious about getting the moves right, but no one has ever been ridiculed for attempting to dance.

If you have questions, please wait for an appropriate time to ask them. During breaks or when you see a member of the Pow Wow committee is circulating are the best times to ask.

Have fun! Buy something from the vendors. Donate if you can. The whole universe comes together at a Pow Wow. It is a day to celebrate and give thanks to the Creator. You are invited to join in!