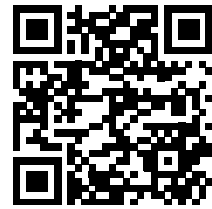


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# The Early Settlers of Aotearoa



The Polynesians, ancestors of the Maori people, began settling in \_\_\_\_\_ around the late 13th century. These skilled navigators and explorers traveled vast distances across the \_\_\_\_\_ Ocean in canoes. Using the stars, ocean currents, and bird flight patterns for navigation, they embarked on one of the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ journeys of human history. Upon arriving, they found a land with dense forests, abundant \_\_\_\_\_, and fertile lands, naming it Aotearoa, which means "land of the long white cloud." The first settlers established \_\_\_\_\_, cultivated the land, and utilized local resources. They introduced crops like \_\_\_\_\_ (sweet potatoes) and taro, which thrived in the new environment. The rich marine life supported their diet with fish, seals, and \_\_\_\_\_. Over time, distinct Maori tribes, or iwi, formed, each with its own territory and leadership. The Maori developed a rich \_\_\_\_\_ with unique art, carvings, and the haka, a traditional war dance. Their social structure was organized around \_\_\_\_\_ (family), hapu (subtribe), and iwi, which played a crucial role in the community's decision-making and daily \_\_\_\_\_. As European explorers arrived in the 17th century, the Maori engaged in trade, exchanging goods like flax and food for \_\_\_\_\_ tools and weapons. This period marked the beginning of significant changes in Maori society and New Zealand's \_\_\_\_\_. The Polynesian settlement of New Zealand is a testament to human courage, innovation, and the ability to adapt to new \_\_\_\_\_.

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