

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Explorer!



Bat Man ⁶

2 Face of Freedom 12 Parrot People 18 Earth Movers



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Parrot People

Meet native people of the Amazon rain forest.



PETE OXFORD

CRISTINA MITTERMEIER (RIVER, WOMAN); PETE OXFORD (RED BIRD); PETE OXFORD/NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY (GREEN BIRDS); NO MAPS



Rain Forest River. The Iriri River in Brazil flows near Kayapó lands.



Map Key

- Rain forest
- River
- Boundary
- Capital
- Village



I wake surrounded by darkness. My hammock slowly sways back and forth. I feel cold, and I hear water. Where am I? For a moment, I'm not sure.

As I get used to the darkness, I figure out what is going on. Rain is falling, and the wind is blowing my hammock. Besides the wind and rain, I hear bats flying overhead.

Then I remember. I'm far from home. I'm in a village in Brazil. That is a country in South America. I have come to take pictures of **rain forest** people. I take photos around the globe.

Cold and wet, I cuddle into my blanket and wait for morning. I dream about the adventure that awaits me.

Little Faces

Soon I see the shapes of the trees. The rain slows and stops. I am shivering. I wonder if I'm the only person awake. A few minutes later, the sun rises. The bats scatter.

Then I notice something else. Many small faces are peeking through my mosquito net! They are part of a rain forest tribe called the Kayapó. They live in a village known as Kendjam. They are very curious about their visitor. They don't see many outsiders. I smile at them.

They watch and smile as I climb out of the hammock. The kids want to show me the village. I grab my camera and follow them.

Village Views

The village is made up of huts. They stand in a circle. They have roofs made of palm fronds.

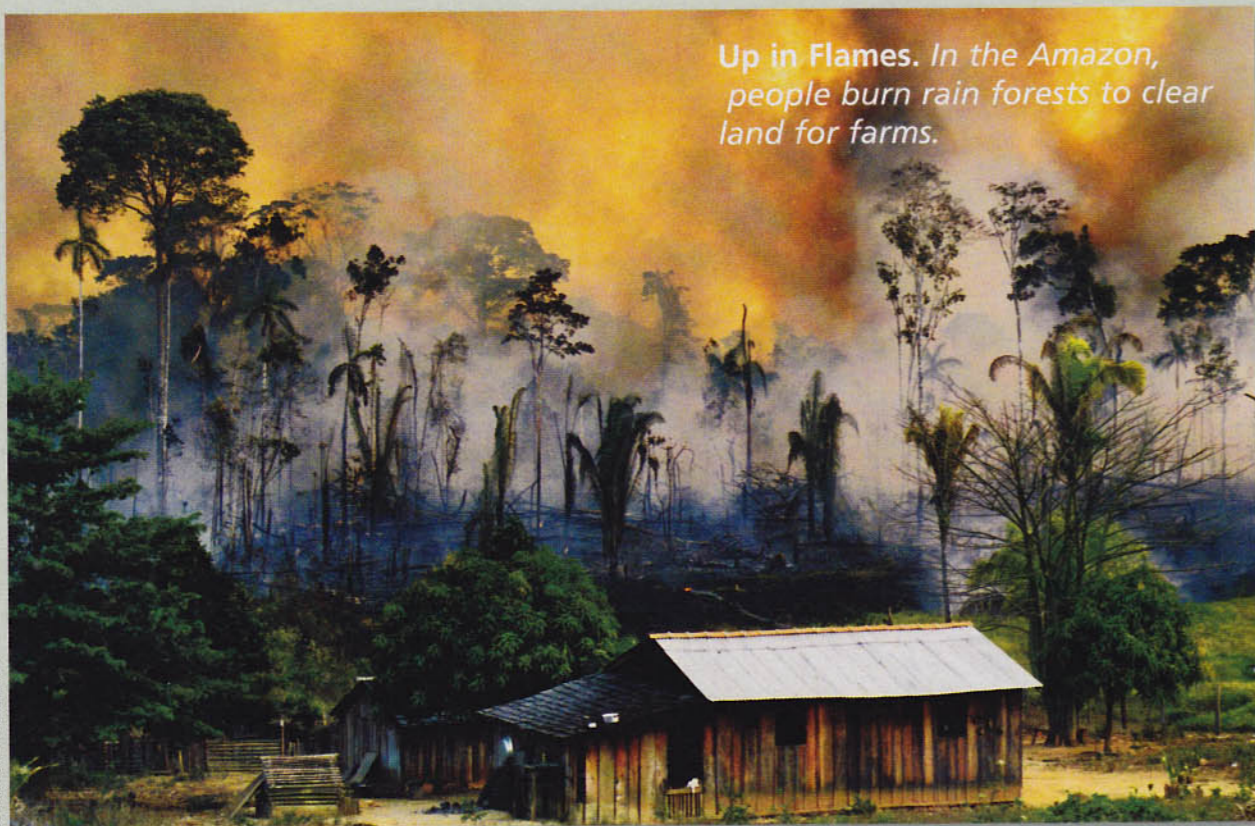
The Kayapó consider their rain forest home to be a very special place. It is. They find food, water, shelter, and medicine there.

Around me I see some of the items they make from the forest. Leaves are laced together to make shelter and clothing. Sticks are carved to make tools. Turtle shells are used as bowls.

I worry about the Kayapó. I worry about their forest. Much of the rain forest around them is being destroyed. Miners, loggers, and ranchers are moving in. Will there be room for the Kayapó in the near future?



Cristina Mittermeier



Up in Flames. In the Amazon, people burn rain forests to clear land for farms.

Beautiful Birds

As we walk through a village, a girl comes out of one of the huts. She is holding something red, white, blue, and yellow. It is a scarlet **macaw**! A macaw is a kind of parrot.

The Kayapó pluck its feathers to make *kokai*. Kokai are headdresses. The Kayapó wear them at celebrations and to show their **status**. They also wear them to frighten enemies.

I see macaws hopping around the village. The Kayapó keep these partly plucked birds as pets. I watch the girl take her pet into a nearby hut. She motions me to follow her inside.

The hut is dark. There are no windows. At first, I cannot see anything! I call out, “Akatiime,” which means “Good morning.” From the shadows, a voice replies, “Akatiime.” I cannot see who is speaking to me.

My eyes begin to adjust to the darkness, and I start to see shapes inside the house. I see a macaw sitting on a table. This one is green with bald spots where feathers have been plucked.

My Makeover

An old man is sitting on the floor. I can see him sorting feathers. He puts the different colors into various piles. He will use the feathers to make a new headdress.

The man’s wife is sitting on a small stool. She asks me to come over. She wants to touch my hair. I take my baseball cap off, and she shakes her head disapprovingly.

She dips her finger into a small glass jar full of an oily, yellow liquid. She then pulls this oily stuff through my hair. It hurts as she pulls my hair, but the oil smells sweet. I think it is Brazil nut oil. The Kayapó harvest Brazil nuts. Americans use the nuts to make hand lotion.

The woman finishes my hair and makes a signal. She wants to give me a Kayapó makeover! She dips a thin, bamboo stick into a black liquid. She then uses the stick as a brush, painting black lines on my arms. She draws a bright red line down my nose. Painting me is a Kayapó sign of friendship.



Forest Friends. A Kayapó girl holds her pet parrot close.

Forest Farewell

For now, I am part of the village. As I leave the hut, I am greeted with excitement. People seem to like my new look.

The Kayapó are decorated too. Many look like animals that live in their forest. Some wear designs like fish scales. Others remind me of monkeys or **jaguars**.

The Kayapó are a wonderful people, but I cannot spend much time with them. The next morning, I get up early to fly home. As the pilot steers the small plane down the runway, I see Kayapó children hiding in the bushes.

When the airplane takes off, they run out from the forest. They chase the plane down the runway with smiles on their face, waving their hands. The morning sunlight splatters a golden hue on the forest.

Truly, the Kayapó are magical. So is their rain forest world. I wonder what will happen to these smiling children as their rain forest home continues to shrink.

Wordwise

hammock: cloth or net bed that hangs between trees

jaguar: large, spotted cat

macaw: kind of parrot

rain forest: wooded area that gets at least ten centimeters (four inches) of rain a month

status: a person’s position in a group