

Basket Shapes and Uses

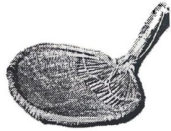
Plant Food Gathering and Transport

Gift/Storage Basket. The gift/storage basket is presented as a gift and is used for transporting goods or plant foods. Typical size: ht. 30", dia. across mouth: 25".



Gift/Storage Basket. Ht. 30", Dia. 25".

Seedbeater. Using the seedbeater, edible wild seeds were harvested by knocking seeds off the plant and into the burden basket. Typical length: 20".



Seedbeater. Length 20".

Acorn and Seed Meal Winnowing, "Sifting" Baskets, and Trays. "Sifting," winnowing baskets, and trays are round or triangular. The baskets are deep while the trays are shallow or flat. Close-twined round or triangular "sifters" were used to separate fine, fully-ground acorn meal from the coarser meal which required additional pounding. Seeds were also sifted with these basketry implements. The fine meal was separated by a side-to-side shaking action. Both closed- and open-weave baskets and trays were used for winnowing. Typical dia.: 20".



Deep Sifting Basket. Dia. 20".



Openwork Winnowing Basket. Dia. 20".



Triangular Basket. Length 20".

BASKET SHAPES AND USES

Food Preparation and Serving Baskets

Cooking Baskets. Cooking baskets have flared, straight or slightly incurved sides. Red-hot rocks are repeatedly dropped into the basket until the acorn soup or mush is cooked. The large (24" or more) cooking baskets have flaring sides to make it easier to remove the cooled rocks. These large baskets would probably have been used to cook for the extended-family households typical in pre-contact times. Today feasts for community gatherings are prepared in the baskets. Small cooking baskets (12" or smaller) may have a slightly incurved profile but are more open (so that rocks can be removed) than the storage basket with strongly incurved sides.

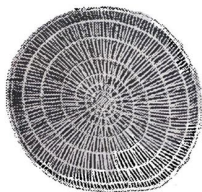


Large Cooking Basket. Dia. 24".



Large Cooking Basket. Dia. 24".

Food Serving Platters. In many parts of northern California, openwork twined platters were used to serve roasted fish or meat. Typical dia.: 12-15".



Food Platter. Dia. 15".

Food Serving Baskets. Small coiled or twined gift baskets with flaring sides were used for individual servings of acorn soup or mush, and for dipping and pouring water. Typical dia. across mouth: 3" to 6".



Small Serving Basket. Dia. 6".

Specialized Baskets

Shell money and other valuables were often stored in small, necked gift baskets whose shapes are reminiscent of pottery. Typical dia.: 7".



Shell Basket. Dia. 7".

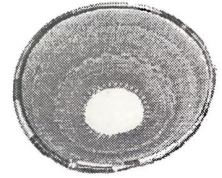
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BASKET SHAPES AND USES

Mortar and Pestle. Acorns were the staple food source of the California Indians. These nuts were pounded into meal on stone mortars. The funnel-shaped mortar baskets, with a hole at the bottom, were used to concentrate the meal in the bottom of the basket onto the mortar rock. This prevented the meal from flying off the mortar during pounding. Typical dia. across the top: 14".



Mortar Basket and Pestle. Dia. 14".



Mortar Basket. Dia. 14".

Storage and Food Serving Baskets

Large Storage Baskets. Large twined storage baskets for acorns and other non-perishable foods often have sides incurving toward the top. In north central California the baskets are round or globular in shape. In the northwestern area of the state the large storage baskets are typically taller with a larger opening. Fancy or highly decorated gift baskets were used for storing different items. Typical dia. across largest area: 30".



Large Storage Basket from Northwestern California. Dia. 30".



Large Gift/Storage Basket from North Central California. Dia. 30".



Food Serving Tray. Dia. 20".

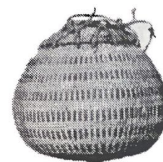
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BASKET SHAPES AND USES

Lidded "Trinket" Baskets were a post-contact innovation in northwestern California. They were made primarily for sale to European collectors. Typical dia.: 6".

Basketry Tobacco Pouches were also made in northwestern California. Typical dia.: 3".

Gambling Trays, shallow, round woven basketry were used by women while playing gambling games. Typical dia.: 20".



Tobacco Pouch. Dia. 6".



Lidded Trinket Basket. Dia. 6".



Gambling Tray. Dia. 20".

Fancy Gift Baskets

Elliptical or Boat-Shaped Baskets. These baskets had various uses. Small ones (typically 5" long) were often used to store valuables. Shaman and native doctor's paraphernalia were stored in medium-sized baskets (typically 14" long). The very large elliptical baskets (typically 30" or more in length) were used to store dance equipment and regalia.

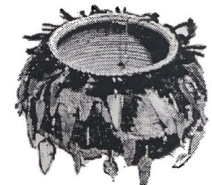


Elliptical Basket. Length 5-30".

Treasured Gift Baskets. The Pomo tribes are famous for their elaborately decorated coiled-baskets used as gifts to store small valuables. Such "treasure" baskets were (and are) more valuable than the items stored in them. The baskets are decorated with beads or feathers. Sometimes they are completely covered with red woodpecker feathers ("sun" baskets), or with a combination of brightly colored feathers. The feathers were tightly stitched into the basket weave. Such valuable baskets were presented as gifts to friends as well as for wedding gifts. They are also used as sacrificial item when a person who owned the basket dies. These elaborate baskets are also made for sale to collectors. Typical dia.: 7".



Sun Basket. Dia. 7".



Feather Basket. Dia. 7".