

Indian Market 2014 FAQs

SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market Week 2014
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What is SWAIA?

SWAIA stands for Southwestern Association for Indian Arts. It is the non-profit organization that produces the Santa Fe Indian Market and over 40 year-round programs and events. SWAIA's mission is "Bringing Native arts to the world by inspiring artistic excellence, fostering education, and creating meaningful partnerships."

What is the Santa Fe Indian Market?

The Santa Fe Indian Market is a 92-year-old Native art market. It is the largest and most prestigious Native arts market in the world and the largest cultural event in the southwest. The yearly event is held during the third weekend of August. Over 1,100 Native artists from the U.S. and Canada sell their artwork. The

Indian Market attracts 150,000 visitors to Santa Fe from all over the world. Buyers, collectors and gallery owners come to Indian Market to take advantage of the opportunity to buy directly from the artists. For many visitors, this is a rare opportunity to meet the artists and learn about contemporary Indian arts and cultures. Quality and authenticity are the hallmarks of the Santa Fe Indian Market.

What is SWAIA 365?

SWAIA 365 is a yearlong series of events in Native film, literature and visual arts. Together with key collaborative partners, SWAIA produces these events, which culminate in larger signature events during Indian Market Week.

What is Indian Market Week?

Indian Market Week precedes the Indian Market. It is a series of events in Native film, literature, music, fashion and visual art that lead to Indian Market weekend.

What is the Best of Show Ceremony?

The centerpieces of Indian Market Week are the Best of Show Ceremony and Previews of Award Winning Art, where more than \$100,000 in prize money is awarded. Held on the eve of the Indian Market (Friday, Aug. 16, 2013), a work of art is selected from hundreds of submissions as the winner of Best of Show. It is the most prestigious and important award in the Native arts world. This intimate ceremony that begins 11:30 am is reserved for SWAIA members only. The Sneak and General Previews are held on the same day beginning at 5:30 pm. This is the first opportunity for SWAIA members and the general public to view the award winning artwork for the first time. To learn more about becoming a SWAIA member, [click here](#).

I'm confused. Is it a market or a festival?

Both. It is a week-long celebration of Native arts and culture anchored by a Native arts market.

What kind of art can I buy at Indian Market?

There are 10 kinds of art in both traditional and contemporary forms you can buy at the Santa Fe Indian Market: Jewelry, Pottery, Sculpture, Textiles, Paintings, Wooden Carvings (Kachinas), Bead Work, Baskets and Diverse Arts, which encompass a variety of items including drums, bows and arrows, cradle boards, etc., There are literally thousands of handcrafted works of art for sale.

Who are the artists?

The artists are Native/Indigenous people from over 220 U.S. Federally recognized tribes and First Nations' Tribes (Canada). It's important to remember that the Indian Market is above all a family event. To the casual observer, it may not be evident that there may be generations of artists sitting together under the same booth. Some artists have been participating in Indian Market 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and even 60+ years. The Indian Market is a direct reflection of the lives of Native people and the communities they represent; their artwork is the universal language, which speaks and becomes a part of our lives.

That looks like the stuff I can buy at the airport. What's the difference?

Although the subject of authenticity is complicated and one that deserves a close look, it is easy to understand the difference between real and fake Native art. Foreign made "Native" art is tangential to "Natural" flavoring in food. In other words, there is no substitute for the real thing. SWAIA guarantees that its artists adhere to strict production and material guidelines. Best of all, you buy directly from the artist. The result is that you support an artist and by default his/her community, not to mention guaranteeing the value and appreciation of your art piece.

I've heard it called "Indian Mark-Up." Why is it so expensive?

Aside from the racist undertones of this term, it's also misleading. With the ubiquity of cheap, foreign made and generally fake "Native" artwork and jewelry, authentic Native artwork available at the Indian Market is comparatively more expensive. The majority of artists at Indian Market are accomplished and full-time professional artists. We know this because the Indian Market is a juried show. From private collections to museums across the globe, many of these artists create some of the most coveted works of art in any market. Most importantly, your purchase supports the artist directly. So as some of the artwork may be expensive--although much of it is very reasonable--it is also a guarantee of quality and authenticity.

Does SWAIA collect any of the proceeds from artist sales?

Absolutely not. As a non-profit organization, SWAIA raises its modest operating budget every year without a percentage of artist sales. In return, the Santa Fe Indian Market generates approximately \$100 million in revenues for the City of Santa Fe. To find out how to support SWAIA and its programs, [click here](#) to become a member of SWAIA, or to sign up as a volunteer or for information on donating to SWAIA.

What does literature, film and skateboarding have to do with Native art?

Native culture is a confluence. It is fed from internal and external worlds that intermingle and eventually erupt in creative practice. You will be hard pressed to find a Native artist at the Indian Market that works exclusively in only one artistic genre. SWAIA's expansion into other forms of expression that can be found "outside" the artist booth is a reflection of Native cultures realized through other mediums. In the end, it's all interconnected.

Where does the Santa Fe Indian Market happen?

The Santa Fe Indian Market is located in the heart of Santa Fe, NM on its historic plaza. The Indian Market covers 14 downtown city blocks with over 600 artist booths.

What's a Booth Sitter?

The Indian Market officially begins on Saturday, 7:00 am -5:00 pm and Sunday 8:00 - 5:00 pm. Saturday is typically when the die-hard collectors come to shop. Don't be surprised to find "Booth Sitters" camped out by their favorite artist booth the night before for a chance to buy a coveted piece of art. Other eager customers come as early as 4:00 am on Saturday. Sunday morning, on the other hand, is less busy and preferred by those Market goers who wish to take their time discovering and rediscovering the hidden gems of Market.

What is the Native American Clothing Contest?

The clothing contest is a cherished Indian Market tradition. It is held on Sunday morning 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Participants, who range from small children to adults, model traditional and contemporary Native clothing. This event is considered to be the most photographed event of Indian Market.

What else can I do at Indian Market?

There are three ways to learn about a city: its food, its outdoor markets and its music. The Indian Market features a vast selection of traditional and contemporary Native foods. With a focus on locally and family owned businesses vendors from all over the southwest celebrate Native identity through their culinary offerings. From roasted mutton and fry bread to more cosmopolitan fare inspired by trained Native chefs, there is something for everyone.

Under the Plaza Stage, music can be heard from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm during Indian Market Weekend. Performances by traditional Native groups can be heard and enjoyed under a comfortably shaded seating area in front of the stage.

There are perhaps more books about Native art and culture as there are Native art forms. An independent bookseller located next to the Plaza Stage sells an extensive catalog of titles and hosts book signings throughout the entire weekend.

Films are becoming a central component in Native art. SWAIA's Indian Market Film Festival features some of the most exciting Native films produced today.

I've never met a Native person before. Is there anything I should know?

To quote the title Native scholar Paul Chaat Smith's book: "Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong." The beauty of Indian Market is the cross-cultural dialogue that happens effortlessly. Unlike grade-school textbooks, museums or Hollywood movies, Indian Market is centered on Native self-representation. It is here that your perceptions and pre-conceived notions about Native people and culture will be changed forever.

