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Bedouins and Mapuches: One Fight for Land and Identity

Two ancestral peoples—the Mapuches in the lush lands of southern Latin America and the Bedouins in the arid expanses of the Arabian Desert—share a common struggle: preserving their identity and autonomy in a world that prioritizes "development" over ancestral rights.



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The Mapuches, whose name means "people of the earth" in their language, now retain just 5% of their ancestral territory, Wallmapu, spanning southern Chile and Argentina. Their resistance spans centuries: first against Incas and Spanish colonizers, and today against multinational forestry companies draining their lands and displacing communities through pine and eucalyptus plantations. Their fight is not just for resources but for küme mongen (balance with nature), embodied in rituals like the nguillatún to honor Mother Earth (Ñuke Mapu) and symbolized in their flag, the wenufoye.

The Bedouins, historically nomadic Arab peoples, have inhabited the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, Sinai, Negev, and North Africa for centuries. In Israel's Negev Desert, their pastoral routes are vanishing, replaced by luxury housing, military bases, or industrial farms, with 35% of Bedouin communities living in unrecognized villages without water. Towns like Al-Araqib have been demolished dozens of times as they fight for ancestral rights. For Bedouins, the desert is home, memory, and freedom. It is a struggle not only for land, but for the right to exist as a free people.

Both peoples share a worldview where the land is sacred—a living entity, not a resource. While the Mapuches reclaim territories through symbolic marches, Bedouins battle in international courts and weave tribal alliances. Yet both face state repression: anti-terrorism laws in Chile and mass demolitions in the Negev.

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"We are not terrorists. We defend water for future generations," says Ana Llao, a Mapuche leader. Sami Huweiti, a Bedouin from the Negev, adds: "Our home is the open horizon."

Their struggle is vital for the planet. Their ancestral wisdom offers keys to sustainability in a world depleted by overexploitation. This is a universal cause demanding all peoples' right to live in dignity and a reminder that alternatives to exploitation exist: life without fences, conquest, or dominance, in dialogue with nature.

As Mapuches replant native forests and Bedouins rebuild demolished villages, their resistance poses an urgent question: Is progress without cultural diversity truly progress?

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The Silent Legacy of Arabic Literature in Latin America

The Arabic influence on Latin American literature, although often underestimated, has been profound. Its origins date back to the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula (711-1492), whose legacy reached Latin America through Spanish cultural mestizaje. Arab migration during the 19th and 20th centuries reinforced this exchange, leaving marks on language, narrative, and regional poetry.



The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges was a clear exponent of this influence. Fascinated by Arabic literature, he eplored Sufi mysticism and One Thousand And One Nights. In the short story The Enigma of Edward Fitzgerald, he analyzes Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat and in The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths, he employs Arabic symbols such as the desert and the labyrinth.

Arab migration to Latin America also left its literary mark. The Chilean writer Antonio Skármeta, of Palestinian descent, addressed Arab identity and the migratory experience in his works.

Also in Argentina, Palestinian writer Sahar Khalifeh portrayed the Arab diaspora in novels like La Herencia (1997), which tells the story of a young Palestinian-Argentine returning to his ancestors' land.

Colombian Gabriel García Márquez incorporated Arabic elements in One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967) by including Arab characters, such as the merchants who arrive in Macondo, reflecting Arab migration in Colombia.

Latin American literature also adopted Arabic themes such as destiny, fatalism, and uprootedness. Arabic narrative structures, such as circular tales, appear in authors like Borges and Juan José Saer.

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Explore the Canaima National Park: The Great Treasure of Nature in Venezuela

The Canaima National Park, an environmental jewel located in the heart of the state of Bolívar, is much more than just a tourist destination; it is a legacy of biodiversity and culture that has captured the imagination of travelers from all over the world.

With an extension of 30,000 km2, Canaima was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994, thanks to its impressive geological formations and its unparalleled biological wealth. The tepuyes, those majestic rocky plateaus that rise above the jungle, are some of the most iconic elements in the park, with ages ranging from 1,500 to 2,000 million years.



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One of the main attractions of Canaima is the Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world, which falls from the Auyantepuy in an impressive descent of 1,283 meters. This natural wonder is not only a must-see destination for nature lovers, but also stands as a symbol of the powerful Venezuelan landscape.

The park is not only notable for its geography; it is also home to indigenous communities, such as the Pemon people, who have lived in harmony with this land for generations. The Pemon consider tepuyes to be dwellings of spirits, and their rich culture and traditions add a unique cultural dimension to the experience of those who visit the park.

Canaima National Park is a testament to the beauty and vulnerability of nature. This diverse ecosystem also faces threats, such as unregulated mining and tourism. The preservation of its biodiversity and cultural heritage is essential to ensure that future generations can enjoy and learn from this extraordinary destination.

As awareness of the importance of conservation grows, Canaima stands as an example of how nature and culture can be intertwined to create a unique experience. Travelers looking for adventure, beauty and cultural connection find in Canaima not only a place to visit, but a treasure to treasure and protect.

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The Caribbean: A Rich Tapestry of Cultures and Traditions

The Caribbean stands as a remarkable cultural mosaic, shaped by centuries of history and diverse influences. This unique fusion of African, European, Indigenous, and Asian traditions has given rise to a wealth of customs and practices that remain vibrant today. From spiritual rituals to festive celebrations, the region is a testament to the power of cultural resilience and creativity.

Spiritual and Religious Traditions



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In Cuba, Santería, a syncretic religion blending Yoruba spirituality with Catholicism, is deeply rooted in the nation's cultural identity. Through offerings, drumming, and dances, practitioners honor the Orishas—deities embodying forces of nature and daily life. Similarly, in Haiti, Voodoo ceremonies celebrate the Loas, spiritual entities that guide and protect communities. These vibrant rituals, rich with music and dance, are central to the spiritual life of many Caribbean nations.

Festivals and Celebrations

The Caribbean's festivals are a burst of color, music, and joy. In Trinidad and Tobago, the famous Carnival draws thousands of visitors with its soca and calypso music, dazzling costumes, and electrifying energy. The Bahamas' Junkanoo celebration during the Christmas season is another spectacle, featuring handmade costumes, rhythmic drumming, and exuberant dances. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico's Fiesta de San Juan, tied to the summer solstice, combines purification rituals with fireworks and lively parties on the beaches.

Music and Dance: A Global Impact

The region's influence extends far beyond its shores, especially through its music. Reggae, born in Jamaica and popularized by artists like Bob Marley, carries messages of love, spirituality, and social change. Salsa, a fusion of African, European, and Latin rhythms, thrives in Cuba and Puerto Rico, drawing dancers and musicians from across the world. Additionally, the fast-paced beats of soca and the story-rich lyrics of calypso enrich Trinidadian culture and fuel its carnival celebrations.

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Culinary Delights

Caribbean gastronomy mirrors its cultural diversity. Iconic dishes like Jamaica's jerk chicken, Puerto Rico's mofongo, and Colombia's coconut rice highlight the blending of African, Indigenous, and European culinary traditions. The use of vibrant spices, tropical fruits, and fresh seafood reflects the region's connection to its natural environment and historical roots.

Arts and Crafts

The Caribbean's artistry shines in its handcrafted goods and visual expressions. From woven baskets and handmade dolls to vibrant paintings depicting everyday life and lush tropical landscapes, the region's creative spirit is undeniable. These works often serve as a celebration of heritage, storytelling, and communal identity.

The Caribbean is not just a geographic region but a living legacy of cultural fusion. Its traditions, whether in music, art, or everyday life, continue to inspire and captivate, offering the world a glimpse into its profound richness and creativity.

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The Güijes: Myths and Legends of Cuban Rural Folklore

Cuban rural folklore is a vast universe filled with myths and legends that have endured over time, even in our modern era. Among these magical creatures, the Güijes—also known as chichiricús or jigües in some regions—stand out as one of the most popular and fascinating beings.

These mythical entities are considered cousins of the goblins, gnomes, and trolls found in other cultures, sharing characteristics such as mischief, elusive nature, and playful behavior.



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Scholars suggest that the Güijes represent a unique aspect of Caribbean culture, rich in fabulous beings. The legends surrounding them describe their fleeting appearances, often depicting them as young individuals with dark skin, grotesque features, and bulging eyes.

While their presence can evoke fear, there are no known malicious acts committed by them against those who manage to catch a glimpse. Their ability to escape is legendary; they are said to be extremely fast and capable of impressive leaps.

Güijes prefer dark nights and intricate woods, especially near rivers, streams, and ponds where they often rest in deep pools. Despite their potential to frighten, over time they have been transformed into sympathetic figures within Cuban popular imagination. This has led to their appearances in children's stories, animated cartoons, puppet theater plays, poems, and cheerful songs.

The northern region of the central province of Villa Clara is particularly rich in legends about Güijes. It is said that these beings choose to appear during difficult times or when there are omens of bad luck. Although fewer people firmly believe in their existence today, there are still those who claim to have seen them.

Those who must travel alone through rugged areas often cross themselves for protection against encountering these mischievous characters. "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" they exclaim into the air as a form of safeguard against the unknown.

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In this cultural context, the figure of the Güije becomes not only a symbol of Cuban folklore but also a reminder of ancestral beliefs that continue to persist among the population.

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