The ramada outside provides shade and shelter for cooking, and the "mano y metate" (stone grinding tool) is still used today in many kitchens for grinding seeds, corn, or mesquite pods.

Convento Fragment

This remaining fragment of the convento complex includes the rooms in which the missionary likely lived and from which he could oversee mission life.

Tensions were sometimes high, and resistance to colonization was common. In 1729, the Comcáac protested incursions on their pearl beds by raiding Spanish ranches. In 1734, the missionary's house was emptied in nearby Wa:k, and people fled the missions in Soamca and Guevavi. In 1740, the Yoeme to the south fought against abusive labor practices. The Nde raided ranches and missions repeatedly, including this one.

Frustration sometimes erupted in violence. In 1751, simmering tensions were sparked by conflict over status and power between a missionary and an O'odham governor/captain general, Luis Oacpicagigua. More than 100 were left dead - Spaniards, other villagers, 2 missionaries and at least 50 rebels.

People also reacted to colonization with strategies of acceptance, compromise, or peaceful resistance. Examples include wide adoption of Catholicism, combined cultural and food traditions, and the practice of keeping important ceremonies or cultural knowledge hidden.

Jesuit Church Footprint

After the 1751 uprising, a presidio (fort) was built nearby in Tubac to maintain the peace and support Spanish cultural expansion.

Persuasion, gifts, and military presence were used to bring people to the mission, especially Tohono O'odham from the west and Sobaípuri (O'odham) from the east. By 1760, this was home to 288 people. Never again did Tumacácori reach this population.

This outline marks the footprint of the church that was in use by 1757 and used for 65 years before the bigger one to the west was built.

Church Façade

Catholicism contradicted many aspects of O'odham and other indigenous cultures' spiritual beliefs that focus on sacred places in the landscape with special meaning in relation to stories and spirit beings. People in mission communities had to follow strict rules and renounce traditions related to healing practices, marriage, and harvests. Priests sometimes described indigenous spiritual leaders or healers as sorcerers or under the devil's influence.

The church façade was intended to inspire awe with its imposing red columns, yellow and black capitals, blue niches for statues and Spanish symbols. The church was in use from about 1822 to1848.

Sanctuary

Over the years, Catholicism mixed with local culture. Today, Sonoran Catholicism, sometimes called God Way, or Saint Way (Santo Himdag) integrates Catholic practices into O'odham traditions.

In the choir loft, over the entrance to the church, men and women singers with accompanying violin and harp filled the church with hymns in O'odham, Latin, and Spanish. Melding of Indigenous, Spanish and Mexican pageantry and music are seen in many current examples of cultural resilience like the O'odham Santo Himdag, the Yaqui deer dance and matachín traditions.

Cemetery

Many European diseases devastated the mission, as people had no immunity. In 1781, a major epidemic of smallpox killed many people here.

Mortuary chapels like this round structure were built starting in the late 18th century. The deceased lay in rest here instead of in the church before burial, in hopes of preventing the spread of disease. Around 600 people were buried at Tumacácori. The cemetery remains sacred ground, testifying to the people's suffering from disease, labor, conflict, and displacement from land and resources.

Storeroom

The ancient O'odham skills of making clay pots and baskets for keeping grain were put to new use here. Surplus was stored to be sold by the missionary. Wheat was a new crop favored by the Spanish over traditionally gathered and cultivated food. Colonial crops and livestock were promoted as better foods but required year-round work thus disrupting traditional lifeways.

Convento Complex

This was an open square of buildings with a central courtyard. An earthen berm protects the foundation of a row of rooms including a blacksmith and leatherworking shops, kitchen, grist mill and slaughterhouse.

Tumacácori National Historical Park

Explore Tumacácori

Negotiating Cultural Change

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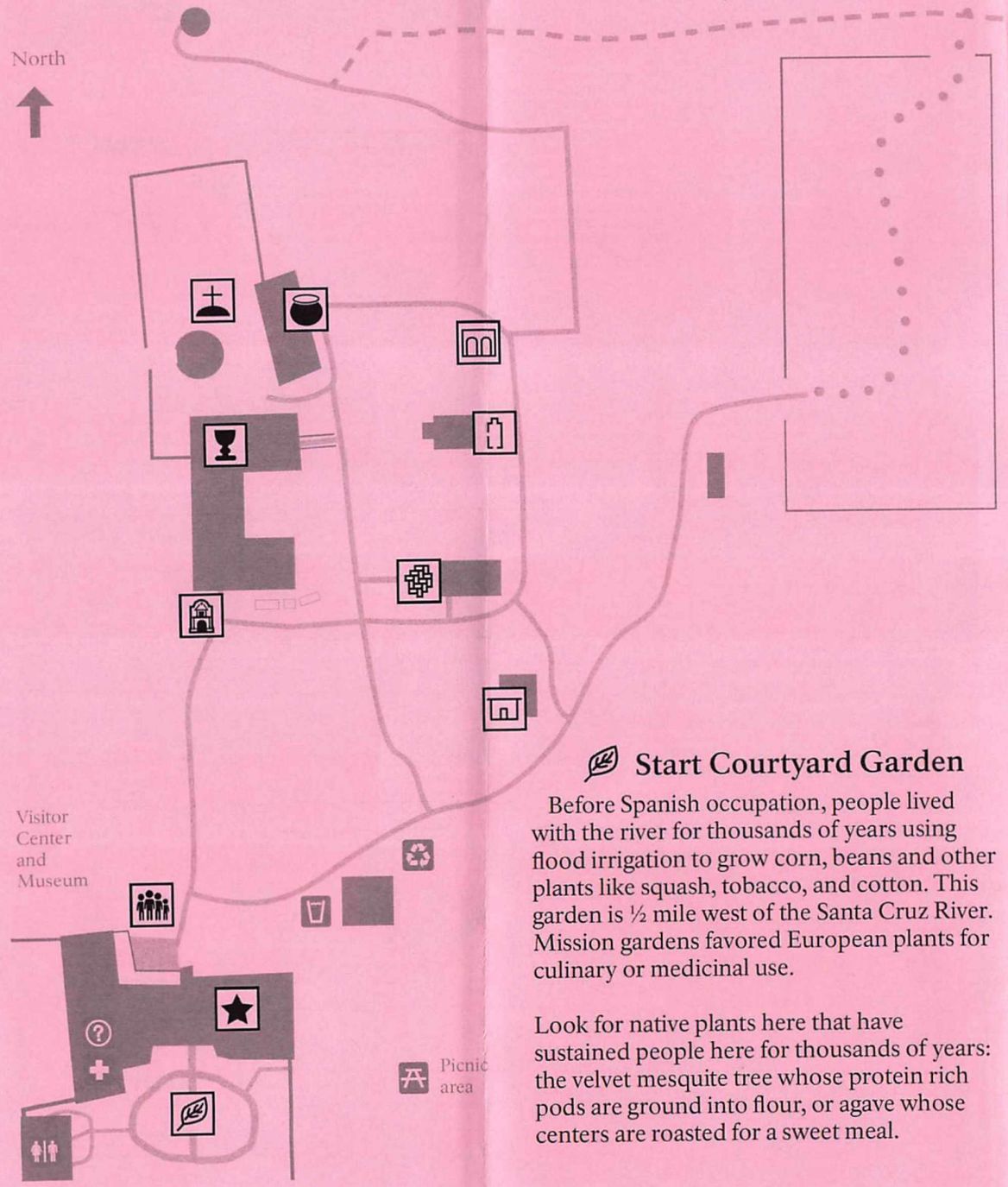




<1/2 mile

Tips for a Safe and Responsible Visit

1. Stay on trails
2. Protect historic structures
3. Respect wildlife
4. Dispose of trash properly



Start Courtyard Garden

Before Spanish occupation, people lived with the river for thousands of years using flood irrigation to grow corn, beans and other plants like squash, tobacco, and cotton. This garden is ½ mile west of the Santa Cruz River. Mission gardens favored European plants for culinary or medicinal use.

Look for native plants here that have sustained people here for thousands of years: the velvet mesquite tree whose protein rich pods are ground into flour, or agave whose centers are roasted for a sweet meal.

★ (Kino Statue)

The mission was part of a larger goal: northward colonization and control of resources by the Spanish. In 1691, 157 years before the U.S. colonized this area, Father Francisco Eusebio Kino, a Jesuit missionary sent by Spain, arrived at Tumacácori as a religious envoy of colonization. The people were kind to him and he was a great communicator. He promised the people new technologies, protection, and a better life.

★ Mission Model

The mission wasn't simply a church; it was a village modeled on the Spanish way of life. It paved the way for settlers to colonize indigenous lands. Missionaries brought a very new style of community structure to what was previously a less concentrated, extended-family based way of life. Strict, hierarchical governance was very different from more consensus-based forms of decision making practiced by the O'odham and other groups. The Spanish also brought a widespread belief in their superiority. Social, economic and religious life changed dramatically for people living in and around the missions. What might have been people's reactions to these enormous changes?

Community Plaza

Who were these cultural groups negotiating colonization and cultural upheaval at Tumacácori?

Here, we are in one of the open-air meeting places of the mission. It lies in the traditional homeland of the O'odham people. O'odham territory extended north to central Arizona, south to the Sonora river, west to the Gulf of California and east to the San Pedro river. Today there are at least four other groups of O'odham people in Arizona, each with specific cultural and historical traditions.

Some Yoeme (Yaqui) people lived at Tumacácori as well. Traditional lands are further south, but some Yoeme followed work northward or sought refuge from conflict in this area. Today, the Pascua Yaqui tribal lands are just south of Tucson. The Yoeme never surrendered to Spain, Mexico, or the U.S.

People from Nde (Apache) groups also participated in Tumacácori history. Homelands extend through southern Colorado, New Mexico, western Texas, eastern Arizona, Sonora, and Chihuahua. Most Nde were forced onto reservations by the U.S. government during the Apache wars (1849-1886). Today there are five federally recognized groups of Nde people in Arizona.

These and other groups to the south, the Opata, Yoreme (Mayo), and Comcáac (Seri) people also had long standing relationships of trade, alliance or conflict with one another. Spanish authority dramatically also changed these relationships.

Melhok Ki (moo-ro kee)

Tmeans "ocotillo house" in O'odham. This ki was built in recent times with saguaro ribs, mesquite, ocotillo, (a strong, thorny desert plant) and mud. It is cool inside and made from readily available materials.