

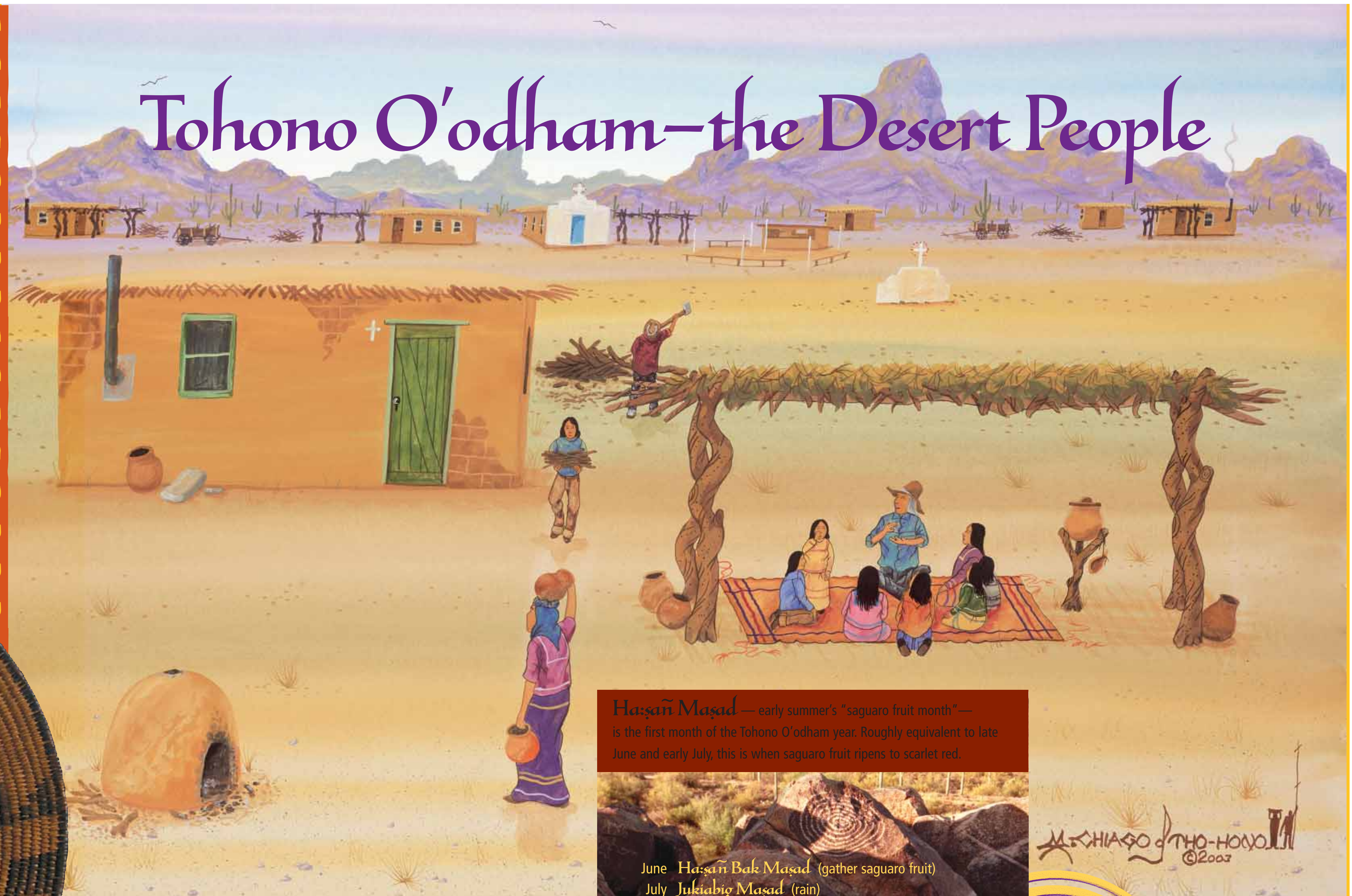
The **Tohono O'odham** have made their homes in the Sonoran Desert for generations. They learned to live in the desert, to be members of its unique natural community, to harvest wild foods, and to farm arid land.

Just as their fellow desert dwellers, the saguaros, the Tohono O'odham used water efficiently. Unlike their rooted neighbors, they moved between valley and foothill villages to take advantage of summer rains and perennial springs. In the valley, they practiced floodwater farming—diverting water from monsoon rain-flooded arroyos to their planted fields of tepary beans and corn. When the summer rains were over, they moved to the foothills where water was more consistently available from springs.

Though the arrival of European cultures forever altered their way of life, the Tohono O'odham remain people of the desert and their culture endures.

When the sky came down and met the earth... I'toi was the first to come forth. It was I'toi who made the Tohono O'odham out of the clay of the earth and placed them at the center of the world, the center of all things. This is where they have always lived and where they live to this day. I'toi planted the wild things and taught the Desert People how to harvest and cook them. He also taught them the ways of agriculture, how to make pottery, and to weave baskets.

Tohono O'odham—the Desert People



Hasa'n Maşad — early summer's "saguaro fruit month" — is the first month of the Tohono O'odham year. Roughly equivalent to late June and early July, this is when saguaro fruit ripens to scarlet red.

- June **Hasa'n Bak Maşad** (gather saguaro fruit)
- July **Jukiabig Maşad** (rain)
- August **Şopol Esabig Maşad** (short time of planting)
- September **Waşai Gakidag Maşad** (dry grass)
- October **Al Ju:big Maşad** (harvest season)
- November **S-ke:g S-he pjiğ Maşad** (pleasant cold)
- December **Ge'e S-he:pjiğ Maşad** (big cold)
- January **Gakimdag Maşad** (depend on stored foods)
- February **U:waliğ Maşad** (deer mating month)
- March **Ce:dagi Maşad** ("greens season" new plants come up)
- April **Uam Maşad** (yellow month / desert in bloom)
- May **U'us Wihogdag Maşad** (gather beans / a time of hunger)

Tohono O'odham followed the desert's natural rhythms. Traditionally, the Tohono O'odham followed the leafing, fruiting, and seeding of edible plants, harvesting their wild bounty. Mesquite, cholla, prickly pear, and saguaro all were important food sources. But the saguaro's role in the Tohono O'odham rain ceremony made it especially vital to their culture.



Basket from Tohono Chul Park Collection, Gift of Agnes T. and Don L. Smith
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Calendar adapted from When Everything Was Red
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