Northern Plateau
Winter Dance

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Okanagan
Penticton Indian Band (Sn Pint’kin)
Penticton, BC/Omak, WA
Participants in Northern Plateau Winter Dances are from tribal communities on both sides of the 49th parallel. In the Specific area of the Okanagan there are dances in Omak, Inchelium, Penticion (Sn Pint’kin) and the Upper and Lower Similkameen (Similkameugh) to name a few.
Traditional Territory areas for Plateau Tribes/First Nations
Northern Okanagan Valley
Purpose of Ceremony

The Winter Dances begin after the Winter Solstice. They only happen during the Winter season.

This is to bring renewal through prayer to the people for the upcoming year.

The Songs that are sung are each individual singer’s medicine song that helps bring blessings to the people and the singer and their families for the next year.
Protocol at the Dance

• All songs are to be sung before the sun rises

• The main singer or medicine person who is hosting the dance maintains the protocol. If there is a problem it is brought to them and they take care of it.

• The rules are told to new people who come to the dances by the address of the host and by the family members they come with to make sure they do not do anything that is out of line.

• When everyone first arrives and takes their place around the hall they are to enter and go clockwise around the pole in the center of the hall, then greet each person by shaking their hand and saying hello (wey).

• There are 4 days of dances to complete the ceremony.

• The first night is the kids/youth night, the second is for the host family, and the 3rd and 4th nights are for anyone else who wants to share songs.

• It is very important that each day everyone who is there has good thoughts and makes prayers of thanks for everything.
Traditional Food

- Traditional roots, berries, salmon, deer meat, moss, and foam berries (Indian ice cream) along with non-traditional foods are served during the dinner break each night.

- It takes the host of the dance a great deal of effort to gather these foods for each year's dance. They are helped out by members of the community, family and friends to prepare, serve, and gather these foods.
Giveaway

• The host family along with individual singers give away items to help the prayers and songs.

• These items can be many home made things from necklaces, bags, shawls, baskets, home canning, earrings, abalone shells etc. to store bought items like blankets, towels, handkerchiefs, laundry baskets, and material.

• The people who dance may receive these things along with all other people at the dance.
• If all goes well at the dance it will snow and no matter the weather this is a very important tradition that needs to continue for coming generation for all the people to stay on the right road.
Limit Limit Ancestors