

## **The Cost of Balance: Callouses and Time**

These mortars and pestles—also known as a metates or grinding stones—symbolize the hard work of gathering and preparing food without disrupting the landscape, using motorized equipment or electric appliances nor tilling the soil.

When the Spaniards arrived in the area that would become California in 1769, the 310,000 people living there held diverse languages, traditions, and beliefs, but they shared a tradition of living mostly as hunter-gatherers, whose ability to keep natural resources in balance had created thriving civilizations.

Many of the inland peoples relied upon the acorn and other seeds or nuts as staple foods and trading products. Preparing acorn flour involved the elaborate processes of collecting, grinding, sifting, regrinding, removing tannins, and cooking the mush over or under hot rocks. This slow and meditative food preparation method leaves a reminder that life without a noisy osterizer is actually life without an ostracizer. (John Daly captured this photo at San Juan Batista.)