

## Spanish Missions

Between 1697 and 1834, padres from Spain established 39 missions along the west coast of North America. These missions stretched from the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula to the Sonoma Valley north of San Francisco Bay. Some missions also included a Presidio (military garrison) to protect the new Spanish interests (see page 23). While the mission settlements existed to spread Christianity to California Indians, they also enhanced Spain's territories in North America. With the help of Indian workers, the Spaniards introduced European livestock, vegetables, fruits, and industry to this **region**. However, a century later European diseases caused the California Indian **populations** to decline.

