

Beach — Quta, Quteq

ARNAT QUTMI ET'UT. – THE WOMEN ARE AT THE BEACH.



Photo: The beach at Cape Alitak - looking northwest.

The place where the ocean meets the land is a diverse, productive environment, close to many resources. From the first occupation of the Kodiak Archipelago, Alutiiq families took advantage of this environment, building their homes behind quiet beaches where they could launch boats, harvest shoreline foods, and watch for sea mammals. Today, the beach remains a popular place for collecting and processing food, storing gear, camping, picnicking, and relaxing.

Kodiak has many types of beaches. The outer coast is covered in rocky headlands and high-energy cobble beaches. Quieter bays feature gravel shores, sandy bights, and even mud flats. On all of these beaches, beachcombing is a favorite pastime. The currents that sweep northward into the Gulf of Alaska from the central Pacific carry debris from far away. Glass net floats and plastic soda crates are among the Asian flotsam that reaches the archipelago's shores.

Archaeologists believe that Kodiak's prehistoric residents also collected objects from the beach, salvaging metal from fragments of Asian shipwrecks, collecting driftwood, and picking up artifacts. Water-worn stone tools from ancient deposits show up in more recent archaeological sites. They suggest that Alutiiq people of the past occasionally collected their ancestors' tools.