

## Cold — Pat'snarluni

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### UKSUMI PAT'SNARTAARTUQ. – IT IS ALWAYS COLD IN THE WINTER.

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Photo: Children play on the ice in Old Harbor at recess, February, 1962. Violet Able Collection, courtesy of the Old Harbor Native Corporation.

The Kodiak Archipelago lies in a maritime environment. Despite the region's northern latitude, encircling ocean waters and prevailing weather keep air temperatures mild by Alaska standards. At sea level, Kodiak's temperatures typically range from 40° to 60° Fahrenheit (4.4°–15.6° Celsius) in summer and hover around freezing (32° Fahrenheit, 0° Celsius) in winter. Moreover, the average temperature in the warmest month, August, is only 38° Fahrenheit (3.3° Celsius) higher than the average temperature in the coldest month, January. And while extremely cold temperatures can occur, they are rare and do not last for long.

Despite these relatively mild air temperatures, the Kodiak environment is highly seasonal, with a distinct period of warm weather and resource abundance followed by periods of colder weather and resource scarcity. Like all northern peoples, therefore, Kodiak Islanders have always had to adapt to the cold.

In classical Alutiiq society, people combated cold weather with well-insulated sod houses, interior fires, warm fur clothing and bedding, gut rain gear, and a diet rich in nutritious, high calorie, sea mammal fat. They paired these technological and dietary choices with social and economic practices. Storage and exchange were the most important. By harvesting and processing large quantities of summer foods, people stockpiled proteins, fats, and carbohydrates for winter use and created stores that could be exchanged with neighbors.

In addition to preparing for the cold, Alutiiq people took advantage of the preservative qualities of cold weather. Elders recall storing foods, particularly garden produce and eggs, in cellars and pits dug into the ground. Others put subsistence foods like clams and berries in oil-filled containers and left them in a cold place to keep throughout the winter.