

## Milk — Muluk’uuq (N), Muruk’uuq (S)

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### KURUWAMEK MULUK’UUNGTARTUTKUT. – WE GET MILK FROM A COW.

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Photo: Cows on the beach in Ouzinkie. Smith Collection, courtesy of Tim and Norman Smith.

Milk is a relatively recent addition to the Alutiiq diet, a fact illustrated by the Russian derivation of the Alutiiq words for milk. Although midwives brewed a tea from pineapple weed to stimulate the production of a new mother’s milk, and mothers nursed their babies for several years, cow’s milk was not widely used in Alutiiq communities until the twentieth century.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a few Alutiiq families kept dairy cows. Most families, however, purchased canned milk along with staples like flour and sugar. Akhiok Elders remember hot cereal breakfasts with canned milk. Milk was also used to make pacifiers. Parents mixed milk with bread, sugar, and seal oil or butter, and placed this mixture in cheesecloth. They tied the cloth closed with a string and nailed the string to the wall by a baby’s crib. When the baby cried, they offered the homemade pacifier.

Today, Alutiiq families purchase both fresh and preserved cow’s milk from grocery stores. Boxed and canned milk remain popular in rural areas, where groceries arrive by airplane. Milk has also been added to some traditional dishes. Alutiiq people eat tender young willow shoots with milk and sugar and mix milk into their *akutaq*, a dessert made today with mashed salmonberries, sugar, and Crisco. Others enjoy dipping an *alatiq* (N) *oralaciq* (S), Alutiiq fry bread, into canned milk.