

Fermented oil, berry pulp & vegetables — Tugluq

TUGLULITAALLRIAKUT PUUC'KAAMI, PITURLUTA UKUQ NANGLUKU. – WE ALWAYS USED TO MAKE TUGLUQ IN BARRELS, AND EAT IT ALL WINTER.



Photo: Phyllis Peterson holds a jar of berries preserved in oil, an ingredient in Tugluq. Photo by Priscilla Russell, Kodiak Area Native Association Collection.

There is no one English word that describes *tugluq*, a flavorful, traditional, Alutiiq dish. Like *akutaaq* or *ciitaaq*, *tugluq* was a mixture of ingredients tailored to the maker's tastes and the availability of foods. The base was *uququq*—fermented seal oil. To this, chefs added berries and greens to form a tasty, aromatic, uncooked meal. Although *tugluq* is not currently served in Alutiiq homes, Elders remember eating it as late as the 1950s.

A key feature of *tugluq* was its longevity! This dish was the Alutiiq version of the never-ending pot, a perpetual plant food stew that was never fully eaten and could be replenished for months. In Alutiiq communities, a barrel of *tugluq* might last all winter, as people added more fermented oil, and whatever fresh or stored plants were available. And as the mixture aged, and continued to ferment, it becomes more flavorful. Both the fermentation and the oil in the dish acted as preservatives.

Making *tugluq* was a way for Alutiiq people to avoid waste, as leftovers could be added to the mix. Thrift, especially with food, is an essential Alutiiq value. It demonstrates respect for the natural world and ensures a future supply of plants and animals. *Tugluq* makes good use of the foods you have. Moreover, *tugluq* supports another Alutiiq value, hospitality. The pot is always available when guests arrive.

Many cultures have a perpetual stew tradition. The hunter's pot, with meat and tubers, was part of medieval European cuisine. Caribbean cultures make pepperpot. Vietnamese pho and Japanese ramen are often made with stock from a perpetual pot of bone broth. And a legend from India tells of a woman with five husbands who fed her large family from a never-ending pot.