

## Uyak Bay — Uyaq

---

### KUGYASIGTAALLRIIT UYARMI. – THEY USED TO SEINE IN UYAK BAY.

---



Photo: Larsen Bay Puskhi, oil on canvas by Linda Lyons, showing a view across Uyak Bay. Purchased with support from Rasmuson Foundation.

Uyak Bay is the largest fjord in the Kodiak Archipelago. Carved by Pleistocene glaciers, this 40 km waterway stretches from its wide mouth on Shelikof Strait far into the interior of Kodiak Island, narrowing towards its head. Uyaq is so long it nearly cuts Kodiak in half. Only 12 km of land separate the head of Uyak from the head of Three Saints Bay on the opposite coast.

For this reason, Uyak has long been a corridor across Kodiak Island. Archaeological sites dot the coast of the bay's far inner shores, and old trails wind up the stream valley at the head of the bay and over some of Kodiak's most precipitous mountain peaks. This passage probably served as a trade route, a connection between areas of the archipelago that would have taken days to reach by kayak.

Uyak Bay is the central feature of a bay complex that includes Spiridon Bay, Zachar Bay, and Larsen Bay. This large region, with its productive, protected waters has a long and intense settlement history. Today, Larsen Bay is the only Alutiiq community, although private homesteads, fish camps, and lodges are found along the coast. However, five hundred years ago,

several thousand Alutiiq people lived along Uyak's shores.

Archaeological data indicate that there was once a major village at the mouth of each bay, communities with many large, permanent sod houses and huge accumulations of midden. These villages appear to have been gathering places, places from which people ventured out to hunt and fish throughout the year. Smaller settlements occur along the shores of the region's inner bay, and probably represent the short-term camps where people fished for herring and salmon, collected butter clams, or trapped foxes and ermine.