

Pack it (to) — Atmagluku

TUNTUQ NUT'KII TAUMI-LLU ATMAGLUKU. – SHE SHOT THE DEER AND THEN PACKED IT.



Photo: Hunter packing a bear hide. Nekeferof collection, AM670:340

Carrying things is a daily chore, especially in rural communities. People haul water, carry meat, tote buckets of berries, and pack loads of wood. Today's trucks, four wheelers, fishing boats, and skiffs help with the transportation of food and fuel. However, people still find themselves lugging heavy loads. The Alutiiq verb *atmagluku* to pack it, acknowledges this constant activity. It comes from the root *atmaq-* and means to carry something on one's back.

Carrying wood is particularly common. In the past, Alutiiq men packed wood on their backs using a sling. They looped a line around a pile of wood several times, then secured the ends around their shoulders. This created a secure bundle of wood that could be packed home. Today, people use pack boards, burlap bags, and backpacks for this task and often seek out or cut small, stove-sized pieces of fuel that are easier to carry. Another way to move a log is to drag it overland. In meadows or on ice, men might tie a line around a log and work together to pull it. By removing the bark on the underside, the log would slide more easily.

Alutiiq harvesters have a few tips for carrying wild foods. If you are carrying fresh meat or fish on your back, put grass under it to keep blood from soaking into your clothing. To carry berries, wear a skirt or apron over your pants and use it like a basket to collect and carry fruit.

Alutiiq people also recognize a creature that carries a load— the goldenrod crab spider (*Misumena vatia*). These small white and yellow spiders are known as *atmaayat*, or evil packers. This name refers to the spider's very large thorax, which makes it look like it's packing a large load.