

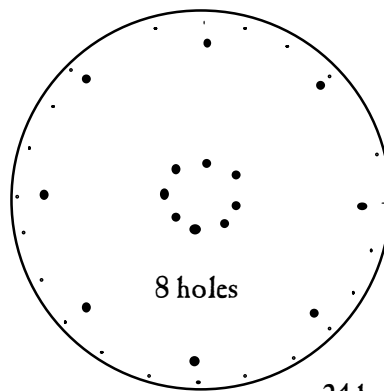


24 Holes

# Headdress Kit Supply List:

1. Round Leather Piece
2. Leather strip
3. 25 ten-inch sinew strings
4. 7 five-inch sinew strings
5. 24 seven-inch sinew strings
6. 8 six-inch sinew strings

7. 270 Color A beads
8. 215 Color B beads
9. 220 Color C beads
10. 32 long beads
11. 96 small green beads



24 holes



32 holes

## Headdress Instructions:

1. Cut Sinew Strings:
  - a. 8 6-inch strings
  - b. 24 7 inch strings
  - c. 7 5-inch strings
  - d. 25 10-inch strings
2. Cut a 5-inch diameter circle of leather
3. Cut a ½-inch wide, 22-inch long strip of leather
4. Punch hole into leather as shown on the illustration to the right.
5. Assemble beads:
  - a. 270 beads of Color A
  - b. 215 beads of Color B
  - c. 220 beads of Color C
  - d. 32 elongated beads
  - e. 96 small flat beads
5. Tie a single knot at one end of each of the sinew strings.
6. Measure long piece of leather around head and place Velcro on band so that the leather forms a ring that fits snugly across the forehead and above the ears.

### With each of the eight **6-inch sinew strings**:

7. Bead one small green bead onto the sinew, and thread through a hole in the center of the circular leather piece.
8. Thread five beads on the sinew, in the pattern of your choice.
9. Thread the sinew through the closest hole just in from the edge of the round leather piece.
10. Place a small green bead on the sinew, and tie a single knot so that the beads are held closely against the leather.
11. Repeat until all 6-inch sinew strings are used.

### With each of the twenty-four **7-inch sinew strings**:

12. Bead one small green bead onto the sinew, and thread through a hole on the edge of the circular piece of leather.
13. Thread ten beads onto the sinew, in a pattern of your choice.
14. Thread the sinew through one of the twenty-four holes on one edge of the strip of leather.
15. Place one small green bead on the sinew, and tie a single knot to hold in place.
16. Repeat until all 7-inch sinew strings are used.

### With each of the seven **5-inch sinew strings**:

17. Bead one small green bead onto the sinew, and thread through the hole on the strip of sinew that is farthest away from the Velcro.
18. Thread three beads onto the sinew, one of each color, and finish with one of the long beads.
19. Tie a single knot to keep in place.
20. Repeat with the other six pieces of 5-inch sinew, placing three sinew strings to each side of the first sinew, so that seven strings hang in a row.

### With each of the twenty-five **10-inch sinew strings**:

21. Bead one small green bead onto the sinew, and thread through one of the holes next to the 5-inch sinew strings on the leather.
22. Thread 16 beads onto the sinew, in the pattern of your choosing, and finish with one of the long beads.
23. Tie a single knot to keep in place.
24. Repeat until all 10-inch sinew strings are used, varying the pattern of beads.

### Finally,

21. Cut each of the sinew strings below the lower knot to complete the headdress.



# Nacaq – HEADDRESS



*JJ Orloff models a headdress made by June Simeonoff Pardue. Purchased for the Alutiiq Museum with support from the Rasmuson Foundation Art Acquisition Fund. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.*

Headdresses were once part of the elaborate clothing worn at Alutiiq winter festivals. Participants in these events displayed their prosperity with beautifully crafted garments. The materials and decorative elements used in clothing reflected their wearer's age, gender, and social position. Wealthy Alutiiq people wore elegantly decorated parkas of valuable sea otter, fox, or ground squirrel pelts. Headdresses, jewelry, and tattoos added to the appearance of prestige conveyed by these rich materials. The less affluent wore simple clothing of common materials like bird skins. Whatever your status, your clothes provided a link to the spiritual world. Alutiiq people kept their garments clean, well repaired, and nicely decorated to show respect for the creatures that supported human life.

Women's headdresses were typically made from hundreds of glass beads strung on sinew and embellished with feathers colored with cranberry or blueberry juice. Strands of small beads were tied into a tight fitting cap with many dangling lengths attached to the sides and the back. These attachments often featured larger, heavier beads that swayed, glittered, and jingled as the wearer moved. In Prince William Sound, the daughters of Alutiiq chiefs wore headdresses of

beads and dentalium shells that extended far down their bodies, sometimes reaching their heels. Beaded headdresses were often accompanied by matching earrings, chokers, necklaces, and belts. Teenage girls and young women wore these lavish ornaments to symbolize their passage into adulthood.

Men also wore headdresses. These garments were hood-shaped, and though they might include beads, they lacked the long strings associated with women's *nacaq*. Some were made of ermine skins, decorated with feathers, pieces of animal hair, strips of leather and gut skin, and embellished with embroidery.

Today, headdresses remain a part of traditional dress. Alutiiq Elders, dignitaries, and performers wear them for special occasions. Along with the increasing use of these garments there is a growing interest in their manufacture. Alutiiq women are exploring the art of beading and passing it to the next generation through classes in village schools.



# *Pinguat; Pisiṛkat (N) – BEADS*

*Makut pinguat cucunartut.* - THESE BEADS ARE BEAUTIFUL.

Before the availability of European goods, Alutiiq people embellished their clothing and jewelry with a variety of handmade beads. Pieces of shell, bone, ivory, amber, coal, slate and even halibut vertebrae were fashioned into decorations for parkas, rain gear, headdresses, hunting hats, bags, and labrets. In Prince William Sound, people made shiny beads from unbaked clay mixed with seal oil, and on the Kenai Peninsula, they carved beads from soft red shale. A necklace collected in Kodiak in the 19th century, features hundreds of tiny bird claws set into each other to form small loops, like beads.

Some shells were particularly coveted for decoration. Alutiiq people obtained dentalium shells, the curved, white, tusk-shaped shells of scaphopods in trade with the societies of Southeast Alaska. They used these graceful shells to decorate clothing and as earrings and nose pins. They were considered extremely valuable. Historic sources indicate that a pair of delicate dentalium shells could be traded for an entire squirrel skin parka.

By 1840, trade goods from Asia and Europe began reaching Alaska in large quantities, supplied by merchants in Siberian ports and Hudson's Bay Company outposts in the United States and western Canada. Russian colonists hoarded the finer goods—porcelains, iron tools, and gunflints—for their own use, but traded food and trinkets to the Alutiiq. Traders used inexpensive commodities like glass beads to pay Alutiiq hunters for valuable sea otter hides resold in distant markets.

Manufactured in Asian and European factories, colorful glass beads were cheap, easy to ship, and coveted by Native peoples. On Kodiak, these brightly colored beads fit well into the prestige-based economy and were widely incorporated into ancestral arts—like the production of headdresses. The Cornaline d'Alleppe, a dark red bead made in Venice, was particularly prized, perhaps as its color resembled traditional red pigments.



*Detail of glass beads in an Alutiiq headdress, Afognak Island, 1872, Pinart Collection, Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Photo by Will Anderson.*