



Ciqlluaq – SOD HOUSE

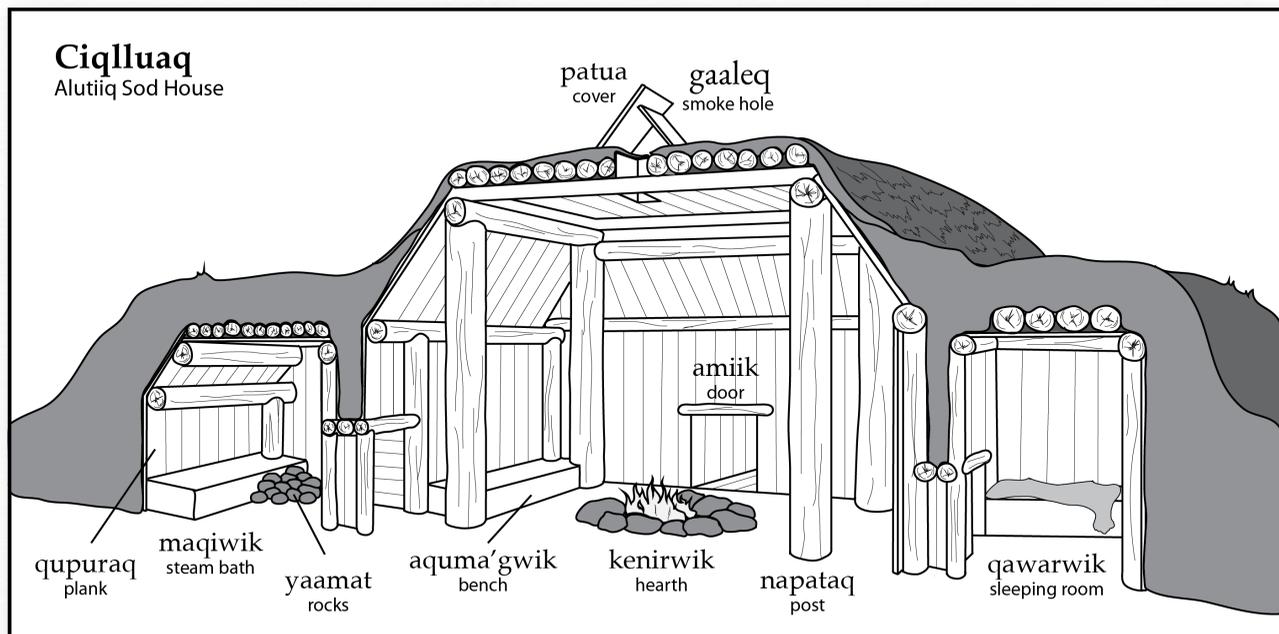
The traditional Alutiiq/Sugpiaq house—*ciqlluaq*, often referred to by the Russian term *barabara*, was a sod-covered structure built partially underground. After digging a foundation, builders erected a post—*napataq* and beam frame covered with planks hewn from driftwood. Logs were split with stone mauls and whalebone wedges, and formed into planks with stone adzes—an axe-like tool. Blocks of sod or grasses were then piled over the frame for insulation. A small hole—*gaaleq* (smokehole) was left in the center of the roof and covered with a hatch—*patuq*, which could be opened to release smoke or let in fresh air.

Each house had a set of rooms connected by narrow tunnels—*amiit* (doorways) to side rooms. Houses were entered through a low passageway—*siinaruaq* that led into a large room with a central hearth—*kenirwik* (place to cook). Around the walls were earthen benches for sitting and sleeping covered with dry grass or bear hide mattresses. Here, Alutiiq people cooked, repaired tools, sewed clothing, and hosted

visitors. Stores of food hung from the ceiling, some in seal stomach containers.

Attached to the central room were a number of side chambers for sleeping—*qawarwit* and steam bathing—*maqiwik* (also known by the Russian term *banya*). Rocks heated in the hearth were carried to the steam bath with wooden tongs—*tuulautek* and splashed with cold water to create steam. The *maqiwik* was always the smallest room in the house with a low roof designed to trap heat. Hot rocks were traditionally piled in the corner so bathers could exit easily.

The outside of Alutiiq houses had many features. A drainage ditch might surround the entire house, and racks—*initat* for drying fish and meat were commonly constructed beside houses. On the roof, residents stored larger gear including kayaks—*qayat*, paddles—*anguat*, and fishing nets—*kuqyasit*. Some houses had a small shed beside them.



Parts of a *ciqlluaq*. Illustration by Alisha Drabek.