

Maanirllat Nunat – VILLAGES TODAY



Today, Kodiak has six Alutiiq villages, in addition to the City of Kodiak. These small towns are descended from ancestral communities where people lived for hundreds or thousands of years. There were once Alutiiq villages and camps throughout the archipelago. Over time, communities consolidated due to population loss from illness and starvation, colonial control, job opportunities, the availability of schools, and natural disasters.

Modern Alutiiq villages offer many of the amenities found in larger Alaskan towns—roads, running water, electricity, and limited internet service, as well as a church, school, and post office. However, they are remote. To reach Kodiak’s villages, people travel by boat or small airplane. Wind and fog can make transportation unreliable.

Alutiiq villages are close-knit communities where many people are related and rely on each other. Families harvest wild food to supplement expensive groceries from Kodiak. Many adults participate in commercial fishing, guiding, or tourism. Others have jobs at the school or with their city or tribal government. A health aid provides medical care in consultation with doctors in Kodiak. Readers lead Sunday worship between visits from a Russian Orthodox priest.

- **Kasukuak** Akhiok – Akhiok is Kodiak’s southernmost village. The community began as a sea otter-hunting settlement established by Russian traders. Villagers moved several times, settling the present location in 1881.

- **Kal’ut** Karluk – Karluk rests on the banks of the salmon-rich Karluk River. The Karluk region was once a population center. Archaeological finds illustrate that Alutiiq families settled the river valley for over 7,800 years.

- **Uyaqsaq** Larsen Bay – Alutiiq families have lived in this location for thousands of years. The modern community developed in 1888 with the construction of an Arctic Packing Company cannery. Its English name comes from Unga Island entrepreneur Peter Larsen.

- **Nunიაq** Old Harbor – In 1784, Russian traders built a settlement in Three Saints Bay, where Alutiiq hostages were forced to work. When the traders moved to Chiniak Bay in 1793, the Native

community remained and became known in Russian as Starrie Gavan—Old Harbor. Residents moved several times before settling in the present village site.

- **Uusenkaaḡ** Ouzkinie – Located on Spruce Island, Ouzinkie began as a nineteenth-century retirement community for Russian traders and their families. Its name comes from the Russian word *uskiy*, meaning narrows. It refers to the slender strait separating Spruce Island from Kodiak Island.

- **Masiqsiraḡ** Port Lions – The 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake leveled the village of Ag’waneḡ—Afognak and displaced its residents. The International Lions Club coordinated the construction of a new village in Kizhuyak Bay. Villagers named the community Port Lions to honor the Lions Club.

LEARN MORE:

Alutiiq Villages Under Russian and U.S. Rule, 2008, by Sonja Lüehrmann, University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.