

Western Alaska Yup'ik Native Culture



1. **Watch the video** for an introduction to a Subsistence Lifestyle

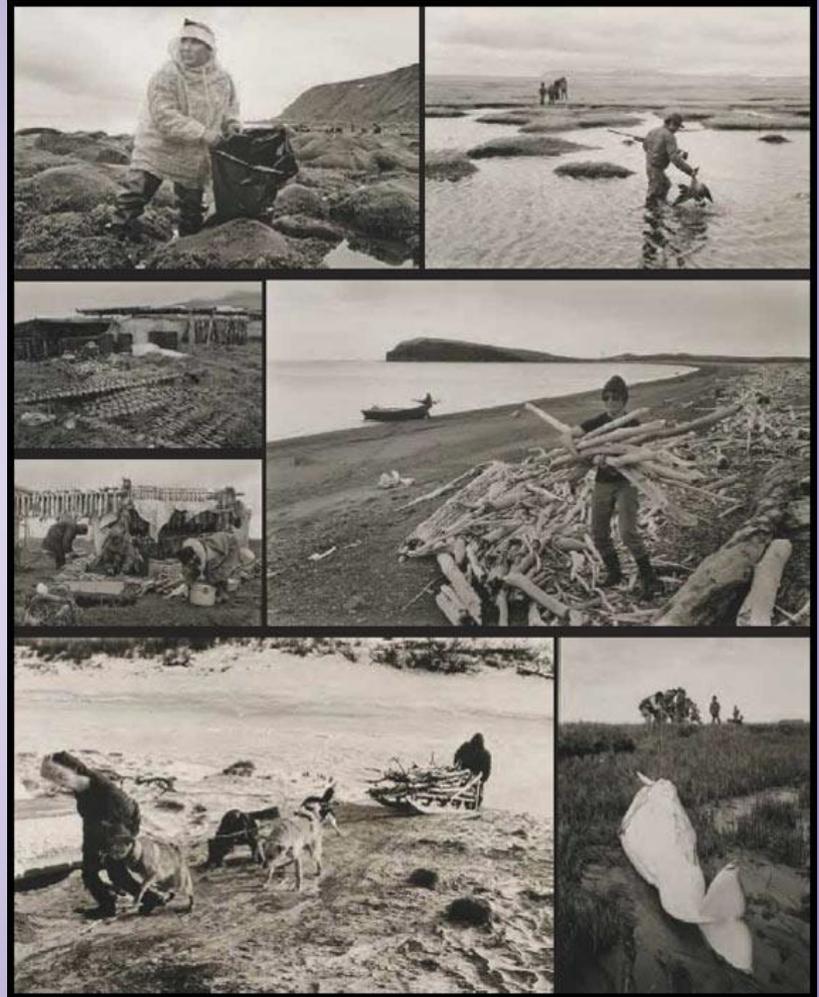
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3dK4viWA-o>

2. **Read the slideshow** to learn facts about these Native Cultures

3. See the next slide for a Yup'ik dancing video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beU485Bxqxs>

Yup'ik: People of Western Alaska



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beU485Bxqxs>

Yup'ik Eskimos



Live in southwest Alaska along the Bering Sea coast and the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta.

Yup'ik people moved to this region about 4,000 years ago.

Population 15,000 -16,000 at time of contact.

Traditional Life



Members worked together to get food.

Men hunted.

Women did skin sewing, preparing/cooking of the fish and meat, and catching of small game.



Pre-Contact Shelters



The Yup'ik lived in permanent winter villages. Men and women lived separately. Women taught the girls in the family home. Men taught boys in the community house. The house had a tunnel entrance and benches along the side for sleeping.

Traditional Villages



The **Yup'ik lived in semi underground houses during winter**. Villages typically had seven houses. Limited building materials and the added warmth were the reason for this construction. Entrance passages were a part of the construction.

Yup'ik people traditionally went to fall and spring hunting and trapping sites. These semi underground houses were often used there.

Yup'ik would live in tents or lean-to shelters in the summer.

Traditional Shelters



Like the Inupiat, the **seal oil lamp** was used to heat these “underground” houses. Seal oil was placed in the dish and a wick was lit to provide heat for the home.

Traditional Transportation

An **umiak** was the traditional open water boat of the Yupik. It was used for hunting and trading expeditions. It was constructed of a driftwood frame and split walrus or bearded seal hide covered with seal oil.



Individual Yupik hunters also used **kayaks** to hunt close to shore.

Traditional Transportation

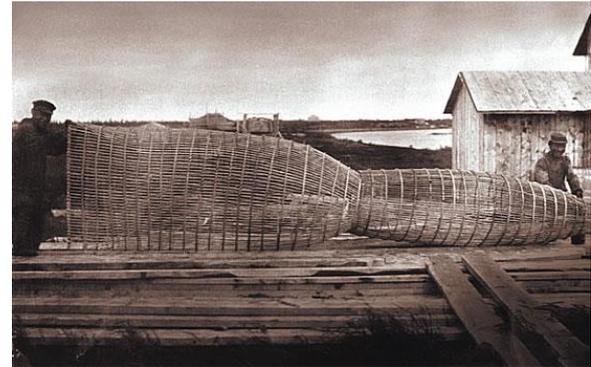
Though not known for the birch bark canoe, like the Athabascans, the Yup'ik also used the **birch bark canoe** in inland areas to travel upriver and downriver.



However, in most areas where the Yup'ik culture was present, there were no birch trees.

Traditional Yup'ik Tools

Before the gun, **bow and arrows** and **atlatls** and **harpoons** were common hunting tools. **Fish traps** were used before nets and fish wheels. **Sun goggles** were used to protect eyes while out on snowy tundra or rivers.



Traditional Clothing



Men and women wore a long-sleeved hoodless parka

Separate hoods made of caribou or squirrel skins and trimmed with other fur were worn in winter

Fish skin or seal gut jackets might be worn over parkas to shield from the cold wind and rain

Traditional Clothing



Like all native cultural groups, **traditional clothing** was based on the available resources in an area.

Seal skin or **caribou** overpants were common. **Mukluks** made with seal skin or fish skin were common. **Woven grass** or **caribou** hide socks also kept feet warm.

Fish skin and **seal gut** parkas were also traditional clothing for the Yup'ik.

Modern Yup'ik



Village of Goodnews Bay, at the mouth of the Goodnews River near, Goodnews Bay!

Many Yup'ik villages are located at the mouths or on good fishing locations on the numerous rivers in this region.....WHY?

Subsistence Foods SALMON!



With **all five species of salmon**, productive spawning grounds, and millions upon millions of returning salmon - SALMON is the most important subsistence resource to the Yup'ik people!

Subsistence Foods - Did I mention salmon?



Subsistence Foods



Other subsistence resources are important, like **caribou, seal and/or walrus, beluga whale, and migratory waterfowl.**

Subsistence Animal Uses



Bowhead whales were **NOT** hunted by the Yu'pik Eskimos
that was the Inupiat!



Yup'ik people hunted **beluga whales!**



Yup'ik Country



There are many Yup'ik villages in the southwest region. Notice where the villages are located. Why is this?

Larger Yup'ik Communities



Regional Hub:

Bethel

Pop. 17,000



Largest community in southern part of
the region: Dillingham

Pop. 4,500

Smaller Yup'ik Villages



Above Left: Pilot Station Pop. 550

Above Right: Togiak Pop. 800

Below Right: Kwethluk Pop. 700

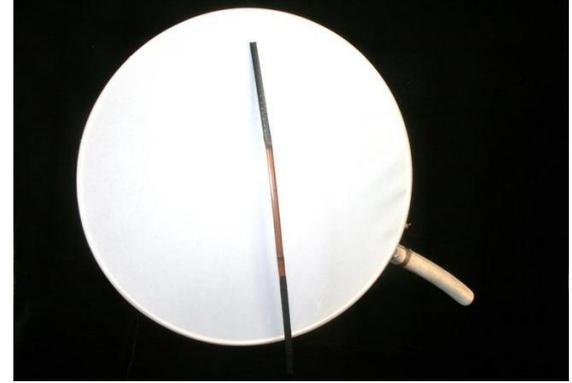
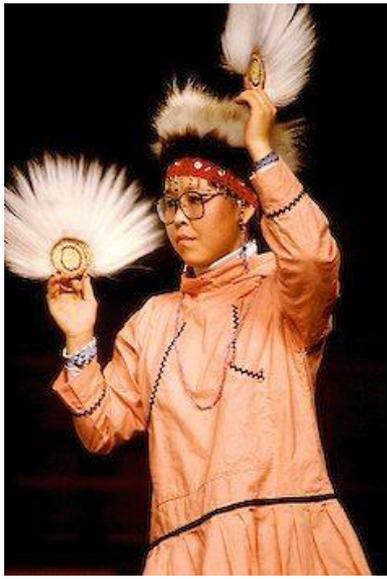
Modern Technology in Yup'ik Villages



Chronicle / Michael Maloney



Yup'ik Art



Yup'ik people danced to celebrate memorable deeds and to tell hunting stories. **Dances told a story!**



Yup'ik Art



Yupik masks are noticeably different from Inupiat masks. Yup'ik masks are carved from driftwood and typically have surrounding hoops and appendages coming from the main mask.

Yup'ik Art

Traditional clothing like these examples are often looked at as an art form from all Native cultures!

