



SOD HOUSES - *CIQLLUAT*

The traditional Alutiiq 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 ax-like tool. Blocks of sod or grasses were then piled over the frame for insulation. A small hole - *caqnaq* (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 - *amiik* (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 in seal stomach containers.

Attached to the central room were a number of side chambers for sleeping - *qawarwik* - and steam bathing - *maqiwincuk* (also known by the Russian term *banya*). Rocks heated in the hearth were carried to the *banya* with wooden tongs - *tuuyawik* - and splashed with cold water to create steam. The *maqiwincuk* 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 surrounded the entire house and its residents stored larger gear including kayak - *qayaq* - frames, paddles - *angyat* and fishing nets - *qugyasit*, on the roof. Racks for drying fish and meat - *initat* - were commonly constructed beside houses.

