



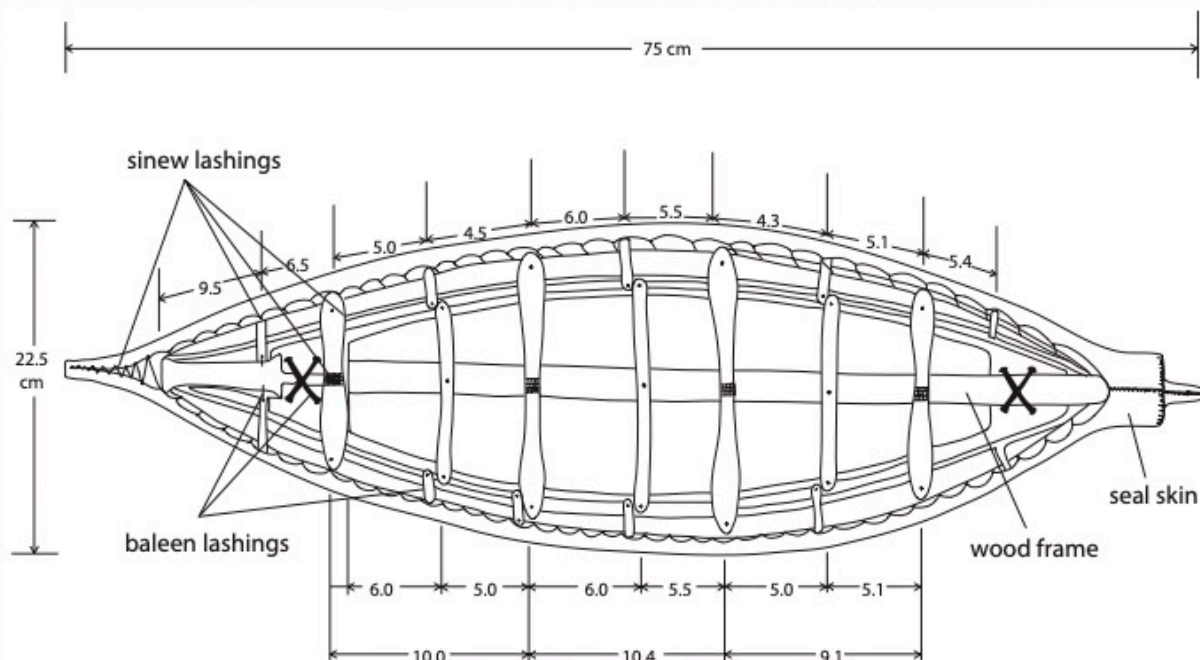
Angyaq – OPEN SKIN BOAT

Seaworthy boats are an essential tool for coastal peoples. The Alutiiq/Sugpiaq built two kinds, *qayat* (kayaks) and *angyat* (open boats). The *qayat* was like a sports car—a slender, speedy craft that carried one or two people, but limited amounts of gear. The *angyat* was more like a van—a large open boat with space for many travelers and loads of supplies. Historic accounts suggest that these sturdy vessels could carry as many as seventy people or the meat of an entire whale.

Up to 32 feet long, *angyat* had sturdy driftwood frames covered with sea mammal skins sewn with special leak-proof stitches. They were expertly designed for navigating Kodiak’s rough waters and landing in the surf. The *angyat* had a flat bottom with a v-shaped front floor, and a narrow, split and rounded bow. These features helped boats cut through waves. Paddlers knelt or sat on benches, and propelled the vessels with single-bladed paddles.

People used *angyat* for travel and trade. In 1833, Russian traders reported that the village of Karluk had one *angyat* with seven benches for paddlers. Villagers used the boat to transport bird-hunting crews to the Alaska Peninsula in summer, and carry goods to Kodiak in the fall. The boat probably carried between twenty and thirty people, as well as their gear.

Knowledge of *angyat* construction has faded from living memory, but boat models in museum collections, boat parts from archaeological sites, and the work of modern carvers are helping to reawaken the art.



Angyaq model illustration, collected in Karluk, 1883. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Catalog #EO90464. Illustration by Alisha Drabek from a drawing and measurements provided by Kathleen Skonberg.

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Open skin boats of the Aleutians, Kodiak Island, and Prince William Sound, 2012, by Evguenia Anichtchenko, *Études /Inuit/Studies* 36(1):157-181.