



**QIVIUT**

**ALASKAN HANDKNITS**



**OOMINGMAK**

**Musk Ox Producers' Co-Operative**



**The Musk Ox:** The Musk ox is a truly Arctic animal who survived the Ice Age. Their body is compact to conserve heat and their long guard hair protects them from weather, wind and mosquitoes. They are well adapted to the cold. In order to survive the harsh Arctic winter temperatures musk ox grow a thick layer of Qiviut (pronounced KI-VEE-UTE) over their entire body; this fine under wool is shed naturally each spring when it is no longer needed. The farm in Palmer is managed by Musk Ox Development Corporation. They comb off this fine fiber each spring. "Oomingmak" Musk Ox Producers Co-Operative purchases all the fiber harvested on the Musk Ox Farm and has it spun into yarn.



**The Qiviut Fiber:** Qiviut is very rare and one of the finest fibers in the world. It compares favorably with Cashmere and Vicuna. Qiviut has no barbs and does not scratch like wool. Qiviut does not shrink like most wools because it is a hair rather than a wool. The fine Qiviut fiber has good tensile strength, but does not hold up well under friction. This is why the Co-Op does not make socks, gloves or mittens.



**About the Co-Op:** Once we have purchased the Qiviut fiber from the Musk Ox Farm and a few other sources, we contract with a fiber expert to arrange the washing, de-hairing and spinning of the fiber. The members of the Co-Op are Native Alaskan women, who live in the remote villages of Alaska. The opportunity to knit the beautiful Qiviut items by hand allows them to earn a supplementary income to enhance their mostly subsistence lifestyle. For a yearly, nominal membership fee, the qiviut yarn is sent to them. They knit at their own pace, with no pressure from quotas or a set time frame for completion. Payment is per piece, along with a profit sharing at the years end. They are also free to select what they knit, and are very good at helping supply the items most in need.

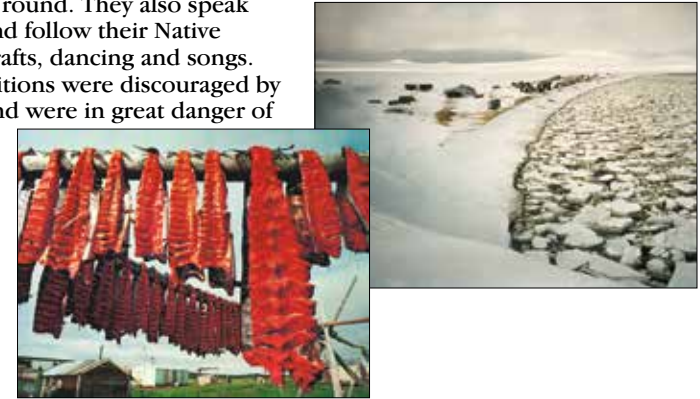


[www.qiviut.com](http://www.qiviut.com)

WE DO NOT SELL THE YARN, PATTERNS OR RAW FIBER.

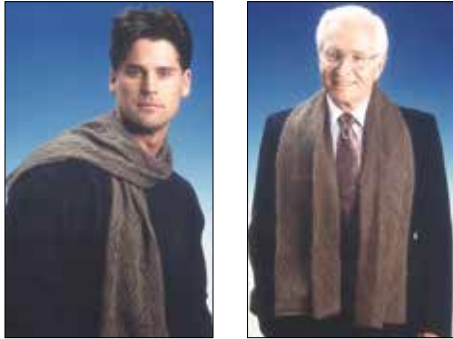
**Subsistence:** Most of the members of the Co-Operative are Yupik; they live in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Many of the villages are small and quite isolated. The only way to travel is by air. A ticket to Anchorage from most of these villages cost more than a ticket from Anchorage to Seattle. Since there are no roads, all their supplies must be transported in the summer by barge or flown in during the rest of the year. Cost of heating fuel, electricity, groceries, etc. are many times higher than in Anchorage.

People living in these remote villages have kept many of their traditions. They hunt and fish for a good part of their food, also gather edible plants, and berries, preserving them so they can be used year round. They also speak their Native languages and follow their Native traditions such as arts, crafts, dancing and songs. In many areas these traditions were discouraged by the early missionaries, and were in great danger of disappearing, now there is renewed interest in their Native languages and traditions. The Native people of Alaska have always lived in harmony with their surroundings. Their environment is part of who they are.



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# Traditional 100% Qiviut Light & Heavyweight Scarves



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LIGHT WEIGHT



1. **Mekoryuk (Harpoon)**  
From 1,200 year-old ivory harpoon head.

*\*We have fewer knitters in rare pattern villages which may affect availability.*



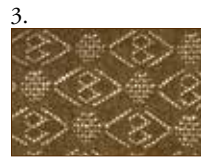
4.\* **Shishmaref (Star)**  
From the beaded top of a Mukluk.



2. **Bethel**  
From the trim on a fur parka.



5.\* **St. Marys (Dancers)**  
From ivory carving depicting Native dances.



3. **Nelson Island (Diamond)**  
From the trim on a fur parka.



6.\* **Unalakleet (Wolverine Mask)**  
Adapted from a dance mask used in dance ceremonies.

*\*We have fewer knitters in rare pattern villages which may affect availability.*



7.\* **Marshall**  
Adapted from a woven grass basket.



8.\* **Seal Hunt**  
Story scarf.



9.\* **Aleutian**  
Depicts a band of sea urchins.



10.\* **Sea Otter**  
Depicts sea otters at play.

*Scarves are knitted to approximate size, but due to individual tension, sizes vary.*

888-360-9665

# Traditional 100% Qiviut SmokeRings (Nachaq)



13. **Mekoryuk (Harpoon)**  
Four panels of solid and lace alternating.



14. **Mekoryuk (Harpoon)**  
Lacy all over.



15. **Bethel**  
From a fur parka trim.



16. **Nelson Island (Diamond)**  
From the trim on a fur parka.

*\*We have less knitters in rare pattern villages which may affect availability.*



17.\* **Unalakleet (Wolverine Mask)**



18.\* **Shishmaref (Star)**  
From the beaded top of a Mukluk.



19.\* **Nelson Island (Diamond)**  
From the trim on a fur parka.

HEAVY WEIGHT

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# Traditional 100% Qiviut Stoles & Tunic



Stole – Exquisite warmth on a cold day or elegant lightness for evening wear will enhance a lady of any age. Available in Mekoryuk's lacy Harpoon pattern or Nelson Island's Diamond parka trim pattern.



Nelson Island (Diamond) from a fur parka trim.



Mekoryuk's Harpoon design with five panels.



Tunic – Softly drapes to hip length from gathered shoulders, open at sides and belted with a hand-braided Qiviut tie. An attractive addition to any wardrobe, worn casually with slacks or elegantly with pearls.

*The tunic is also made with the heavy weight yarn.*

**Want to knit your own Qiviut cap?**



Cap Kit to knit your own 100% Qiviut cap.

***This is the ONLY way we sell the yarn.***

The cap kit comes with a skein of bulky weight yarn that is enough to do one of the three cap patterns that are included with the kit. Kit does not include knitting needles.

# Traditional 100% Qiviut Hats & Head Band

*\*We have less knitters in rare pattern villages which may affect availability.*

20.\*



Cloche Cap – close fitting, more like a beanie-style hat.

21.



Star Cap – with cuff and full crown. Styled like a stocking, cap can be worn floppy or folded for a more stylish look.

22.



Harpoon Cap – with cuff, close fitting, more like a watchman's cap.

23.



Baby Cap – with ear flaps and under-the-chin string ties. Will easily fit infants to three-year-olds.

25.\*



Headband from Unalakleet "Wolverine" derived from a traditional dance mask.

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# Tundra & Snow Hats

## 80% Qiviut 20% Silk

*\*All hats can have pom poms added, with extra charge.*

40.\*



Sunburst Cap –  
extra floppy large top.

41.



Igloo Cap –  
with ear flaps.

42.\*



Herders Cap –  
bell shaped with floppy brim.

43.



ABC Baby Cap –  
with ear flaps and under chin tie.

44.



Forest Cloche –  
close fitting skull cap.

45.



Tundra Beret –  
made to fold around center  
brown ring – or leave floppy.

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# Tundra & Snow Hats

## 80% Qiviut 20% Silk

### Head Bands

*All blended head bands are reversible.*

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50.



Hearts Head Band



(Reverse)

51.



Mirror Image Head Band



(Reverse)

52.



Potlatch Head Band



Checkerboard (Reverse)

53a.



Snowflake Head Band

53b.



Pack Ice Head Band (Reverse)

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**History of the Co-Op:** In the early 1950s John J. Teal Jr. started to domesticate the musk ox, so that the fiber, Qiviut, from the prehistoric animal could be used to enhance the lives of the Native people in Alaskan villages. In 1969, "Oomingmak" Musk Ox Producers' Co-Op was formed and originated the production of Qiviut items for the benefit of the Native people of the Arctic. Today there are several individuals both in Alaska and Canada who manufacture items from the musk ox wool for personal gain. The Co-Op members still knit the beautiful fiber to earn a supplemental income to their subsistence lifestyle in the remote villages of Alaska. This is helping the members maintain the values and traditions of the Alaskan native people that have been practiced for hundreds of years. The location of the remote villages make it extremely expensive to start businesses and maintain a profit margin. Because of this, there is a lack of available jobs for most local people, and many people end up leaving the villages to get a job that provides an income sufficient to sustain a family.

**QIVIUT:** Qiviut (pronounced KI-VEE-UTE), sometimes seen spelled in other ways, is the Eskimo word meaning down or underwool. The Eskimo languages, Inupiat and Yupik, were not written languages, therefore you will see many different ways to spell a Native word. Qiviut was the spelling adopted by the Co-Op in 1969, and is the most well known.

In the wild this fiber falls to the ground as it is shed, and is quickly destroyed by the harsh forces of nature. The domestic animals are combed, which makes it possible to harvest the fiber at its best. The Co-Op purchases all the fiber combed at the Palmer Musk Ox Farm, as well as the majority of the fiber produced at the Large Animal Research Station in Fairbanks. Other sources may include fiber gathered or harvested at remote job sites or locations or by Alaskan Natives.

**MUSK OX:** Contrary to popular belief the musk ox have no musk glands and are not closely related to the ox, but are much closer to the goat family. Musk oxen are also much smaller than most people imagine, a male stands about 4 to 5 feet at the shoulder, and weighs between 600 and 1000 pounds, whereas the females are shorter and weigh between 400 and 600 pounds. On the farm a female musk ox can produce one calf a year, whereas in the wild it is dependent on weather and food conditions and can stretch out to one calf every other year.

It is said that it takes 250 years to domesticate an animal, and the musk ox has only been farmed since the early 1950s, and cannot yet be reliably called domestic. The animals on the farm are more docile than the wild musk ox, but they still have very distinct personalities, with as much variation as you find in the human population. They are curious and innovative, and seem to show a sense of humor while being mischievous.

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## Why Qiviut?

- Because Qiviut is eight times warmer than sheep's wool by weight.
- Because it is in the natural ash brown color, which compliments any complexion and any outfit.
- Because Qiviut is one of the rarest fibers on earth.
- Because Qiviut will not shrink in any temperature of water.
- Because Qiviut is sensuous beyond measure, soft to the most sensitive skin.
- Because Qiviut contains no lanolin or natural oil.
- Because they are hand knitted with knitting needles by Alaskan Native Co-Op members from the remote villages.

Qiviut is a magnificent fiber that will keep you warm on cold days or comfortable on those chilly evenings out with family and friends. It is perfect for walking the dog or camping because it is light weight and can compact into a small space. You will never want to leave home without your wonderful Qiviut scarf, stole, hat, headband or versatile SmokeRing (Nachaq). You can appreciate the quality of Qiviut any place there is a chill in the air, like your air conditioned office. We all know that one person that is always cold. Why not give them the gift of softness and warmth? Patterns of hats and scarves and more, range from elegant to practical so there is something to be cherished and appreciated by every man, woman and child.



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## Oomingmak

Musk Ox Producers' Co-Operative

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