



**QIVIUT**

**ALASKAN HANDKNITS**



**OOMINGMAK**

**Musk Ox Producers' Co-Operative**



**About the Co-Op:** The members of the Co-Op are Alaskan Native men and 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. The location of the remote villages makes 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.



For a yearly, nominal membership fee, the qiviut yarn is sent to them from the Co-Op headquarters in Anchorage. The members knit at their own pace, in their own homes; with no pressure from quotas or time limits for completion. Payment is per piece, paid out to the knitter the next day and 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.

**Our Mission:** The Musk Ox Producers Co-Operative was formed by Alaskan Native knitters for the purposes of acquiring and processing qiviut into yarn. This yarn shall be used by the members for knitting garments to be sold by the co-operative. The purposes of this business are to provide an income to its members to the highest extent possible. Profits not needed for reinvestment in the business shall be shared by the members as a dividend, based upon their current production.

**QIVIUT:** Qiviut (pronounced KI-VEE-UTE) is the Yupik word meaning down or underwool. Qiviut was the spelling adopted by the Co-Op in 1969 and is the most well-known. In the spring the musk ox will naturally shed their qiviut, allowing them to cool off in the warm summer weather. People in areas where the musk ox are wild will find qiviut on the ground or in bushes from musk ox rubbing up against the trees while they are eating.



Qiviut is very rare and one of the finest fibers in the world, comparing 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. Therefore, the Co-Op does not make socks, gloves or mittens.

[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 to these areas is by air; a ticket to Anchorage from most of these remote villages costs 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. Village cost of heating fuel, electricity, groceries, etc. are many times higher than in Anchorage. The Co-Op mainly uses the U.S. Postal Service to send out yarn, supplies and correspondence to the members.

People living in these remote villages have kept many of their traditions. They hunt and fish for a good part of their food, also gathering edible plants and berries, preserving them so they can be used year-round. Many 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 Alaskan Native people have always tried to live 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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1.



**Mekoryuk (Harpoon)**

From 1,200 year-old ivory harpoon head.

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

2.



**Bethel**

From the trim on a fur parka.

3.



**Nelson Island (Diamond)**

From the trim on a fur parka.

4.\*



**Shishmaref (Star)**

From the beaded top of a Mukluk.

5.\*



**St. Marys (Dancers)**

From ivory carving depicting Native dances.

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

LIGHT WEIGHT

HEAVY WEIGHT

# Traditional 100% Qiviut SmokeRings (Nachaq)



13.



**Mekoryuk (Harpoon)**

Four panels of solid and lace alternating.

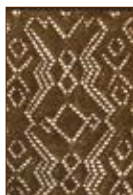
14.



**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.

11.



Nelson Island (Diamond) from a fur parka trim.

12.



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 or headband?



Purchase a  
"Knit Your Own" Kit

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

The Kit includes

5 patterns (3 cap patterns, 2 headband patterns), a skein of worsted weight 100% Qiviut yarn, which is enough to complete one of the patterns included in 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 Inside



Hearts Head Band Outside

51.



Mirror Image Head Band Inside



Mirror Image Head Band Outside

52.



Potlatch Head Band Inside



Potlatch Head Band Outside

53a.



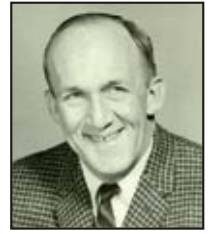
Snowflake Head Band Inside

53b.



Snowflake Head Band Outside

**History of the Co-Op:** In the early 1950s John J. Teal Jr. started to domesticate the musk ox on his farm in Vermont. His goal was to see if the fiber, Qiviut, from the prehistoric animal could be used to enhance the lives of the Alaskan Native people in villages where few job opportunities are available. From Vermont, he then captured musk ox in Alaska to start a herd for qiviut production and eventual domestication.



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. The first workshop was held in Mekoryuk, where our original 25 members knit a pattern based on a carved harpoon head. From Mekoryuk, the Co-Op has held workshops in 23 other remote areas, where many of the patterns are designed after traditional arts and artifacts

representing the culture of the people.

**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. 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. “Oomingmak” Musk Ox Producers Co-Operative purchases qiviut from sources throughout the state of Alaska and has it spun into yarn. It can take multiple years for the Co-Op to buy enough raw fiber to meet a spinning mills minimum weight requirement.



Contrary to popular belief the musk ox has 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. The majority of musk oxen in Alaska are wild, located on Nunivak Island, Nelson Island, Seward Peninsula and the North Slope. There are also captive musk oxen located in Fairbanks, Palmer and Portage.

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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 can be enjoyed whenever you are chilly or on those cold weather days. It is perfect for enjoying outdoor activities like camping, hiking, fishing, or walking the dog. The culturally inspired patterns of scarves, hats and Smoke Rings range from practical to elegant and appeals to those enjoying an evening out with friends and family or that chilly air-conditioned office. Qiviut's lightweight means that it can be taken anywhere and is compact enough to even fit in your luggage when traveling. Give the gift of warmth and softness and help the Alaskan Native Co-Op carry on traditional lifestyles with your support.



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Oomingmak

Musk Ox Producers' Co-Operative

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