Eskimos: Life and Survival in a Frozen Land

It’s freezing cold! There’s nothing but snow—and lots of it—for miles. Your home is made out of blocks of snow instead of bricks. How’s that for home, sweet home?

Eskimos are people who make their home in polar regions. Polar regions are known for their extreme cold and harsh conditions. Alaska, Canada, parts of Russia, and Greenland are such areas.

The Yupik and the Inuit are the two main groups of Eskimos. In Northern Canada, a territory called Nunavut was created for the native Inuits. The people there have their own government, but it is still part of Canada.

When people think of Eskimos, they usually picture hunters wearing coats trimmed with animal fur. They also think of an igloo, a round dome made out of blocks of snow that look like giant ice cubes. Actually, this image is accurate only for a small number of Eskimos who live in the northernmost regions, like Canada’s Arctic Islands or in Northwestern Greenland.

Eskimos who live on the Pacific coast rely on fish as their main source of food. Canadian Eskimos who live away from the shore hunt and eat caribou for food. Eskimos often eat raw meat. They have a limited diet, and cooking destroys some of the important nutrition the food provides.

Eskimos use dogsleds for travel and for transporting their gear over long distances. Eskimos who live near the coast often travel inland to fish in fresh water and to hunt. The dogsled is a necessary part of their nomadic life.

Modern-day Eskimos from the U.S. and Canada live in settled communities. They hunt with guns. They travel by snowmobile or other modern vehicles.

Trivia:
• Igloo is the Eskimo word for house.
• In Canada, the term Eskimo is considered insulting. They prefer the term Inuit.
• Eskimos have used dog power for travel and hunting for hundreds of years!