

Why eat raw meat?

Inuit have always eaten food raw, frozen, thawed out, dried, aged, or cached (Slightly aged) meat for thousands of years. People still eat uncooked meat today. There is a good reason for that.

Uncooked meat takes quite a while to digest whereas cooked meat will be digested very quickly. A person is kept energized as the food is processed in the stomach as he does his outdoor chores when raw meat is eaten. For a person to stay outdoors for a length of time, great deal of energy is needed. A hunter is encouraged to eat something from the “Sea” to keep them warm before he/she heads out hunting. Fat from sea mammals insulates the hunter from extreme cold. A hunter may be outdoors for weeks at a time without going home to a warm house. At this time, nutrition is extremely important to keep energy level up. Raw meat will keep the hunter energized and mobile to do his chores effectively and productively. A cooked meal will be digested much quicker than raw meat. Another good factor about raw meat is that animal meat will keep you warm even on a coldest day. When frozen food is eaten, a person will feel cold on the mouth, throat and stomach at first. After a while, he will start to warm up as the food starts to get processed in the stomach. Minus 40 degrees Celsius will feel like -20 instead. The only cold you will feel is will be around exposed skin like the face, and hands.

Other people have made fun of Inuit in the past for eating raw meat, but knowing the culture displays respect for those who do. Most people that are exposed to Inuit culture, respect them for who they are. To live in the North, is a totally different than living elsewhere, as they eat different food, wear different clothing and talk differently. To be effective on the land, in the Arctic, people have to adapt to the local food.

A person may sweat as the food gets processed in the stomach even when it's extremely cold outdoors after eating raw meat. A person may find it difficult to sleep when he has eaten raw meat before bed-time. Inuit try not to eat raw meat before bed-time, because you will sweat a great deal when the food starts to get processed in the stomach. A hangover will is nothing compared to “sweats” in the middle of the night (all night) from eating raw meat.

Inuit are known to have warm hands when you shake hands with them. That's from eating raw meat or mammal meat from the sea. People tend to get cold much quicker if they have not eaten any food from the land. Store bought food will not warm you up like country food would. They will warm you up briefly, but not for long as it's already cooked, it does not need much processing in the stomach.

It's okay to eat raw meat! Go ahead give it a try, next time before you head on the land. Better yet, have some raw meat on the land! Try some in town! “Mikigaq” is great for your body. It has kept Inuit alive for thousands of years!

By: Elijah Tigullaraq
May 2008