

A night sky filled with stars and a vibrant green aurora borealis. Below the sky, a range of rugged, snow-covered mountains is visible under the dark night.

GREENLAND

QUICK FACTS

— ABOUT GREENLAND —

Name:

Greenland (Greenlandic: Kalaallit Nunaat)

Population:

55,877 (1 January 2018)

Geography:

Stretching approximately 2,800 kilometres (1,750 miles) from north to south and approximately 1,000 kilometres (625 miles) from east to west, Greenland is the world's biggest island.

Government:

Constitutional monarchy. Greenland is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Flag:

The flag of Greenland Erfalasorput (our flag) features two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red with a large disk slightly to the hoist side of centre. The top half of the disk is red, the bottom half is white. The circle in the middle represents the sun setting on the horizon of the ice cap and the colors coincide with the flag of Denmark (Dannebrog).

VISIT *greenland*

Produced on a recycled paper.

Published by: *Visit Greenland A/S*

visitgreenland.com

Religion:

Predominantly Christian.

Language:

Greenlandic belongs to the Inuit-Aleut family of languages, which is spoken by some 80,000 Inuits in Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Greenlandic is the official language, other languages spoken being Danish and English.

Currency:

Danish Kroner (DKK) is the valid currency in Greenland.

Timezones:

Greenland stretches from UTC -1 to UTC -4 in standard time and UTC -0 to UTC -3 in the summertime.

Highest point:

Gunnbjørn Fjeld 3,694 m (12,119 ft) - also highest mountain north of the Arctic Circle.

Natural resources:

Fish (mainly shrimp and halibut), coal, iron ore, lead, zinc, molybdenum, diamonds, gold, platinum, niobium, tantalite, uranium, hydropower, possible oil and gas.

Helpful websites:

→ visitgreenland.com

→ nanoq.gl

→ asiaq.gl



WEATHER & CLIMATE



TEMPERATURES

Greenland has an Arctic climate with average temperatures that do not exceed 10° C (50° F) in the warmest summer months. Due to the very dry air, summer temperatures will often feel warmer than you might expect. If the sun is shining, T-shirts are perfectly adequate.



All towns are below freezing from November through to April. The winter is particularly cold in the very north of Greenland, for example in Upernavik, where the thermometer shows an average of -20° C (-4° F) in February.

THE WIND, RAIN AND SNOW



Many days are completely calm with glassy fjords and lakes. However, weather in the Arctic is unpredictable and there are days when it is best to stay indoors due to storms. The wind can gust up to 50 m/s (111 mph).

During the winter, the wind can increase the effect of the cold. Minus 5° C (23° F) feels a lot colder in a wind blowing at 10 m/s (22 mph). Quantities of snow vary locally, but during a heavy snow season, you may see piles of snow as high as light poles during the winter!

TOP EXPERIENCES

— IN GREENLAND —



NORTHERN LIGHTS

This phenomenon is a source of great interest to many of us living here in Greenland. We keep an eye out for the northern lights through online forecasts, follow live updates of how the northern lights are spreading across the Arctic, take lots of photos with great enthusiasm, and love to take our guests out in the dead of night to view the sky.

DOG SLEDDING

Dog sledding in Greenland has been a mode of transportation and hunting for approximately 5000 years. Recently, it has also become a leisure activity for Greenlanders and tourists.



PIONEERING PEOPLE

We are often called hospitable, cheerful and kind, but even if such universal traits will shape your experience of Greenlanders, we might be better characterized as adaptable, full of wanderlust, and culturally diverse. Meet us here.



MIDNIGHT SUN

See the warm and magical light of the midnight sun north of the Arctic Circle, which makes it possible to go sailing or hiking no matter what time of day it is.



WHALES

Set sail on a whale watching tour to spot humpback whales, fin whales and minke whales frolicking and feasting in Greenland's waters during their own summer holidays.



NORSE CULTURE

The Vikings (also known as 'Norsemen') inhabited Greenland for more than 400 hundred years, and left behind are a number of very well kept ruins in South Greenland. They also created a tradition of Arctic farming which today has become a cornerstone of everyday life in the area.



HIKING

Greenland is the last frontier, where robust nature reigns most powerful. Follow hiking trails to reach mountaintops or traverse long distances. You can even forge your own route and stand in no one's footsteps but your own.



THE ICE SHEET

This coast-to-coast ice cap has almost single-handedly formed the world's perceptions of our large northern country, and for the many populations who have lived in Greenland throughout the millennia, it has all but defined the entire way of life.



ICEBERGS

Greenlanders once used icebergs to distinguish the seasons and even to identify towns - a testament to their steadfast presence and to the intertwined quality of Greenlandic culture with our country's powerful nature. Media stress that the ice in Greenland is melting, and while this is absolutely true, as long as the Greenland Ice Sheet exists, icebergs of all shapes and sizes will fill these Arctic waters.





NORTHERN LIGHTS

The northern lights are Greenland's way of adding an extra bonus to the adventures of winter. It is free, there is enough for everyone and all it takes is for you to dress warmly, wear a sturdy pair of boots, add an ounce of patience, maybe carry with you a thermos of coffee, and then have someone there to share the adventure.



The most easily accessible destination in Greenland to view the northern lights is the airport settlement of Kangerlussuaq, uniquely located inland in lee of mountains and ice. Kangerlussuaq boasts more than 300 clear nights a year.

The season for watching the northern lights in Kangerlussuaq, which is from the end of September to the middle of April, is the same as in the rest of the country. Heading out on the only gravel road in Greenland, which leads directly to the Ice Sheet, the opportunities for seeing the northern lights are at their best, as there is hardly any man-made “pollution light” to speak of, even after travelling just a short stretch on the road. Although the situation is pretty unique in Kangerlussuaq, the northern lights are a common sight in the night sky in many places in Greenland. Even with the many street lamps in the capital city of Nuuk, the northern lights are clearly visible and will often make people stop, pause and look up at the sky on their way home from work.

We know for a fact that the same fascination that we feel and that you will feel while visiting, also challenged the imagination of our ancestors. In a well-known myth, we are told that when the northern lights dance across the night sky, it is the dead who are playing soccer with the skull of a walrus.

SCIENCE AND MYTH

What are the northern lights really? Northern lights are electrically charged particles from the sun, which hit our atmosphere, and create a natural phenomenon of light with altering colors, revealing how far above our planet the particles are, when they hit the atmosphere.

But is this scientific explanation of the Aurora Borealis really the reason why we, time after time, stop in our tracks when the northern lights flash across the night sky? Or are we reminded of something greater than ourselves, something almost magical that will even entice Greenlanders, who are thoroughly accustomed to seeing the northern lights, to look up at the night sky.

We know for a fact that the same fascination that we feel and that you will feel while visiting, also challenged the imagination of our ancestors. In a well-known myth, we are told that when the northern lights dance across the night sky, it is the dead who are playing soccer with the skull of a walrus.

DOG SLEDDING

— GREENLANDIC SLED DOGS —

There's something about experiencing Greenland's majestic landscapes from the perspective of a dog sled that snowmobiling or a ski tour simply cannot match. Maybe it is the slower pace that gives you plenty of time to take in all the impressions, or maybe it is the combination of sled dogs panting plus the rhythmic beat of their large paws, a sound suddenly magnified against a backdrop of pure silence.

Enjoying this fascinating experience of man and dog working together in nature does necessitate a small tolerance for chilly temperatures, but Arctic fanatics are not the only ones who can take pleasure in dog sledding. Even if the cold typically does not agree with you, it is nothing a cup of hot tea, borrowed sealskin garb, and a blanket made of reindeer skin can't fix.

Spending an afternoon riding along with Greenlandic sled dogs is something you won't soon forget. They have

a commanding presence with their shrill voices and the thick winter coats that allow them to endure winter's wrath.

The energy level and endurance of sled dogs is unmatched, and it seems the command 'Go' is completely unnecessary as they are constantly in 'Go' mode! Sled dogs howl and jump at the mere sight of the musher, and you better hold on to your dog sled or else these instinctive pullers will speed off without you!

Arctic temperatures and several meters of snow are no match for the natural impressions and cultural twist that will warm your soul while dog sledding in Greenland.





THE ART OF MUSHING

The sled dogs provide the power, but the real star in the dog sledding world is the musher. With a handful of command calls and a formidable whip as their only tools, the mushers skillfully drive their packs of sled dogs in order to safely reach their favorite fishing hole or hunting grounds.

Mastering the art of mushing is vital to prevent sled dogs' disobedience from turning into a matter of life or death, and in Greenland the learning starts early. Passing from one generation to the next, children often have their own small sleds and even a few dogs of their own, though they are never mistaken that the dogs are working animals and not pets. It is a proud day when a Greenlander forms his first pack and leads it over mountains and sea ice.





A TASTE OF GREENLAND

Meat from marine mammals, game, birds and fish has been the main ingredient in Greenlandic food for generations. The high meat content in the diet provided energy and nourishment all year round for a physically demanding existence in which the harsh Arctic winter could seriously tax one's reserves of energy.

The Greenlandic culinary culture is also closely tied to the old hunting community's strong social solidarity, where vital necessities depended on the catch being shared. Today, food and mealtimes remain a central part of Greenlanders' characteristic hospitality.

As a guest at Greenlandic eateries it is possible to taste traditional Greenlandic food – often as part of the highly regarded Greenlandic buffet. The majority of restaurants also have international menus that incorporate Greenlandic ingredients.

Food made from Greenlandic ingredients is always a unique culinary experience and the ingredients are often organic, since fish, game and marine animals roam free in their natural environment and are not given artificial feed or flavourings.

SPECIALITIES

— TO TASTE —

MUSK OX

The muskox carpaccio is a perfect example of local source, global format. This rich meat is also served in burgers, delicately grilled fillets, or slowly braised.



REINDEER

This incredibly tender and flavourful steak meat is a staple in most restaurants. At Hereford Beefstouw in Hotel Hans Egede in Nuuk, a 225g reindeer mignon graces the menu and will not leave you hungry.

SHRIMP

Greenlandic shrimps are among the best in the world as they grow slowly in the ice cold water. This ensures a good taste and crisp texture. The shrimps are boiled and frozen immediately after they are caught by the fishing trawlers. Self-peel shrimps are a nice and easy dish to serve your guests as the shrimps only need to be defrosted and peeled at the table.



LAMB

All Greenlandic lamb comes from the farms that dot South Greenland, and when you bite into its juicy meat – preferably seasoned with rosemary and Arctic thyme and then slow-roasted – you are tasting a unique delicacy.

WHALE

One of the favourites is the ribbons of delicately boiled mattak served with red sorrel, lemon and celery at Restaurant Ulo, Ilulissat.



LANGUAGE

Greenlandic belongs to the Eskimo family of languages. It is a 'polysynthetic' language, which means that words are formed with a root, one or more affixes and a suffix. A Greenlandic word can thus be very long and can mean what corresponds to a whole sentence in other languages.

The Greenlandic language is roughly divided into four dialects: South Greenlandic, West Greenlandic, East Greenlandic and the Thule dialect. West Greenlandic is the official language which all children learn in addition to Danish and English.

As is the case for all languages, Greenlandic continues to evolve, and when loanwords are not used, new, highly descriptive words are created. The word 'computer' is 'qarasaasiaq' in Greenlandic, which directly translated means 'artificial brain', whilst 'potato' is 'naatsiiat' – which actually means 'something for which one waits for a long time to grow up'.

In small towns and settlements, it is common for only Greenlandic to be spoken and English to be understood only to a limited degree. It is therefore a good idea to learn a few common phrases that can open up for communication during your trip:

Hello: Aluu

Goodbye: Baaj

How are you? Ajunngi?

Ok / Good: Ajunngilaq

Thank you: Qujanaq

You're welcome: Illillu

Help: Ikiu



HOLIDAYS

Greenlanders have cosy traditions and festive gatherings. The most celebrated are Christmas, New Year and National Day on June 21st .



CHRISTMAS

— IN GREENLAND —

In the towns, lights on Christmas trees and the characteristic red-orange Christmas stars are illuminated on the first Sunday of Advent, and the cosy atmosphere in the homes of most families is further enhanced as Christmas decorations are cut out and mulled wine and Christmas goodies are enjoyed.

It is a custom that on Christmas Eve children sing in front of the town's houses, after which they are given a generous portion of Christmas goodies by the occupants.

Christmas Eve is celebrated on 24th December with dancing around the Christmas tree, although many children have already received their presents in the morning!



THE RETURN OF THE SUN

Following months of winter darkness and clear starry skies in North Greenland it is particularly pleasing to see the sun reappear on the horizon.

The return of the sun is celebrated with family excursions, songs, coffee and cake in most of the towns north of the Arctic Circle.





NATIONAL DAY





21ST JUNE

Greenland's National Day is a national festival celebrated on 21st June, the longest day of the year. All towns and settlements celebrate the day with a similar programme consisting of songs and entertainment.



NEW YEAR
— IN GREENLAND —



New Year is celebrated in the same way as in Europe with good food, fireworks, singing and champagne – although there is a difference: on 31st December New Year is celebrated twice – firstly the Danish New Year at 8 p.m. (there is a 4-hour time difference) and then the Greenlandic New Year at midnight.

On both occasions the night sky and the snow-covered landscapes are illuminated by spectacular and colourful rockets.

HIKING

— IN GREENLAND —



In Greenland, the expansive backcountry literally knocks at the back door, and the urban sprawl has not plagued these pristine mountains and lakes. Greenlanders often say that even though we build our homes next to the nature – and there is plenty of life and vibrancy in the town limits – our hearts are always happiest in the great outdoors. Come hiking in Greenland to experience a country that loves the nature just as much as you do.





FACTS ABOUT HIKING

— IN GREENLAND —

The most popular mountains for hiking in Greenland are 300 – 1300 meters tall and can be accomplished in a day trip.

East Greenland has the tallest mountains in Greenland. The tallest is near Ittoqqortoormiit, called **Gunnbjørn Fjeld** (3700 meters).

One of the longest marked hiking trails is the **Arctic Circle Trail** between Kangerlussuaq and Sisimiut (160 km). Hikers typically take 8-9 nights to complete the trail.



Maps of hiking trails can be found in tour offices, in some book stores, and online. You can also purchase vital supplies, such as gas canisters and cartridges of butane, at the local stores - Pilersuisoq, Pisiffik or the Polaroil gas stations in every town and village in Greenland.

There is no privately owned land in Greenland. You are free to hike (and camp) anywhere you wish, but be respectful of surrounding people and land.

You can drink the water from flowing rivers while hiking in nature. You don't need purifiers to drink the water, as long as the waters are connected to a flowing river. For example, do not drink from a closed small lake. Follow the Leave No Trace mountain code and carry all trash with you for the duration of your hike.





MAP

— OF GREENLAND —



EVENT CALENDAR

There are things to do in Greenland all year round!

MARCH



ARCTIC CIRCLE RACE **SISIMIUT** MARCH

Considered by many to be the toughest cross-country skiing race in the world - skiers from all over the world race 160 km across 3 days, spending nights camping in tents in the wilderness.

APRIL

ARCTIC SOUNDS **SISIMIUT** MARCH/APRIL

Arctic Sounds is an annual music festival celebrating talent from Greenland as well as from other Nordic countries and Arctic regions. It takes place across two days at various venues throughout the city of Sisimiut.

JUNE



KANGIA RACE **ILULISSAT** JUNE

Kangia Race is an adventure race that is run in teams over three days. The race takes participants all over the Disko Bay area across varied and challenging terrain.

MIDNIGHT SUN MARATHON **AASIAAT** JUNE

The Aasiaat Midnight Sun Marathon takes place, as the name suggests, under the midnight sun. The island of Aasiaat does not have many roads to offer, meaning that the marathon route has to be lapped a few times in order to make up the full 42 km.

JULY



ARCTIC MIDNIGHT ORIENTEERING **ILULISSAT** JULY

Arctic Midnight Orienteering is a 4 day event which takes place during the period of 24 hour daylight in Ilulissat. The terrain is challenging, but racers are rewarded by striking, open views of the ocean dotted with islands and icebergs.

AUGUST



DISKO ARTS FESTIVAL **ILULISSAT** AUGUST

Disko Arts Festival is a relatively new celebration of contemporary music, theatre and performance. It takes place both in Ilulissat and in the small settlement of Oqaatsut. Events are varied and experimental, and often feature collaborations with other international artists.

IGASA FOOD FESTIVAL **NANORTALIK** AUGUST

Greenlanders love to celebrate their culinary culture, and Igasa (meaning “Let’s cook” in Greenlandic) is one of the best ways to experience it for yourself. It takes place in South Greenland, which is the region famous for its farm produce, and focuses on Greenlandic ingredients and encouraging self-sufficiency in the region.



LEIF ERIKSSON MARATHON **QASSIARSUK** AUGUST

The Leif Eriksson Marathon is named after the son of the fabled Viking, Erik the Red. Qassiarsuk, the settlement where the marathon begins and ends, is believed to be Leif Eriksson’s childhood home.

QOOQQUT FESTIVAL **NUUK** AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Qooqqut Festival is a weekend-long music festival that is a real getaway. It takes place in the Nuuk fjord system in a secluded bay that is transformed into a festival ground for the weekend using tents and marquees. The festival is focused on family entertainment and is alcohol-free.

COLOURFUL NUUK MARATHON **NUUK** AUG./SEP.

For those who prefer a city marathon, the Colourful Nuuk Marathon takes place towards the end of summer. Although the route is mostly on paved roads, this does not mean that the event is any easier than Greenland’s other marathons.

SEPTEMBER



NUUK NORDISK FESTIVAL **NUUK** AUG./SEP.

Nuuk Nordisk Festival is a celebration of collaborative culture from all over the Northern world. All sorts of contemporary art and culture, from theatre, dance and visual arts, to music and literature, are presented in more than 50 venues across Nuuk, over the space of a week. Nuuk Nordisk happens once every other year. The next Nuuk Nordisk will be in 2019.

OCTOBER



POLAR CIRCLE MARATHON **KANGERLUSSUAQ** OCT.

The Polar Circle Marathon is unique in that it is the only marathon in which you can run on Greenland’s ice cap itself. The majority of the course, however, is run on road, which is often covered in snow, due to the race taking place in late October.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How am I covered if I hurt myself or get sick?

You must have your own health insurance when traveling to Greenland.

There are hospitals in the towns and nursing clinics in the settlements.

If you use medication regularly it is recommended that you bring your own medicine for your stay in Greenland.

Are there any places to shop in Greenland?

In larger towns in Greenland you may be surprised at the variety of shops and goods. There may only be a few shops, but the selection is wide. Often there are one or two larger supermarkets selling everything from hardware to milk, and a selection of smaller specialized shops. In Nuuk you will find the first proper mall in Greenland.

In smaller towns and settlements the selection is smaller. Here there may only be a single store dealing in food, hunting equipment, fishing tackle and other items necessary. You may also find postcards and greenlandic handicrafts for sale here. The store usually also functions as a post office and a bank.

There is no VAT in Greenland, but as most goods must be either shipped or flown in, prices tend to be on par with or a bit higher than in Northern Europe.

In Greenlandic shops prices are set and not for negotiation. This is also the case for most street vendors. Do not attempt to haggle unless expressly invited to.

What about tipping?

All prices in Greenland include tips and gratuity.

If you find the service at a restaurant or by a guide to be good, gratuity is appreciated. How much you wish to give is entirely up to you.

Also feel free to express if the service exceeded your expectations, as this both encourages and makes the service provider conscious of what they are doing well.

Which currency and credit cards can I use?

Danish Kroner (DKK) is the valid currency in Greenland. Some souvenir shops may accept foreign currency, but only in notes. In smaller towns and settlements, the local Pilersuisoq shop accepts cash in Danish Kroner, Euro, US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, British Pounds, Norwegian Kroner and Swedish Kroner.

As a general rule it is always a good idea to bring cash in DKK, especially when visiting small towns and settlements. The following credit cards are accepted in Cash Dispensers (ATMs): Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, Diners, Dankort and American Express. Pin-code must be used to draw money.

Cash Dispensers (ATMs) are found in the following towns: Nanortalik, Narsaq, Qaqortoq, Paamiut, Nuuk, Maniitsoq, Sisimiut, Kangerlussuaq, Aasiaat, Qasigiannuit, Ilulissat, Qeqertarsuaq, Uummannaq, Upernavik, Tasiilaq.

I've heard there are many mosquitos in Greenland. Is this true?

There are mosquitoes and midges (small black flies) in the summer months, approximately from June to August. When the first night frost appears they disappear. Greenland's coast is big, and the night frost happens sooner in some places than in others depending on where you are. We advise visitors to bring mosquito nets, repellent and after-bite, or buy it upon arrival. These can be bought in several places in the towns.

PHOTO CREDITS: PAGES

Paul Zizka: 8

Ace & Ace: 14

Serena Ho: 29 [3.]

Klaus Eskildsen: 17 [2.]

Lola Akinmade Åkerström: 29 [1.]

Mads Pihl: 1 | 4 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 26 | 28 | 29 [2.]

Rebecca Gustafsson: 2 | 6 | 10 | 12 | 15 [1st] | 16 | 18 | 29 [4.] | 30

What shall I bring and wear?

In general we advise you to bring:

- Waterproof and breathable footwear with a good grip and support around your ankles. Many places in Greenland you will find yourself walking on rocks, gravel or dirt tracks. Proper footwear may be the difference between great and bad experiences.
- Rain- and windproof breathable clothing. Even on days with blue skies, the weather may change and the wind is almost always cool. A light and packable jacket allows you to wear it when needed.
- Warm clothing, to wear if the temperature changes.
- Warm and sheltering headwear. Your head is one of the main areas of warmth drain and should be covered in cold conditions. In high summer the sun can be very strong, and a hat or cap can come in handy.
- Gloves. To protect your hands on the water and chilly days.
- Sunglasses. The sun is very strong during summer and especially on the water.
- Sunscreen for exposed skin. In summer the air may feel cool, but the sun still burns.
- Mosquito net and repellent. Especially in July and August. If you are allergic to insect bites, you should bring antihistamine.

Do I need a visa and passport when travelling to Greenland?

1) You do not need a visa as a Dane, but if you come from a country from which a visa is required to enter Denmark, it should be noted that you are travelling on to Greenland. Remember to take your passport with you, as security regulations may require that you provide proof of identity both upon arrival and on departure.

2. To apply for a visa to Greenland you have to contact the Danish immigration service at Ny i Danmark or your local Danish embassy. If you need a visa to enter Denmark, please be aware that you need a special permit to enter Greenland, as Greenland is outside the Schengen agreement.

How should I behave upon meeting locals?

Most people in Greenland welcome visitors and are in many cases just as curious as you are. For many visitors and locals, the best experiences come from meeting and engaging with each other in a way that provides value for both. This can be anything from a simple smile or conversation, to engaging in shared activities.

Even if a small Greenlandic village may seem like another world from your home, the general rule of conduct is not to behave in a way that you wouldn't at home.

There are, however, some special considerations, as most settlements in Greenland are working areas and designed for local use. In North Greenland sled dogs are not pets and should never be approached. You may find tools and equipment apparently lying around, but rest assured, it belongs to someone and has a purpose.

Ask your onboard guides if there are special considerations before going ashore, and follow this simple advice:

- Smile and say hello
- Ask before you take pictures, and always respect a "no"
- Talk to people, not about them
- Respect local habits
- If invited into a local's home, always remember to take off your shoes before entering

Should I be worried about polar bears and if so is it possible to rent rifles for protection?

1. One should always be cautious. Talk to the locals from where your hike starts. If a polar bear has recently been spotted, they would know. It is unlikely that you will see a polar bear but chances of encountering polar bears are more likely in the remote parts of north and/or east Greenland. For summer hikers: there will still be ice floes coming from the North Pole, and polar bears tend to travel along the coastline following these.

2. Destination East Greenland does rent out rifles.



VISIT *Greenland*

VISITGREENLAND.COM