



GREENLAND: WILD WALKS



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Climbing unnamed peak above camp, DAY 5

- ***A series of dramatic and varied walks***
- ***Spectacular scenery***
- ***Boat supported camps with the help of Inuit hunters***
- ***Remote walks with some - but not too much - backpacking***

East Greenland

Greenland, the world's largest island, is formed from some of the oldest rock in the world, much of it covered by an icecap several kilometres thick. The east coast is steep and rugged, with mountains divided by deep fjords and glaciers calving straight into the sea. East Greenland is less accessible than the west coast due to pack ice drifting down from the polar region. Supply ships can only approach the main town of Tasiilaq, formerly known as Ammassalik, during the brief months of the summer.

There is a sense of excitement and anticipation as the first boat of the season arrives, usually early July, bringing fresh fruit, vegetables and a whole bounty of goods from Denmark. Colourful villages provide an insight into a way of life far removed from city life, with the Inuit maintaining the old traditions of hunting and fishing. The catch is strung up on racks to dry, alongside the occasional polar bear skin.

Trip summary

The aim on this trip is to access some remote and beautiful areas with magnificent walking with only as much backpacking as is needed to do this. The latter has been kept to a minimum with only one full day and three short days and this small amount of backpacking coupled with a food cache allows us access to some tremendous mountain days in a seldom visited area. The isolation and its accompanying silence is moving.

Especially when backpacking, the pace will be unhurried, with time allowed to savour our surroundings. In the event of bad weather or sea conditions, we may need to rejig the itinerary, so we ask that you maintain a flexible approach to the trip.

Trip grade

This trip has been graded 'Tough' to allow for the backpacking, the remoteness and for the possibility of bad weather which could make it harder. In ideal conditions the trip may seem more like 'steady plus', especially if you are used to backpacking.

Accommodation

In Tasiilaq we stay in a hostel and on trek we camp in two person tents. In Reykjavik we stay in a guesthouse about 15 mins walk from the town centre. (B&B).

Food

In Greenland all meals are included apart from lunch and dinner on the final day. This is a 'hands on' holiday and all cooking is done communally, with help required for meal preparation and washing up. Camping food includes dehydrated meals, tinned meats, fish, cheese, rice, pasta, potatoes, wholemeal Danish bread etc. If you don't eat meat or fish, please contact us - you will be asked to bring a few favourite items to ensure you have a balanced diet. Greenlanders are a nation of hunters so fresh vegetarian supplies are extremely limited. The cost of any vegetarian food used on the trip will be refunded.



"Its my turn to cook"

Climate

Temperatures in July and August normally range from 2°C to 16°C and the weather is often clear and sunny, though wet and/or windy weather is possible and snow can fall in the mountains at any time of year. You should come prepared for any weather, with good waterproofs and warm clothes, but bring shorts and sun hat too, and hope for the best. Overnight frost is possible.

Insects

Black fly and mosquitoes can be troublesome, and a head net and good repellent are on the kit list. Most years the problem is restricted to windless days as the breeze normally keeps flies away.

Transport

We travel between Kulusuk & Tasiilaq by boat. Boats will also support our camps by transporting us and/or our luggage. In good weather the boat trips are a highlight, and in any weather you will need to wrap up well as the air around icebergs does tend to be chilly.

Money

Danish Kronor (DKK) is the currency used in Greenland. Personal expenses will include one lunch and dinner in Tasiilaq, postcards, maps, coffees, drinks and gifts. There are some interesting Inuit carvings available.

The Icelandic Krona (ISK) is the local currency in Iceland. You will need money for meals in Reykjavik. Credit cards can be used in restaurants and shops.

Equipment

Tents and cooking gear are provided, though some people prefer to bring their own tent. Crampons will be required for crossing a small icecap and also in case we encounter hard snow conditions, backed up by an ice axe and/or ski sticks. Previous experience of using crampons is not necessary, as instruction will be given. However there may not be suitable terrain for instructing the use of an ice axe, so if you don't know how to ice axe brake, you may prefer just to bring ski sticks, which are better for flat terrain. If there is more hard snow/ice than expected, our route will be tailored to the specific conditions we meet. Ice axe and crampons can be hired from an outdoor supplier in Scotland – details are in the kit list, which will be sent when you book.

Maps

There are some excellent maps of East Greenland produced in 1995 by the Danish Committee for Hiking Tourism in Greenland. Tasiilaq (1:100,000) covers our walks on Ammassalik Island. This may be available from Stanfords <http://www.stanfords.co.uk> or from Inger Hauge, Atuagkat Book Shop, Box 1009, 3900 Nuuk, Greenland, Fax 00 299 23378, E mail: atuagkat@greenet.gl or from www.scanmaps.dk, a Danish mail order map supplier with a good English web page. There is slightly inaccurate but useful map called Angmagssalik (old spelling) which gives an overview of the whole area and includes our mainland expedition. It also has some interesting info and old photographs on the back of the map, and is published in Danish or English. It is produced by Saga, 1:250,000, and may be available online or at Kulusuk Airport or Tasiilaq.

Reykjavik extension

It is possible to extend your trip by a night or two to see more of Reykjavik - subject to flight availability. The capital is an attractive and stylish city with impressive art galleries, museums and geothermal bathing pools.

What our clients say....

"I just wanted to write and thank you for a life changing experience in Greenland. All the arrangements were flawless and allowed me to concentrate on soaking up the experience. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the pristine wilderness, the pure air and water and most of all, the peace. I will never forget my time in Greenland."

Richard Kefford Wild Walks, Greenland Aug 07



Boat pick up photo John Pulford

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Most people will fly to Iceland from the UK, however some of you may prefer to meet up with the group in Reykjavik.

The word 'backpacking' is mentioned whenever we will be carrying tents & food. All other walking times are for day walks carrying day gear only.

- DAY 1 Flight to Keflavik. Transfer to our guesthouse in Reykjavik.
- DAY 2 A 2 hour flight from Reykjavik to the island of Kulusuk, with exciting views of the inland ice and Greenland's mountainous east coast, best viewed from RHS of plane. A boat transfer takes us to the town of Tasiilaq, our base for the next two nights. Afternoon walk to stretch legs and take in our new surroundings. Guesthouse. (B,D)
- DAY 3 Tasiilaq, (formerly Ammassalik), means 'that which looks like a lake', and is the biggest settlement on Greenland's east coast. The houses are colourful & wooden, perched on rock. Today we climb the peak of Qaqqartivakajik (679m). Following a ridge, we climb gradually with the occasional scramble to this easy rocky summit from which there are great views down to the Polar Stream, north to Mittivakat Glacier and east across Ammassalik Fjord to Kulusuk. 6 hours. On our return, we will prepare and pack for the days ahead. Guesthouse. (B,L,D)
- DAY 4 Our supplies are packed into a boat and we set off through the polar stream, often surrounded by icebergs. Whales frequent these waters and with luck we will be treated to an encounter. Our boatman has to weave between icebergs to drop us on a rocky shore from where we walk to our basecamp for the next two nights, situated by the outflow of a large lake. Backpacking approx 3 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 5 The peak behind our camp beckons for magnificent views of the coastline and the inland ice. A memorable day. Perhaps a visiting arctic fox at dusk? B,L,D
- DAY 6 Skirting the edge of the lake, we cross a boulder field and have an early lunch on a rocky pedestal. A lightweight foray to the edge of the inland ice reveals this massive ice sheet at close quarters. Picking up our gear again we continue to our next camp. Backpacking approx 5 hours, side trip 2 hours.
- DAY 7 At its highest point, the dogsled route joins the icecap, which extends over 600km to Greenland's west coast. Our route crosses this watershed and drops down to a remote fjord littered with icebergs from the glaciers which flow into it from the icecap. We pick up a food cache at the end of the fjord, and camp by its shore, listening to a silence broken only by the crashing which reverberates



By the inland ice photo Roope Roine

around the fjord as icebergs adjust their weight and rebalance. This is the longest backpacking day, approx 7 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 A short day today as we move our camp to a good spot for accessing tomorrow's walk. Plenty of time for photography, relaxing and taking in the magnitude of the landscape. Backpacking 1-2 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 It's time to gain some height again and we climb a rocky spur to a view point from which Sermilik Fjord and the icecap are laid out at our feet. Tremendous views. 4-7 hours, how high we get depends on conditions. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 Our boat returns and we cross the fjord to be dropped near the start of a dogsled route between the now abandoned village of Ikateq and Kong Oskar's Havn on the far side of Ammassalik Island. Initially the route is intricate, and may be hard to find in poor visibility. Once we have negotiated initial steep ground, the walking is on a good track, made easier by carrying only day gear. We rendezvous with our boat and luggage and a short hop across Kong Oskar's Havn drops us in a bay at the far side of the fjord. 7 hour walk. (B,L,D)



DAY 11 From our final camp, we climb high on Sofia's Fjeld for views to the north beyond the Arctic Circle. A fitting finale. 6-8 hours. (B,L,D)

High on Sofia's Fjeld

DAY 12 We pack up camp and cross Kong Oskar's Havn to spend a day around the town. You may like to visit the museum where displays of artefacts from days gone by help us to understand the harsh stone-age lifestyle which locals faced until not so long ago when men would hunt polar bears, whale and seal from skin clad kayaks armed only with a harpoon. If our boat man isn't out hunting today, he may have time to show us his sledge dogs and describe his life in winter. Only breakfast is included today - for lunch you can sample fresh Danish baking, and for dinner we'll have a final celebratory meal at the hotel. (B)

DAY 13 We return to Kulusuk by boat, always on the lookout for whales. If the weather is good on the flight to Reykjavik, the pilot may fly along the coast only a few hundred metres from the vast Karaali and Knud Rasmussen Glaciers, giving a breathtaking aerial view of the dramatic ice sheets spewing into the sea. (B)

DAY 14 Flight from Keflavik OR extend your stay in Reykjavik. (B)

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