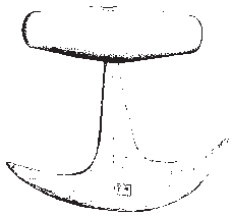


A scenic view of a fjord in North Greenland. The water is a deep blue, and several large icebergs are floating in the distance. In the foreground, a dark tent is pitched on a grassy bank, and two people are sitting on the ground, looking out at the water. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Does the sun also shine in North Greenland...?

# Welcome to North Greenland

*The warm light from the midnight sun casts a dream-like glow over the landscape.*



North Greenland is a giant paradise for the adventurous at heart. Kangaatsiaq in the south is separated from Qaanaaq in the north by 1,200 kilometres of landscapes ready to share an abundance of outstanding experiences.

Since you are north of the polar Circle, the summer sun shines 24 hours a day, going black later on as it turns over the “stage” to the colourful northern lights.

The culture is Greenlandic - North Greenlandic. Along the coast are more than 30 small settlements where hunting is still the primary occupation, and where the unique

skills demanded of this hunting-based culture are still going strong. In these small, closely-knit communities, dogsledding, kayaking and handicrafts have been nurtured to perfection over the centuries. Here too you will encounter the North Greenlandic hospitality

## Yes... 24 hours a day

that has become deeply rooted by necessity in the spirit of the inhabitants. In these parts, hospitality has traditionally been more a question of survival than friendliness.

Though much of North Greenland remains unchanged, the convenience of accommodation and travel here has greatly improved. There is no need to embark on an expedition into no man’s land like an adventurous Danish prince did recently; North Greenland can also be experienced from the comfortable base of a modern hotel or a cruise ship - and from here discover a great outdoors you cannot experience anywhere else in the world. Welcome to North Greenland.



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In the spring of 2000, Denmark’s Crown Prince Frederik and five other participants completed a 2,500 kilometre dogsled expedition starting at Qaanaaq, North Greenland and ending at Daneborg on the north-east coast of Greenland. The journey lasted 110 days.

A person wearing a red jacket and sunglasses is seen from the side, pulling a sled on a snowy slope. The sled is being pulled by a team of white dogs. The scene is set in a snowy, mountainous area under a clear blue sky. A red circle is visible on the left side of the image.

Can you have fun in North Greenland...?

## Dogsleds



*Remember that in Greenland dogsleds always have the right of way.*

The dogsled is the national vehicle of North Greenland. This seemingly primitive means of transport was developed and refined over the course of millennia and today easily outperforms various snowmobiles and fulltrack vehicles. As a result, hunters and others prefer the dogsled when travelling in districts where they are totally dependent on their vehicles.

Dogsleds in the northernmost regions differ from their more southerly counterparts in that they are longer for crossing over cracks and crevices in the sea ice. Also, since the sled is not nailed, but tied together, it has added flexibility for pushing its way through rugged terrain. A veritable off-roader. Ten to twelve “dogpower” is the



most common “engine size”, enough to reach considerable speeds on the rapid surfaces.

A dogsled ride is a fantastic experience for the passengers, and it’s not bad for the dogs either. Their perky tails express their joy at pulling and running with all their might. Happy dogs do not prove anything to a North Greenlander however. To hunters, the dogs are indispensable instruments and therefore demand nurturing and care.

## Yes... royally!



*Do not pat the dogs. They may look friendly, but they are not pets.*

on North Greenland’s snow should deprive him or herself of the experience of following in the sled tracks of celebrities at high speeds across the ice on the heels of a pack of panting dogs.

North Greenland has been the starting point for countless historic sledding expeditions, from the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen to the Crown Prince of Denmark. And no one who sets foot



If you say “ILI, ILI, ILI”, your dog team will turn right, and if you say “IU, IU, IU” they will turn left but it is better to let your dogsled driver handle these commands. He knows his sled dogs inside out and controls them with his cries and his guiding whip whose whiplash doesn’t hit the dogs but indicates the direction.



Are there environmentalists in  
North Greenland too...?

## Inuit Culture



*Even whale bones are used in house-building.*

The North Greenlandic culture has deep roots. And it is very difficult to understand the contemporary society without being aware of the ancient hunting culture and its total dependence on nature.

The first Inuit people arrived in Greenland from the American continent as early as 2,500 BC. They were hunters following in the tracks of the musk ox. This endless hunt for food was of vital importance to the Inuits. If the food moved on, the Inuit had to be ready to break camp. This resulted in a distinctive culture where it was important to own as few personal belongings as possible.

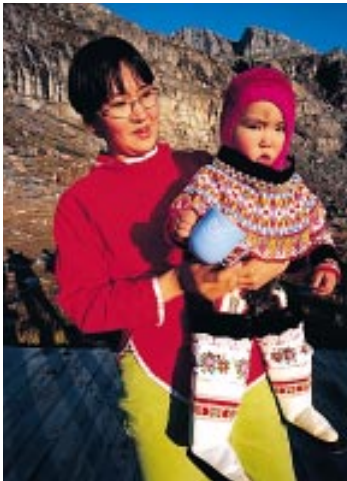
Only a few things were absolutely necessary. For men, this meant hunting implements like harpoons and spears, for women, sewing



needles. Later on came the kayak, the umiak (women's boat) and the summer tent, but little else. Practically all implements and clothing were made from the animals they hunted. As the animals were the only "raw material" the Inuit had, nothing went to waste. They did not even have wood, with the exception of driftwood that occasionally washed up on the shore.

It was a harsh life where only the toughest survived. A life at the mercy of wind and weather. Therefore, the Inuit shared a common, inevitable respect for "Sila" – the "up above".

# Yes... they have been here for the past 4,500 years



The Inuit were incapable of violating nature because they knew they would be jeopardizing their very existence. The Inuit were environmentalists 4,500 years before it became fashionable.

This harsh life did not make the Inuit pessimistic and withdrawn however. Little was needed to evoke laughter, and their hospitality was unparalleled. To them, it was a wonderful treat to be visited by strangers perhaps bringing new versions of the myths – the fantastic migratory legends they told to each other during the long, dark nights.

Today you will encounter the age-old Inuit culture throughout North Greenland. Mainly in the hunting communities where the old "crafts" are still honoured. Then in the general population where the hospitality, humour and the respect for nature lives on. And finally at the many museums where you can see the implements and the handicraft that attest to an age-old way of life that is thoroughly in harmony with nature.

*In many cases, a Greenland woman has at least three national costumes in her lifetime: One for the first day of school, one for confirmation and one as an adult.*

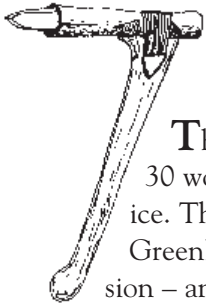


The native peoples who today inhabit the Arctic regions in Siberia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland are now called Inuit, which can be translated as "people". The term "Eskimo" is no longer used. Greenlanders refer to themselves as "kalaallit", and the Greenlandic name of Greenland is "Kalaallit Nunaat", which means "kalaallit's land".



Can mountains be moved in  
North Greenland...?

## The Ice



The Greenlandic language has more than 30 words for the different types of snow and ice. The ice is nothing short of the North Greenlandic nature's primary form of expression – and it expresses itself impressively and with immense beauty.

The North Greenlandic icebergs can be as high as 100 metres – and that is only the part over the water line. They are colossal objects jutting vertically out of the water in tremendous forms and shapes. Yet they are also graceful and fantastically beautiful as they move quietly along the surface of the sea.

The icebergs are created by the inland ice that splits them off into the sea with a staggering force. The most productive glacier in the northern hemisphere is located in Ilulissat Ice Fjord.



It produces 20 million tonnes of ice per day – equal to the volume of water used by New York City over an entire year! The inland ice itself covers 85% of the world's largest island. At its peak, it is more than 3,000 metres thick and up to 100,000 years old. Borings into the core of the inland ice describe climatic changes and volcanic eruptions on the northern hemisphere. In other words, the ice is a deep-freeze archive of world history, making it a popular destination for researchers. For everyone else, it is “just” an overwhelming nature experience. Standing on the inland ice, you will experience utter tranquility, both as you behold the fantastic landscape

## Yes... very gracefully



and as you gaze into your soul.

The Greenlandic ice must be treated with respect however – otherwise the beauty becomes hazardous.

The gigantic icebergs are melting and can suddenly tip. When the glaciers calve the icebergs, they can produce tidal waves 10 metres high. And the inland ice is filled with cracks and clefts that are visible out on the edge, but often covered by a layer of snow further inland. By treating the ice with caution however, you can experience some of the most magnificent natural splendour in the whole world. The ice may be cold, but it will melt your heart in the twinkling of an eye.

*In Greenland, you can indeed see very far.*

If Greenland's ice were to melt, the oceans would rise by up to seven metres - Greenland's inland ice binds enormous freshwater resources. The first crossing of the inland ice was made in 1888 by Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen. Today, many expeditions across the ice cap depart from Kangerlussuaq in the west and Isortoq in the east. Permission must be obtained from [www.dpc.dk](http://www.dpc.dk)

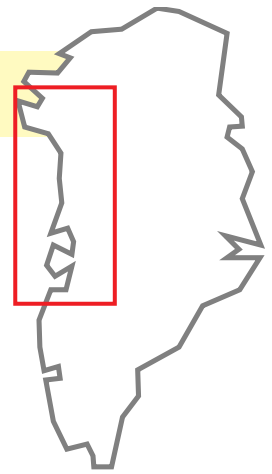




## Travelling to North Greenland



The towns of North Greenland are served by helicopter routes; here a four-engine DASH 7 craft that conveys a maximum of 50 passengers.



ty makes the climate feel milder than the temperature on the thermometer, and further inland local temperatures can approach 20° C. In the height of summer, mosquitoes can abound, so remember to bring a mosquito net and mosquito repellent.

### How to get there:

The gateway to North Greenland is the international airport at Kangerlussuaq / Sdr. Strømfjord. It only takes 4.5 hours to fly there from Copenhagen and 2.5 hours from Iceland. There is air service from Kangerlussuaq to Aasiaat, Ilulissat, Qaarsut, Upernavik and Pituffik, while Kangaatsiaq, Qasigiannugit, Qeqertarsuaq, Uummannaq and Qaanaaq are served by helicopter from the nearest airport. Travelling to Qaanaaq requires special permission, since the flight touches down at Pituffik, a US airbase. To apply for permission, please contact the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or a Danish embassy. During the ice-free period, the passenger ships of the Arctic Umiq Lines serve the district from Kangerlussuaq to Uummannaq.

### Clothing:

No matter if it is winter, spring or summer, you are recommended to clothe yourself according to the layer-on-layer principle, the outermost layer of which should be wind- and waterproof. Since the summer sea temperatures are only a few degrees Celsius, it is a good idea to bring along a pair of gloves and a cap for sea travel. Proper footwear is essential both in winter and summer, i.e. waterproof shoes or hiking boots with thickly treaded soles. For dogsledding it is usually possible to rent very warm sealskin clothing.

### Climate:

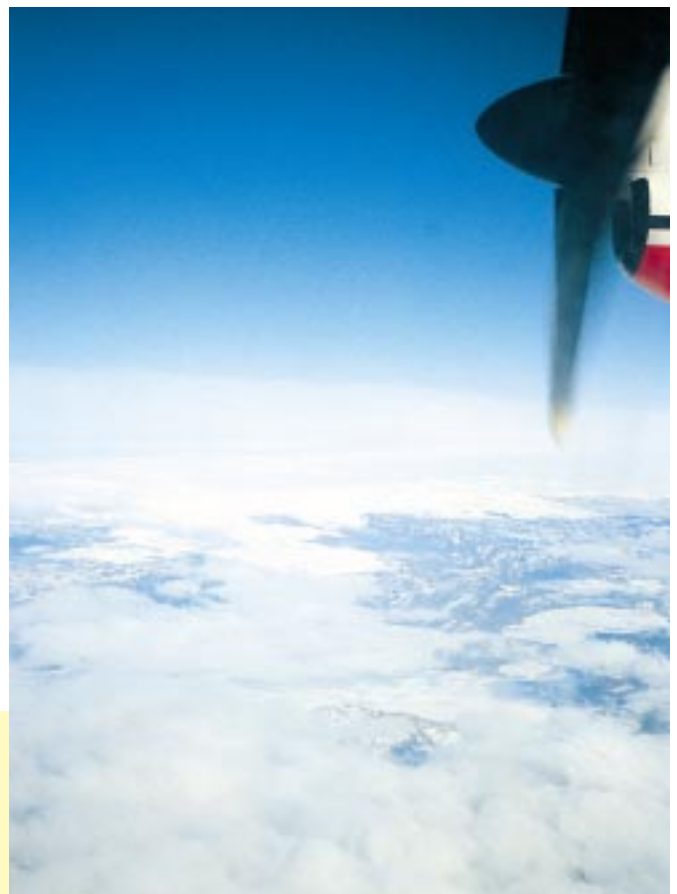
Since the distance from Kangaatsiaq in the south to Qaanaaq in the north is more than 1,200 kilometres, it is only natural that the climate varies greatly from region to region. Generally speaking, it is coldest in the north and mildest in the south - both summer and winter. During the coldest months of February and March, the temperature can drop to -25° C or more, while temperatures of +8° to +12° C are common in summer. The low humidity

### Health Services:

The towns of North Greenland have well-functioning hospitals and dental clinics, and nurse stations are located in the settlements. In the event of acute illness or accidents, medical assistance is usually provided free of charge. You are advised to bring your own medicine or other medicaments for regular use, since special products are not always available.

### Currency:

Danish currency is a valid means of payment, and there are no restrictions on the import or export of cash. In the towns and villages of North Greenland without banks, the post office provides banking services. Credit cards are accepted at fair-sized shops and at hotels and restaurants.



Greenland's national day is June 21 and is called "Ullortuneq" which means "The Longest Day". The day is celebrated throughout Greenland with cultural activities and public outdoor feasts.

## Kangaatsiaq



*Drying racks for fish and meat leave their mark on the settlements of North Greenland. Here filleted Greenland halibut is being dried for dog food.*



Several seal species live in the sea around Greenland; the ringed seal is the most dominant, and none of the species is threatened by extinction. Around 100,000 seals are caught each year.

**K**angaatsiaq means “rather small promontory”. The town is the youngest in Greenland, since it did not receive municipal status until 1986 – but the settlement itself is naturally much older. Around 600 people live in the town proper and 900 in the four settlements of Attu, Niaqornaarsuk, Ikerasaarsuk and Iginniarfik.

The great importance of fishing and sealing to the region is illustrated by the townscape. In among the dogs and sleds there are drying racks for fish and meat, stretched sealskin and nets, as well as buoys and kayaks, and the sea surrounding Kangaatsiaq contains specimens of almost all species of Greenland’s marine mammals.

East of town, the 150-kilometre fjord system opens up for visitors with countless islets, coves and bays, and there are fine opportunities for exploring the protected waters by boat, canoe or kayak. Along the way there are also many chances of encountering animal life that includes

reindeer, fox and hare, as well as a multitude of birds.

In winter and spring, the dogsled is the most suitable means of transport. It is actually “only” a four-day ride from Kangaatsiaq to the Kangerlussuaq Airport. But normally travellers take either the helicopter or the liner to get to and from Kangaatsiaq.

## Aasiaat

**A**asiaat was founded in 1759 by Hans Egede’s son, Niels Egede, to prevent European – especially Dutch – whalers from bartering with Greenland’s inhabitants. The town is located on an island at the outermost edge of a very beautiful archipelago area, “the land of a thousand islands”. Several islands in the area are protected, and there are fantastic opportunities for activities like watching the unique bird life and for observing the whales that were originally the reason for founding the town.

The area surrounding Aasiaat offers many fine hikes, but the most magnificent experiences are found at sea. The archipelago is perfect for kayaking and other boating, and there are good places to stay overnight in a tent or hunting cabins along the way. The best way to reach the two settlements of Akunnaaq and Kitsissuarsuit is also by boat where 300 of the municipality’s almost 4,000 inhabitants live.

Though fishing is by far the most dominant occupation, the town has traditionally been the education centre of North Greenland with an upper secondary school and other study programmes. Culturally speaking, the town has a lot to offer, including its old quarter, housing both the museum and the community centre, the latter of which is decorated with 24 paintings by the famous Danish artist Per Kirkeby.

There are 52 bird species that breed regularly in Greenland, and summer guests include the Arctic tern that flies all the way from Antarctica. The largest bird is the white-tailed eagle with a wingspan of almost 2.5 metres.



## Qeqertarsuaq



*Wooden houses painted in bright, vivid colours liven up the towns.*



The town of Qeqertarsuaq is located on the southern tip of the island of the same name. Qeqertarsuaq means “large island” and is by far the largest of the islands along the Greenland coast.

According to the old Greenlandic legends, the island was actually located in South Greenland. It got in the way of the hunters however, so two men in kayaks decided to pull it northward. According to the legend, it took only one day to move the 8800 km<sup>2</sup> island to its present location. Turning from the fantastic world of the legends to the more objective historical facts, the island town was founded by whaler Svend Sandgreen in 1773. Since the basalt hills surrounding the town are almost porous, they retain moisture. As a result, the region is very fertile and green by Greenland standards with a particularly varied flora.

Whaling has been of great importance to the town over

the past two centuries. Hunting and fishing are still the primary occupations for the island’s inhabitants around 1000 of whom live in the main town and more than 50 in the Kangerluk settlement, a few hours by boat to the north-west. This is where researchers found a “galloping” glacier in 1999 that moves up to 100 metres a day.

As something quite unique in Greenland, it is possible to ride a dogsled at Qeqertarsuaq under the midnight sun in summer. It takes place on the inland ice at a height of around 800 metres in the hills behind the town. Wander to the top of the hills where your efforts are rewarded by a fantastic view of Disko Bay and the gigantic icebergs at Ilulissat almost 100 kilometres away.

If you want to hike on your own, there are good opportunities to do so in the surrounding area. You can also try your luck at angling or merely enjoy the peaceful village pace by visiting the unique hexagonal church, “the Lord’s ink pot”.

## Qasigiannuit

Qasigiannuit is located in the south-east part of Disko Bay. The name, which translates into “small, multi-coloured seals”, refers to the good sealing conditions that traditionally prevail in the area. 1700 people live here as well, 100 of whom live in Ikamiut, the municipality’s only settlement. Fishing and hunting are the primary occupations, and the town’s fish factory mainly processes Greenland halibut and crab.

The many brightly coloured wooden houses are characteristic of the town. Here in Qasigiannuit you also find



Greenland’s oldest wooden house, which today is fitted up as the town’s museum.

The area is a treasure chest for archaeology and history buffs who will find prehistoric memorials from several thousand years of settlements along the coast in the form of house sites, meat caches and hunting blinds. Traces of the highly advanced Saqqaq culture have also been found, and today the finds are on display at the town’s museum.

The town’s hinterland with rounded hills, valleys and tundra plains offers fine opportunities for activities both in summer and winter. In summer, the surroundings invite you on hikes of any length, from day trips in the vicinity of the town to hikes for experienced hikers to the edge of the inland ice. Canoeing on Tasersuaq Lake is also a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the magnificent summer landscape. In winter, dogsleds and snowmobiles dominate the hinterland and the ice-covered bay. Seeing the beautiful winter-clad nature as you rush along on a dogsled is an unrivalled experience.

The national flower of Greenland is the broad-leaved willowherb. It is called “Niviarsiaraq” in Greenlandic meaning “young girl”. Cotton-grass is called “Ukaliusaq”, meaning “something resembling a hare”.

# Ilulissat



*It is spring and the ice in the harbour is starting to break up.*



*The word "kayak" is derived from the Greenlandic word "qajaq". In recent years, young Greenlanders have shown increasing interest in kayaking.*

Only a couple of kilometres from the town is the fertile Sermermiut valley that extends down to the ice fjord. In 1727, this was the site of Greenland's largest settlement of 250 people. Excavations have since shown that the beautiful valley had been inhabited for thousands of years.

Icebergs are called "Ilulissat" in Greenlandic, and it comes as no surprise to anyone who has been here that this is the town's name. Ilulissat is beautifully situated at the mouth of the 40-kilometre ice fjord filled with enormous icebergs produced by the most productive glacier in the northern hemisphere. The largest icebergs strand at the mouth – at depths of 250 to 300 metres – and do not break free until the next spring tide, or until they are so eroded that the balance shifts.

4,000 people live in Ilulissat and not less than 6,000 sled dogs. This is an eloquent statement of the importance of the dogsled as a means of transport, even in a large modern town. The harbour is filled with fishing vessels and trawlers that bear witness to the great importance of fishing to the town.

North of Ilulissat lies the settlement of Qqaatsut where some of the old houses from the colonial period are today fitted up as a youth hostel and restaurant, and after sailing north for another couple of hours, you arrive at the impressive Egi glacier, where it is possible to spend the night in modern cabins.



Though kayaks are still made in Greenland, today the seal-skin covering is often replaced by cotton covering. Kayaks are tailored to fit the height and breadth of the user. The Greenland Kayaking Championships are held every year.

## Uummanaq



The midnight sun can be experienced all over North Greenland. At Qaanaaq from April 19 to August 24, at Uummanaq from May 16 to July 28 and at Ilulissat from May 25 to July 25.

Uummanaq lies on an island at the foot of the heart-shaped hill for which the town is named - Uummanaq means “heart-shaped place”. At this location, 600 kilometres north of the polar circle, winter darkness lasts for two months, but in return the midnight sun extends from mid-May to mid-August.



This provides many bright hours during the summer season for experiencing the landscapes and culture in one of Greenland’s northernmost municipalities. In the town and the surrounding area, you will also find a museum, several old unique houses and the old winter settlement of Qilakitsoq where perhaps Greenland’s most remarkable archaeological find was made. In 1972, the astoundingly preserved mummies of six adults and two children were found that were dated to around 1475. Today, the mummies are on display at the museum in Nuuk. Uummanaq is also the site of Ice Golf World Championships every April – and the golf balls are not white of course!

## Upernavik

Upernavik means “place of spring” - the hunters moved here after spending the winter further inland. Upernavik’s location on the small island facing the open sea makes Upernavik unusual in comparison with other Greenlandic towns. Its location on the side of a hill provides a fantastic view of the Davis Strait. The town’s landmark, the 1100 metre-high Qaarsorsuaq mountain, can be seen 10 kilometres from the town on the southern horizon. A unique bird life also populates the area,

*In several places in North Greenland, the coffins are cast in concrete, since there is not enough soil in which to bury them.*



which is also the location of the world’s largest bird cliff, Apparsuit.

The town of Upernavik was founded in 1772. The more than 200-year-old buildings, the school from 1911, and a turf house are now fitted up as the world’s northernmost open-air museum. More than half of the municipality’s 3,000 inhabitants live in ten settlements spread along a coastal stretch of 450 kilometres. Here the primary occupation is fishing for Greenland halibut, but hunting still plays a decisive role for employment in the settlements.

Narwhals are still caught in Melleville Bay using traditional methods from kayaks, and belugas and polar bears are also hunted. Since the sea freezes over from December to June, the fishing sites are reached by dogsled or snowmobile where the fishing is done using long lines under the ice. As they have done for millennia, the hunters either catch the seals in nets or hunt them in spring as the seals sun themselves on the ice.

Many different species of whales populate Greenland’s waters, like the fin whale, blue whale, lesser rorqual, humpback, narwhal and beluga. Whale photo-safaris by boat are organised in most towns of North Greenland.

## Qaanaaq



*The kayaks are shipped to the hunting grounds by speedboat.*



Qaanaaq is the world's northernmost municipality and the settlement of Siorapaluk is the northernmost inhabited place in the world. Owing to the short distance to the North American continent, the region has been the gateway to Greenland for millennia. The most recent immigration took place only 130 years ago.

In this area, you will come closest to the archetype of the traditional way of life of the Greenlandic hunter. They earn their living from hunting for seals, narwhals, walrus-es and polar bears, and hunting trips lasting several

weeks are not uncommon. The fact that the hunting profession is still going strong is corroborated by a local preservation regulation. It states that walrus and narwhals may only be hunted from kayaks and only using harpoons to ensure that no more specimens are caught than the population can bear.

Every part of the animal is used. The meat is naturally used as food for both people and dogs, polar bear skins are used for trousers, sealskins for kamiks (top boots) and anoraks and narwhal tusks for making



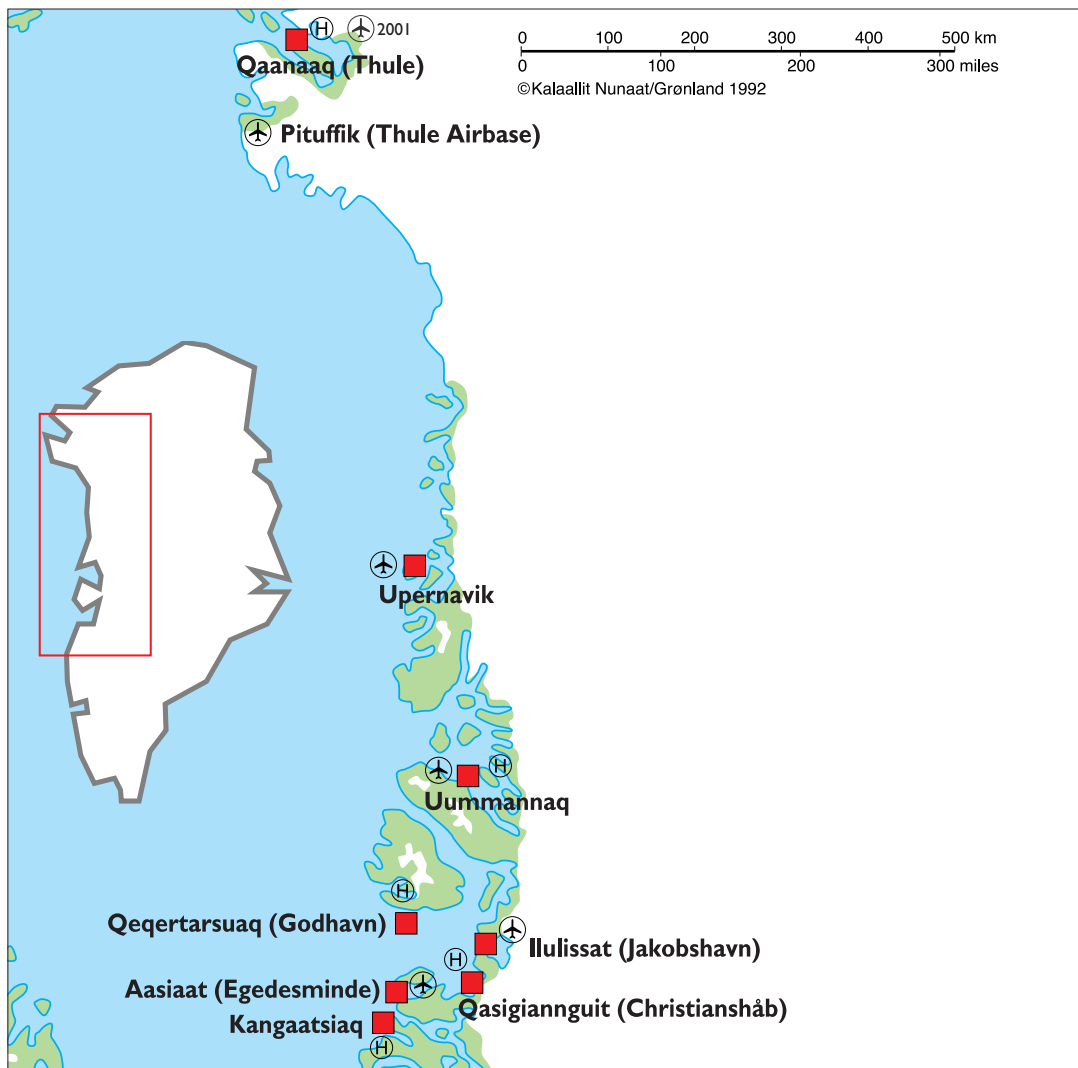
hunting implements and handicrafts.

This age-old way of life takes place in a modern town. When the US airbase at Thule (Dundas) was expanded in 1953, the population was actually moved some 100 kilometres to the north where an entirely new town was built.

In this northernmost area, many dramas and sufferings have occurred. It was from here that seven of explorer Knud Rasmussen's expeditions started out, and it was also from here that Peary tried to reach the North Pole in 1909.

Greenland's national dish is "suaasat", which is seal meat boiled with rice and onions – a particularly strong soup, where the meat is eaten as a side dish.





## Machen Sie Ihre Träume wahr...

Wenden Sie sich an die lokale Gästeinformation Grönland, oder holen Sie jetzt gleich einen Vorgeschmack unter [www.visitgreenland.com](http://www.visitgreenland.com)



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Aasiaat Tourist Service, P.O.Box 241, DK-3950 Aasiaat, Tlf: +299 89 25 40, Fax: +299 89 25 45, [aasiaat.tourist@greenet.gl](mailto:aasiaat.tourist@greenet.gl)

Discobay Tourism, P.O.Box 140, DK-3951 Qasigiannuit, Tlf: +299 91 10 81, Fax: +299 91 15 24, [discobay@greenet.gl](mailto:discobay@greenet.gl)

Qeqertarsuaq Tourism, P.O. Box 507, DK-3953 Qeqertarsuaq, Tlf: +299 92 16 28, Fax: +299 92 15 34, [qeq.tourism@greenet.gl](mailto:qeq.tourism@greenet.gl)

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# North Greenland

*Experiences of a world apart*



**Greenland**