

Greenland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Greenland is the world's **largest island**, an autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark. Most of its landmass sits under a permanent ice sheet up to 3 km thick, so the roughly 56,000 people who live here are spread along the coasts in small, isolated settlements connected by boat and small aircraft rather than roads. Towering icebergs, silent fjords, the northern lights, and Inuit culture shape a trip here more than any single monument.

The Norse explorer *Erik the Red* is said to have named the island Greenland around 985 CE to make it sound more inviting to settlers than the ice-covered reality. His colonies lasted several centuries before vanishing, and their stone ruins still stand in the south today. The west coast around Ilulissat Icefjord and the capital is the most visited and best connected by flights; East Greenland around Tasiilaq is wilder and harder to reach. Greenland suits travelers who want dramatic Arctic nature. It is not the place for resorts, nightlife, or guaranteed schedules.

Money & payments

Currency

CURRENCY	1 DKK	1 DKK
kr	**0.1338 EUR**	**0.1493 USD**
DKK	1 EUR = 7.475 DKK	1 USD = 6.697 DKK

Cards accepted in major venues

Card payments cover most hotels, restaurants, and shops in the larger towns. Carry some cash for small settlements, local markets, and kiosks, where card machines are not always available. ATMs exist in the main towns but not in the smallest settlements, so withdraw what you need before heading further afield.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel, double room	1,200 – 2,200 kr €161 – €294
Dinner (mid-range restaurant)	150 – 350 kr €20 – €47
Inexpensive meal	90 – 150 kr €12 – €20
Local beer	45 – 70 kr €6 – €9
Coffee	30 – 45 kr €4 – €6
Water	15 – 25 kr €2 – €3
Transit ticket	25 – 30 kr €3 – €4
Taxi (per km)	15 – 25 kr €2 – €3

Tipping

Restaurant not expected; service is included	Not customary
Hotel	Not customary
Taxi	Not customary
Bar	Not customary
Tour guide small tip appreciated on multi-day tours	Optional

Service is built into listed prices, so there is no need to calculate a tip after a meal or taxi ride. On multi-day boat or hiking tours, a small tip for the guide at the end is a common way to say thank you for excellent service, but it stays optional.

Electricity

Greenland uses Type C, E, and K plugs at 230 V / 50 Hz, the same standard as Denmark. Travelers from North America, the UK, or Australia will need an adapter; most of continental Europe can plug in directly.

ELECTRICITY



Type C

ELECTRICITY



Type F

ELECTRICITY



Type K

230 V · 50 Hz

Language

Greenlandic (Kalaallisut) has been the sole official language since 2009, and Danish remains widely used in administration, business, and among older residents. English is spoken in hotels, tour operations, and restaurants in the main towns, but far less so in small settlements — a translation app is useful outside Nuuk and Ilulissat. Greenlandic itself is a polysynthetic language with very long compound words, so do not expect to sound out signs or menus; a handful of memorized phrases go a long way.

Useful phrases

Hello	Aluu
Thank you	Qujanaq
Yes	Aap
No	Naamik
Goodbye	Baj

Staying connected

Mobile coverage is solid within towns but drops out quickly once you leave them — there is no signal on most boat trips, hikes, or dog-sled excursions. Tusass is the main network operator, and prepaid SIM cards are sold in Nuuk and at other town kiosks. For any multi-day trip into the backcountry or along the coast, carry a satellite messenger or rent one locally rather than relying on a phone signal.

Safety & emergencies

Emergency numbers

GENERAL EMERGENCY
112

POLICE
112

AMBULANCE
112

FIRE BRIGADE
112

Crime against tourists is rare; the real risks in Greenland are environmental. Weather changes fast and regularly grounds flights and boats for days, so build slack into any itinerary that involves a domestic connection. Sea ice, crevasses near glaciers, and cold-water immersion are serious hazards — only

approach glacier fronts, calving icebergs, or sea ice with a local guide who knows current conditions. Dress in layers and always carry more warm clothing than seems necessary, even in summer.

Health

Tap water is safe to drink everywhere in Greenland, including in Nuuk, Ilulissat, and Sisimiut. It comes from glacial meltwater and needs no filtering or boiling. Pharmacies and hospitals exist only in the larger towns; smaller settlements may have a nurse or health clinic at most, and serious cases are evacuated by air. Buy travel insurance that explicitly covers medical evacuation — a routine requirement for adventure tourism here, not an optional extra. No special vaccinations are required beyond being up to date on routine ones.

Visas & entry

Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark but **not part of the Schengen area** or the EU. A Schengen visa or residence permit alone does not guarantee entry, so check the specific rules for your nationality before booking. Citizens of the EU, the Nordic countries, the US, Canada, Australia, and many other countries can generally visit visa-free for short tourist stays; others need to apply for a Danish visa valid for Greenland in advance. All visitors need a passport valid for the length of their stay.

> Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

- **Sled dogs are working animals, not pets.** Keep your distance from dog teams you pass in town or on the ice — they are not socialized to strangers and can bite.
- Hunting and fishing (seal, whale, muskox) are part of everyday subsistence life in Greenland, not a show for visitors. Ask before photographing a hunter, a catch, or a drying rack of meat or fish.
- Greenlanders are generally reserved with strangers at first but warm up quickly; a quiet nod or greeting goes further than a loud approach.
- Treat Norse ruins and old Inuit settlement sites as you would any historic monument — do not climb on unstable stone walls or take "souvenir" fragments.
- Dress modestly and remove hats when visiting a church, as in the rest of Scandinavia.

Getting around

- **By air**: domestic flights and helicopters are the backbone of travel between towns — there is no road or rail network connecting Greenland's settlements. Air Greenland operates most routes; book connections early, as capacity is limited and full flights are common in summer. See Air Greenland.
- **By boat**: coastal passenger ferries and smaller boats link west-coast towns and villages, especially in summer when the water is open; this is often cheaper than flying and gives close views of the coastline.
- **By snowmobile or dog sled**: a practical way to travel between some settlements in winter, usually arranged through a local operator or guide rather than independently.

Always build a buffer day or two around any domestic flight or boat connection — Arctic weather causes frequent delays and cancellations.

Driving

- **Roads**: Greenland's towns are not connected by roads to each other — each settlement has only its own small local road network, often just a few kilometers long. A rental car is useful only for getting around within a single town, such as Nuuk, Sisimiut, or Qaqortoq.
- **Fuel**: pumps are labeled *Benzin* (petrol) and *Diesel*, as in Denmark; stations are self-service and card-operated in the main towns.
- **Winter driving**: studded or winter tires are standard practice from autumn through spring given ice and snow on local roads.

URBAN	PETROL	DIESEL
50 km/h	Benzin	Diesel

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

Food & drink

Greenlandic food centers on what the sea and land provide: seal, whale, muskox, reindeer, and fish, much of it still hunted or caught locally rather than farmed. *Suaasat*, a simple soup of meat (often seal or whale) with onion and potato thickened with rice or barley, is considered the national dish and turns up on most traditional menus. *Mattak* — raw whale or narwhal skin and blubber, eaten in thin slices — is a genuine Inuit delicacy worth trying at least once, even if the texture takes some getting used to.

Dried fish, especially capelin (*ammassat*) and cod, is a common snack sold at markets and eaten on the go, much like dried meat snacks in other countries. Restaurants in Nuuk and Ilulissat increasingly pair these traditional ingredients with New Nordic technique, so muskox steak or Arctic char can appear as a refined plate as easily as a home-style stew. To finish a meal, Greenlandic coffee is a theatrical after-dinner tradition: coffee mixed with whiskey, Kahlúa, and Grand Marnier, topped with whipped cream, and set alight at the table before drinking.

What to eat & drink

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Ammassat (dried fish)
Wind-dried capelin or cod, a common snack sold at local markets.

DRINKS

Greenlandic coffee
A flambéed after-dinner drink of coffee, whiskey, Kahlúa and Grand Marnier, topped with whipped cream.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Suaasat
Greenland's national dish, a soup of seal, whale, reindeer or seabird meat with onions and potato, thickened with rice or barley.

Mattak
Raw narwhal or whale skin and blubber, a traditional Inuit delicacy eaten in thin slices.

Musk ox and reindeer
Game meat from the interior, served as steaks or in stews on most restaurant menus.

Greenland – Plan Your Trip

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Where to explore

West coast: Nuuk, the capital, is Greenland's largest town and main gateway, with the country's only real urban life, museums, and restaurants. North along the coast, Ilulissat Icefjord is Greenland's best-known natural sight — a UNESCO World Heritage fjord where the Sermeq Kujalleq glacier calves some of the largest icebergs in the Northern Hemisphere, right next to the town of Ilulissat. Nearby Disko Island offers dramatic basalt cliffs and hiking with far fewer visitors. Sisimiut, Greenland's second-largest town, is a good base for dog sledding and cross-country travel.

South Greenland: around Qaqortoq and Narsarsuaq, the landscape turns greener, with sheep farms, milder summers, and the ruined stone churches and farmsteads left by Norse settlers a thousand years ago.

East Greenland: centered on Tasiilaq, this is the most remote and dramatic region, with steep mountains dropping straight into fjords choked with drift ice.

Wild interior: the Greenland ice sheet covers about 80% of the island and is reachable on short excursions from Kangerlussuaq, while Northeast Greenland National Park — the largest national park on Earth — protects the remote, uninhabited far north.

Overview





A Russel glacier

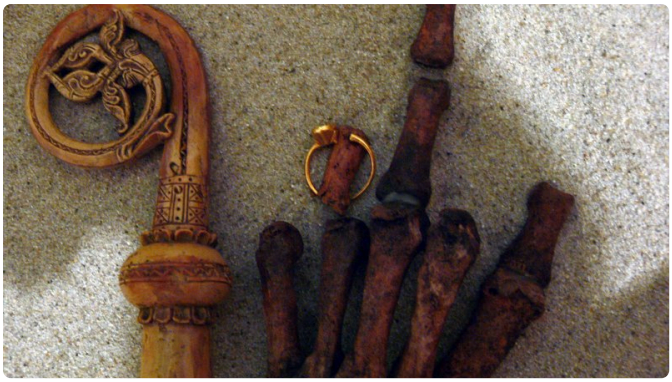
Greenland (67.09542, -50.21705)



B Hvalsey Church ruin

Hvalsey Church was a Catholic church in the abandoned Greenlandic Norse settlement of Hvalsey.

Greenland (60.82812, -45.78043)



C Gardar Cathedral of Saint Nicholas

Garðar Cathedral, known formally as the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas, was a Roman Catholic cathedral church located in Garðar, situated in...

Igaliku, Greenland (60.98733, -45.42308)



D Church of Our Saviour

Nuuk Cathedral or Church of Our Saviour is a wooden Lutheran cathedral in the Old Nuuk neighborhood of Nuuk, the capital of Greenland.

Greenland (64.17979, -51.74385)



E Qaqortoq Museum

Local history museum housed in a historic 1804 colonial building that once served as a trading department. The collection features permanent exhibits on Dorset, Thule, and Norse cultures alongside traditional Inuit boats and hunting equipment.

Torvet B-27, 3920 Qaqortoq (60.71811, -46.03800)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

qaqortoq.museum.gl, +299 641080



F Nuuk Art Museum

Nuuk Art Museum is a local museum in Greenland, located in Nuuk, the capital.

5 (64.17786, -51.72933)

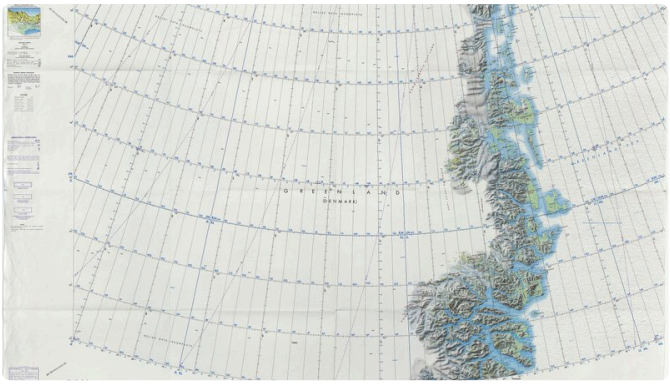


G Sisimiut Museum

Open-air cultural history museum specializing in trade, shipping, and industry through exhibitions of archaeological finds and traditional hunting tools. The site consists of several 18th-century colonial buildings and a reconstructed early 20th-century peat house.

Jukkorsuup Aqquserna, 3911 Sisimiut, Greenland
(66.93844, -53.67105)

+299862550



H Petermann Peak

Petermann Peak,, also known as Petermann Fjeld, Petermanns Topp and Petermann Point is a mountain in King Christian X Land, Northeast...

(73.09065, -28.61844)



I Sermermiut

Nationally protected archaeological site and former Inuit settlement containing ruins from the Saqqaq, Dorset, and Thule cultures. A wooden walkway protects the fragile environment while providing views of the surrounding icebergs.

World Heritage Trail, 3952 Ilulissat, Greenland
(69.20209, -51.12644)

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