



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.



From peak above camp, DAY 5. Photo Rima Dolognos

- ***A series of dramatic and varied walks***
- ***Spectacular scenery in a rarely visited area***
- ***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 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.

How much do I have to carry?

Most days you will only have to carry what you need for the day, but on one full and two shorter days, you will need to backpack with tents, share of food and fuel.

Trip grade

This trip has been graded 'Tough' to allow for the backpacking, the absence of footpaths, 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 Reykjavik we stay in a comfortable guesthouse approx 15 mins walk from the town centre. In Tasiilaq we camp with access to hot showers and we also camp on trek.

Food

In Reykjavik and Tasiilaq we provide B&B. While walking all meals are included. 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. Vegetarians can be catered for if we know beforehand.



"It's 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 a 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 for good reason. 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 is chilly.

Money

Danish Kronor (DKK) is the currency used in Greenland. Personal expenses will include meals in Tasiilaq and items such as postcards, maps, 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 may be required depending on conditions, backed up by either an ice axe or ski sticks. Previous experience of using crampons is not necessary, as instruction will be given.

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@greennet.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 really enjoyed High Places' Greenland Wild Walks trip; the leaders made a great team and were very good at what they do; the itinerary worked well with the perfect blend of back packing and day walks. Despite the 'remoteness' the food was surprisingly good (and more importantly there was enough of it!); and the scenery was awesome: more mountains and icebergs than I could count! And as an added bonus we got to see the Northern Lights."

Justyn Evans, Greenland Wild Walks 2009

A wonderful trip that will provide great memories in the coming months. The itinerary was very well designed to provide just the right amount of challenge. A great holiday thanks very much.

Steve Flanders, Greenland Wild Walks 2009

Would you recommend High Places to others? "Yes" Why?

"Bloody good"

Peter Jackson, Greenland Wild Walks 2009

What did you most enjoy about the trip?

"The nature, the peace, the pure air, the silence, the views from the mountains, the flowers, the boat trips. This was a trip to remember for the rest of my life. The weather was good" "The trip Wild Walks was something special. Every day to see beautiful scenery ! I can't find enough words to say what I mean...Much more than I expected Thanks !"

Tarja Seppänen from Finland, Greenland Wild Walks 2008

"I have been on many treks around the world and these two make it onto my top 3 of all time.

Well done High Places. Well thought out, brilliantly executed. A credit to the staff involved. "

Michael Grainger. Iceland Contrasts and Greenland Wild Walks 2008

"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, Greenland Wild Walks 2007

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.

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. Camp. (B)

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. Camp. (B,L)

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)



Boat drop off. Photo John Pulford

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 We skirt the edge of a lake and cross a couple of boulder fields. A glacier from the inland ice flows directly into the lake, and the haunting cry of the great northern diver can sometimes be heard. We camp near the end of the lake for the next two nights. There are good views from a nearby hill. Backpacking approx 5 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 After a foray to a beautiful high lake we get close to a corner of the massive inland ice sheet. With a river crossing en route, this is an interesting day. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 Our final backpacking day leads over a rise and follows the shoreline of another lake. The route is sometimes interesting as we weave our way in and out of some steep and occasionally exposed ground, but it is nowhere difficult. Descending by a waterfall, we reach the sea again and a food cache. This is the longest backpacking day, approx 7-8 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 There is a great day walk from camp up to a high point for tremendous views of Sermilik Fjord. 6-7 hours including plenty of time for photography and taking in the magnitude of the landscape. (B,L,D)



High above Sermilik Fjord. Photo Pavel Dolognos

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)

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. Camp. (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. Guesthouse. (B)

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

ML3/11