

Greenland Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

From Narsarsuaq airport, 420km of delightful ferry hops takes you to most of the south's appealing main villages, culminating in the country's most spectacular fjordlands. Return by helicopter from either Nanortalik (some 115km) or Alluitsup Paa.

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

Four to five weeks / Narsarsuaq, Narsaq & Nanortalik

In summer **Narsarsuaq** (p97) is a handy international arrival point, where treks, boat transfers and lovely excursions are conveniently easy to arrange. Prettier **Narsaq** (p109) offers much more local culture and a great museum. Boat hops are reasonably frequent to cultured **Qaqortoq** (p114) from where you can visit the classic **Hvalsey Norse ruins** (p120). Continue to traditionally minded **Alluitsup Paa** (p121), with its tempting sea-facing hotel and fairly easy access to Greenland's hot-springs island. The old harbour of **Nanortalik** (p126) is heart-burstingly quaint, and on a clear day the surrounding fjords, especially approaching **Aappilattoq** (p133), are indescribably gorgeous. The helicopter ride back from Nanortalik to Narsarsuaq is magnificent too. If you've got the time and money left, continue north by coastal ferry and be awed by even bigger icebergs around Disko Bay.



DISKO BAY

10 days / Aasiaat to Disko Island via Qasigiannuit & Ilulissat

Iceberg-studded Disko Bay is the stuff that armchair travellers' dreams are made of; see it from the deck of a coastal ferry and you'll never forget it. First stop is the quiet fishing town of **Aasiaat** (p183), located on the outer edge of a beautiful archipelago. Continue on to the brightly coloured village of **Qasigiannuit** (p181), an excellent destination for hikers, whale-watchers and history buffs. Nearby **Ilulissat** (p170) has become the centre of Greenland's tourist industry with its magnificent icefjord, the most prolific tidewater glacier outside Antarctica. From here you can day trip to the icecap, heli-tour over the glaciers or lose yourself in the splendid isolation of the untouched landscape. Top it all off with a trip to see the bizarre landscapes of **Disko Island** (p186), where you can hike and dogsled under the midnight sun.

A 220km ferry ride around bergy Disko Bay from the sleepy fishing villages of Aasiaat and Qasigiannuit to the gargantuan icebergs of Ilulissat and extraordinary landscapes of Disko Island in a 10-day odyssey you'll never forget.



TAILORED TRIPS

Greenland is way off the beaten track – if you're self-sufficient, disappearing into utterly untouched wilderness is simple. Destinations are dependent upon your interests and the time available; fierce travel costs often preclude linking many different destinations, so this section offers thematic attractions rather than a single route.

HIKING, CLIMBING & DOGSLEDDING

The **Sisimiut to Kangerlussuaq trek** (boxed text, p163) is the classic multiday camping trek, with easy access at either end and pristine wilderness in between, but others start from **Hvalsey** (p120), **Igaliku Kujalleq** (see p125), **Igaliku** (see p109), **Narsaq** (p109) and **Kapisillit** (p154). For shorter, easier hikes, great starting points are **Narsarsuaq** (p97) and nearby **Qassiarsuk** (p104), from where you can walk from hostel to hostel.



If you want to take it up a notch and get climbing, head to the area around Nanortalik, where kilometre-high granite cliff faces rising above **Tasermiut Fjord** (p130) and **Torsukattak fjord** (p133) form a unique climbers' paradise. Inaccessible **east-coast mountains** (p211) are the Arctic's highest, but many first ascents are possible on equally stunning ranges near Tasiilaq and Ittoqqortoormiit.

And if you're dog-tired after all this activity, dogsled rides are possible almost anywhere above the Arctic Circle. **Uummannaq** (p191) and **Ittoqqortoormiit** (p211) are top spots to try. Sledding is also very popular at **Ilulissat** (p170) and **Sisimiut** (p158), where the route to Kangerlussuaq offers a great, accessible experience for the hardy.

TAKE TO THE WATER

Classic rivers and lakes for world-class salmon and Arctic-char fishing abound in the areas around **Nuuk** (p144) and **Kangerlussuaq** (p162), though conditions are rough and generally require expensive boat charters and/or lots of walking to access (see p215).



Greenland's fjords offer fabulous if sometimes treacherous sea-kayaking for experienced, self-reliant paddlers (see p217). A great compromise between beauty and relative simplicity of organisation is the **Narsaq to Narsarsuaq route** (see p113).

To take things at a more sedate pace, go on a lazy boat trip. Superb possibilities include the weekly public ferry ride along the fabulous **Torsukattak fjord** between Aappilattoq and Narsarmiit (see p132), whale-watching tours from **Aasiaat** (p185) or **Nuuk** (p149), and stunningly impressive glacier approaches from **Ilulissat** (p173), **Grønneidal** (p139), **Nanortalik** (p130) or **Narsarsuaq** (p102).

GREENLAND'S PAST: GHOST TOWNS, RUINS & MUSEUMS

Norse and Inuit ruins are historically intriguing, but in most cases all you'll see is a faint undulation of turf. Only at **Hvalsey** (p120) and (reconstructed) at **Qassiarsuk** (p104) will non-archaeologists really get much of a visual impression. Dozens of settlements have been abandoned, of which the most evocative, best preserved and most historically meaningful is **Ivittuut** (p138).

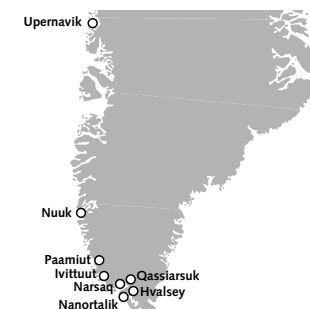
Otherwise, to get a real feel for the past, head to the museums. Greenland's best are housed within preserved historical buildings, as in **Nuuk** (p144), **Nanortalik** (p126), **Paamiut** (p141) and, most charmingly, in **Narsaq** (p109). **Upernavik museum** (p196) is also a real surprise.

ASTOUNDING VIEWS

For many people it's all about the icebergs, and if you're one of them you won't be disappointed. **Ilulissat Kangerlua** (p176) produces the biggest, most impressive bergs. Less prolific but extremely scenic icefjords are relatively accessible on excursions from **Narsarsuaq** (p97), **Upernavik** (p196) and **Kapisillit** (p154).

Of all the jaw-droppingly marvellous fjords, the most incredible are in the area around **Aappilattoq** (p133) and **Nanortalik** (p126) in the far south.

Greenlandic villages are colourful and often very picturesque. **Uummannaq** (p191) is particularly appealing thanks to its stunning setting on a heart-shaped outcrop of rock and, like **Aappilattoq**, has a fabulous setting. **Nanortalik**, **Upernavik**, **Qaqortoq** (p114), **Sisimiut** (p158) and **Nuuk** (p144) all have photogenic old-town areas behind newer surroundings.



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