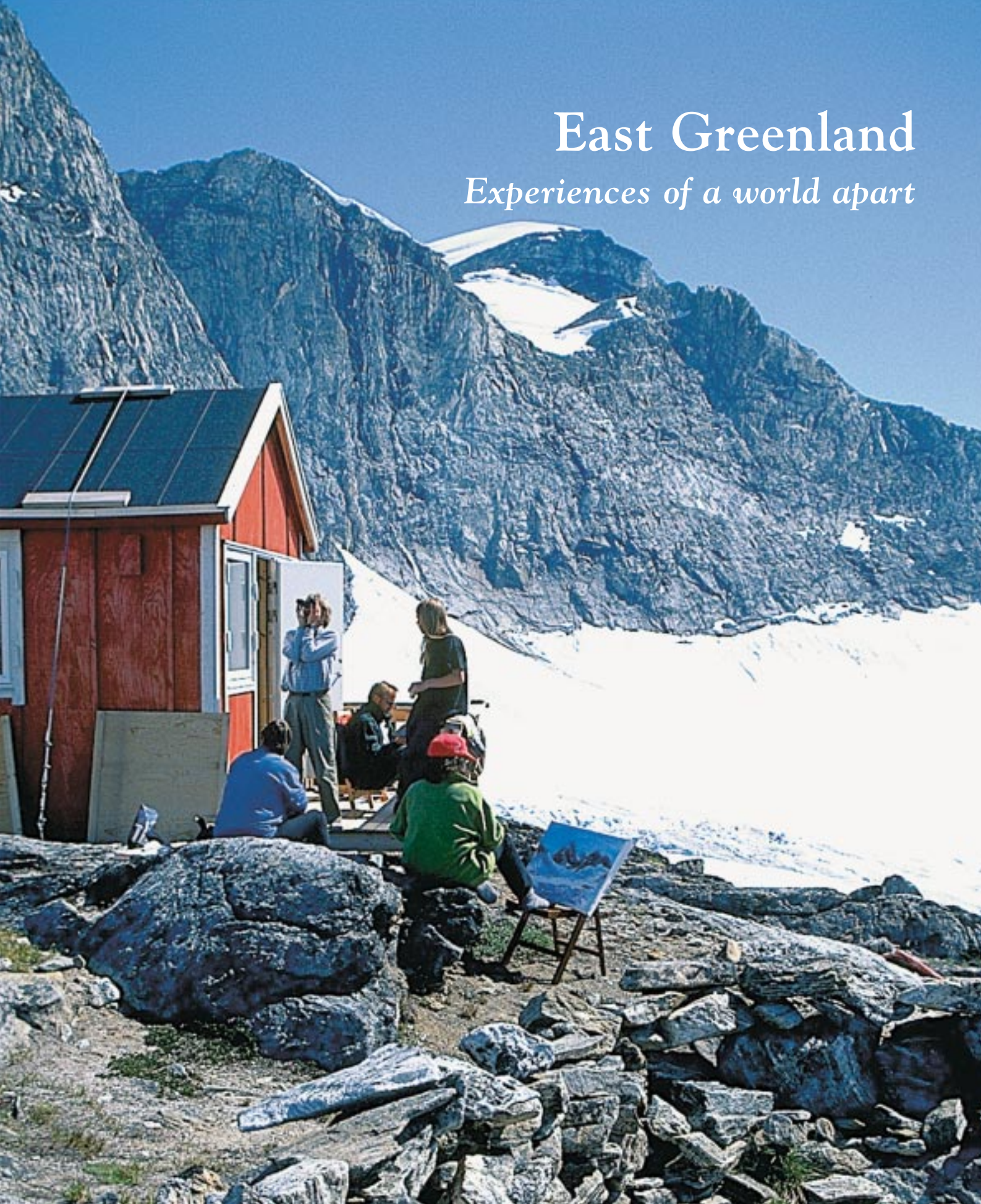


# East Greenland

*Experiences of a world apart*



A night photograph of a snowy village in East Greenland. The sky is a deep green, filled with the shimmering, streaked light of the aurora borealis. In the foreground, a cluster of small, snow-covered houses with warm yellow lights glowing from their windows and doors is nestled on a snowy slope. The background features dark, snow-capped mountains under the night sky. A solid red circle is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

Are there demons in East Greenland...?

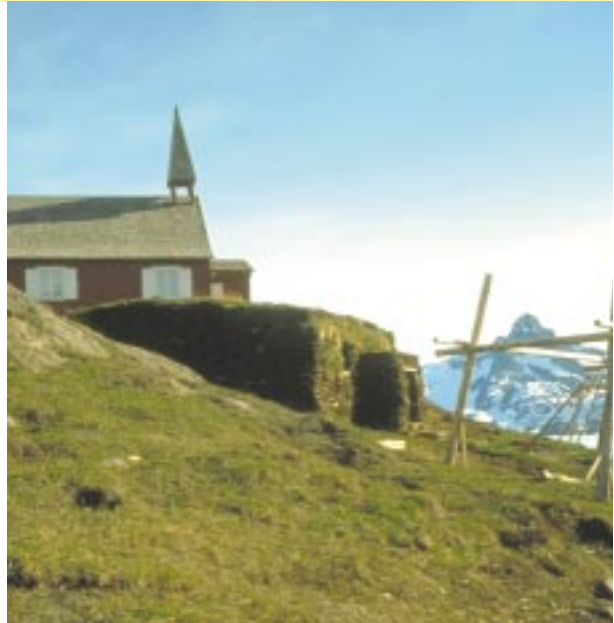
## East Greenland and its culture



The West Greenlanders like to call East Greenland 'Tunu', which means the back side. But in reality there is little to bear this out.

Indeed, for travellers from Iceland and Europe, it is closer to being the front.

If it is your first visit to East Greenland, you cannot fail to marvel at the unique beauty of the province: the scenery, the population, the towns and the villages combine to provide an overall picture of a culture which is more original and traditional than anywhere else in Greenland.



At the same time, East Greenland is a modern society with practically all the facilities you find in other parts of the world.

## Yes... but they are carved in bone and wood

The population of East Greenland still lives to a great extent from, in and with nature – the sea, the ice, the mountains and the animals they catch are of vital importance for most people. It is only just over 100 years since the first Europeans arrived in the inhabited districts of the east coast, and the traditional Inuit culture therefore continues to play an important role in everyday life. The spiritual element of East Greenland culture has been passed down through the centuries in myths and legends. According to the original faith, the countryside was populated by powerful and at times cruel beings who could only be warded off by observing the rules and taboos handed down by the forefathers. Although Christianity has established itself on the east coast of Greenland, the original faith continues to be reflected in the art and handicrafts which the local artists make in the same way as the traditional drum dance is still performed on special occasions.

A tupilak was originally a figure composed of many different natural materials and remains of animals, birds and human bones. The tupilak symbolised an evil spirit, who would bring bad luck to the recipient. Today tupilaks are figures carved in bone, tusk, stone and wood, illustrating the magic of former times. They are much sought-after souvenirs.



East Greenland extends over 1,451,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Less than 3,500 people live scattered among two towns and nine villages in an area bigger than Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy put together. Each East Greenlander therefore has an area three times larger than Liechtenstein to himself.

# Tasiilaq



With approx. 1,700 inhabitants, Tasiilaq is the largest town on the east coast. The town is beautifully situated in a protective fjord with high mountains on all sides.

Tasiilaq is split in two by a river, which flows through the valley of flowers behind the town. This valley has a unique Arctic flora and is an ideal place for walks of all lengths. A cairn marking Tasiilaq's 50th anniversary in 1944 stands at the town's highest point. From here there is a fantastic view over the whole town and the surrounding countryside.

Like all towns in Greenland, Tasiilaq is characterised by small wooden houses in every colour imaginable. Often several generations live together under the same roof with the family's sledge dogs tethered outside. But there are also several larger buildings which catch the eye – including the hospital, the modern town hall and the Greenland Stamp Printing Works, which with its central location and its many jobs has become an important part of life in Tasiilaq. The town's new pentagonal church was consecrated in 1986. The Greenland artist Aka Høegh decorated the walls, ceilings and altarpiece, and the nave is, quite uniquely, an umiak or traditional women's boat.



The town's old church dating from 1908 is situated high above the harbour. It has been beautifully restored and now houses the town's local museum with an interesting collection of objects from both ancient and more recent times.

There has been some confusion about the name of the town. Tasiilaq and Ammassalik (or Angmagssalik to use the old Greenland spelling) are one and the same town. The first name is East Greenlandic and the second the West Greenlandic version. But the town of Tasiilaq lies on an island, called Ammassalik in both East and West Greenland. Tasiilaq means 'the place which is almost like a lake' and Ammassalik means 'the place with ammassat (a small species of capelin)'.



## The climate

The Ammassalik district lies close to the Arctic Circle. Summers are warm and sunny, and winters relatively mild. In spring, the sun is high in the sky while ice and snow are still thick on the ground and one experiences the very mixture of summer and winter which makes Greenland and its climate an experience out of the ordinary. Each season has its own characteristics and whether gentle and still or harsh and violent, the landscape is fascinating and magnificent.

# Kulusuk



**K**ulusuk is the largest of the five villages in Ammassalik municipality. East Greenland's international airport with connections to West Greenland (Nuuk and

Kangerlussuaq) and Iceland is half an hour's walk from Kulusuk.

In the busy summer months there are several arrivals and departures daily and the village buzzes with life. Although Kulusuk is visited by several thousand tourists every year, the village is still remarkably untouched by foreign influence. As in the other villages in the district, this is where one comes closest to the original Greenland culture. Fishing and service trades are gaining ground but catching seal, whale and polar bear remains an important source of income for the vast majority of families.

Kulusuk is home to some of the most skilled craftspeople in Greenland, and their tupilaks, carved figures symbolising spirits, are of extremely high quality. A good half of the population of Ammassalik municipality lives in the villages.

A visit to a Greenland village offers a unique opportunity to experience a socie-



ty where the new and the old co-exist. Although everyone is gradually coming to have a rifle and fibre-glass dinghy, the traditional fishing tackle such as kayaks, harpoons and, in particular, dogsleds are still in regular use. In this way the people of the villages have managed to embrace modern-day conveniences without yielding traditional cultural values.

People have been living in the Ammassalik area for many hundreds of years and, according to historical sources and legends, the 'Tunumiut' - the East Greenlanders - were known of long before the first Europeans came to the area on an expedition in 1884 - i.e. only just over 100 years ago.

## Flora and fauna

In summer the area around Kulusuk and Tasiilaq is surprisingly fertile. Arctic plants, berries and flowers in every colour of the rainbow spring up everywhere, turning a walk into a wonderful experience.

The animal life too is rich and varied. Polar bears, narwhals and whales regularly frequent the district. There are thousands of seals, and many species of bird are represented in both summer and winter.



## Ittoqqortoormiit



**I**ttöqqortoormiit is one of the youngest towns in Greenland and, together with Qaanaaq/Thule in North-West Greenland, the most isolated.

With its side fjords, Scoresby Sound is the world's largest fjord complex, and the fjord itself is the world's longest. The municipality is approx. five-and-a-half times larger than Denmark and, with only 562 inhabitants, there is plenty of room for everyone. However, all the inhabitants live in Ittoqqortoormiit or in the villages of Itterajivit/Cape Hope or Uunartoq/Cape Tobin. Hunting and a little fishing (made difficult by the ice) are the main trades for the municipality's population. The town was established by newcomers from Ammassalik in 1925 at the request of the discoverer Ejnar Mikkelsen. At that time the area was already known for its rich supply of the animals traditionally caught for food: seals, walruses and polar bears.



Only a few tourists find their way to this outlying area. Winters are long and the fjord is covered by ice for nine months of the year. It is thus the perfect place for the individual traveller who doesn't want to run into the neighbours from back home. The area offers attractive expedition-like trips in kayaks or on dogsleds, and is also the departure point for expeditions to the protected national park in North-East Greenland. This nature reserve is the biggest in the world and people who are not resident in Ittoqqortoormiit or Qaanaaq must apply for permission to travel into the area, which, among other things, has abundant and diverse animal life, with all of Greenland's animal species represented.



### Climate

There are large variations in temperatures. In February and March the temperature can be minus 25° C or lower, while temperatures of 8-12° C are common in the summer. The dry air means that the climate often feels warmer than it actually is.

## Adventure - The home of great experiences



**E**ast Greenland offers unbelievable experiences for all travellers. The challenges presented to adventure travellers in East Greenland are immense.

The area's peaks are sharply pointed and it can be difficult just to reach base camp. Several locally based firms in East Greenland have specialised in adventure tourism and can arrange everything from group journeys to very special expeditions.

As well as the obvious opportunities for mountain climbing, there are also good opportunities for sea-kayaking. Moreover, there are ample opportunities for dogsled tours in East Greenland. In fact, you can travel by dogsled in Ittoqqortoormiit for nine months of the year.



Most "discovery travellers" who cross Greenland's massive inland ice either start or finish in the village of Isortoq by Tasiilaq. East Greenland with its diverse, harsh and unspoiled landscape is, in many ways, the last frontier of the new world.

### Clothing

Layers of clothing are recommended, with a windproof and waterproof outer layer. As the sea temperature is always low, gloves and hats are advisable for sailing trips. Waterproof shoes or walking boots with a sturdy sole are recommended all year round.

### Health system

There are efficient hospitals and dental surgeries in the towns and nurse's station in the villages. Treatment for acute illness and accidents is usually provided free. It is

advisable to bring your own medicines or other medicaments for regular use, as special products are not always available.

### Currency

Danish currency is the legal tender. Most standard credit cards can be used at the post office (Visa, Mastercard, Maestro, Plus, Cirrus) and the bookshop in Tasiilaq, at Kulusuk Tourist Station (Visa, Mastercard) in Kulusuk and the village bank (Visa and Eurocard) in Ittoqqortoormiit.

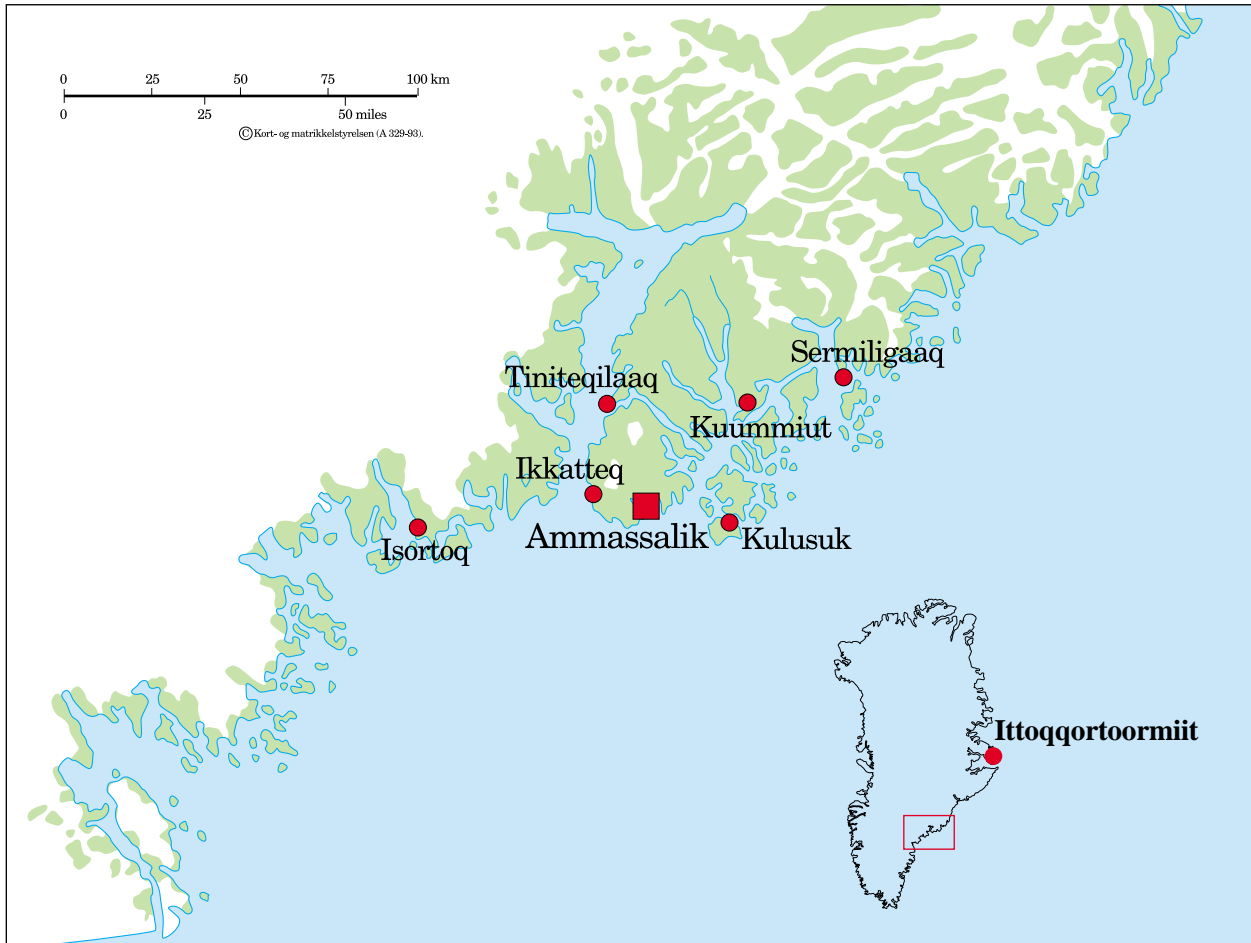
### How do I get there?

Kulusuk can be reached by air from Kangerlussuaq on the west coast (with connections to the rest of Greenland and Denmark) or from Iceland.

Ammassalik can be reached from Kulusuk by helicopter or boat.

Ittoqqortoormiit is served by air directly from Reykjavik or via Kulusuk from Kangerlussuaq or Reykjavik with flights to Nerlerit Inaat/Constable Point and from here on to Ittoqqortoormiit by helicopter.





**Make your dreams come true...**

Contact the local tourist office or start your adventure this very day at  
[www.visitgreenland.com](http://www.visitgreenland.com)



**Ammassalik/Tasiilaq and Kulusuk:**

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