

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## GREENLAND ULTIMATE WINTER ADVENTURE IN UUMMANNAQ & ILULISSAT

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Helicopter to Uummannaq
- Wild polar landscapes
- Sunset sail through icebergs
- Possibility of aurora borealis
- Uummannaq Settlement
- Ice fishing photography
- Colourful wooden houses
- Harbour life & Inuit Culture
- Dog sledging photography
- Snowmobiling to locations
- Hotel with Icefjord views
- Greenland Inuit local life
- Ilulissat UNESCO

### INTRODUCTION

Wild Photography Holidays are super pleased to add a new two base winter trip to West and North Greenland. The March date of this departures has been chosen to make the most of the fabulous winter landscapes and low light that can be found in Greenland during March. The sunrises and sunsets tend to be spectacular and the big dark arctic skies are superb for photographing the aurora borealis. This trip explores both Ilulissat in the west and the remote northerly settlement of the Island Uummannaq and spends four nights in each location. Ilulissat (formerly Jakobshavn) means “Icebergs” in the West Greenlandic language. From Ilulissat we take a helicopter north to the stunningly located northerly Inuit

island settlement of Uummannaq with its famous heart shaped mountain. During winter, average daytime temperatures hover around  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ , but it is a dry cold, so not as bad as it sounds.

### ILULISSAT AND THE ICEFJORD

Each year, the massive Jakobshavn Glacier calves some 35 billion tons of icebergs into the sheltered waters in Disko Bay and the Icefjord. It is the only UNESCO World Heritage Site on the world’s largest island. Towers, arches, and walls of ancient blue ice thrust skyward from the water’s surface. It’s believed that an iceberg calved from this magnificent glacier sank the Titanic itself! A first sighting of this unique arctic wonderland is guaran-



teed to make your photographic heart beat faster. In wintertime the snow cover means that dog sledging and more currently snow-mobiles have become the normal way of transport for the local people who hunt and transport fish. A huge country, it is populated rather sparsely only around the coast. Indeed, there are no roads to anywhere except in and around the settlements and the only way to travel is by boat, air, dog sledge and foot. There are many fabulous view points overlooking the Icefjord. Sunrises and sunsets can be photographed from many areas close by the hotel, even from the veranda! The amount of ice in the vicinity is variable and very reliable in the Icefjord itself, it is always awe-inspiring to witness giant icebergs trapped in the sea ice or to watch as the smaller pieces just float by. In the mornings and evenings we hope for a spectacular showing of the pastel blue/pink skies that are common in these parts, lighting up the landscape in a manner that is special in Arctic Greenland.

## UUMMANNAQ

This is a truly adventurous experience exploring a location that is only now becoming more accessible to photographers. Uummannaq is a remote island located in north Greenland almost completely cut off from the rest of the world. The trip to Uummannaq is by small plane from Ilulissat to the small settlement of Qaarsut, followed by a dramatic helicopter ride to Uummannaq. The settlement comprises brightly coloured houses randomly set above a working harbour. The roads around are snow packed and the sounds of sledge dogs is ever present.

“Uummannaq” means “heart-shaped” in Kalaallisut (the Greenlandic language). Like many place names in Greenland, it gets this name from a physical characteristic of the area, its very dramatic heart-shaped mountain which dominates the small island upon which it sits. Uummannaq itself rises directly from the ice filled ocean and its past is well-preserved with many historic buildings easily accessible around the harbour area. Huge icebergs are generally trapped in the frozen sea around the settlement and it is possible to walk or snowmobile out onto the ice to photograph these. The lovely and often clear ice lake



behind the settlement affords fabulous foreground for the mountain. This is the ‘aurora time’ of year and wherever possible we will try to capture these incredible phenomena. All of our tutors are experienced ‘aurora shooters’ and will be passing on their expert knowledge to ensure that you go home with some good high quality images. In all this is a rare opportunity to explore a location that is very much off the radar of most photographers!

## DAILY ITINERARY

### Day 1: Arrive in Ilulissat

Guests will arrive in Ilulissat at various points in the day and there is an included transfer to our hotel overlooking the Icefjord. The hotel is modern and well run with a great selection of food including vegetarian options. We will meet together as a group for the first time at 19:00 for introductions, a trip briefing and dinner at the hotel. Some guests may arrive in time for a preliminary exploration of Ilulissat and its surroundings. The town itself is



littered with colourful houses, a picturesque church, sledge dogs and a fascinating working harbour.  
Accommodation Hotel (D)

### **Day 2: The Icefjord and Local Culture**

Following an early breakfast we will take a scenic walk to the Ice Fjord for sunrise where we will have the opportunity to photograph massive icebergs transformed by the morning light into delicate shades of pink and blue. We return to our hotel with a chance to look at our images before setting off into the town for lunch and an exploration of many fascinating subjects including the harbour, black church, colourful houses, sledge dogs and the loc-

al inhabitants. Mid afternoon we will board a private boat to photograph icebergs at close quarters in the dramatic evening light, this is a memorable and photographically rich excursion.

Accommodation Hotel (B,L,D)

### **Day 3: Flight/Helicopter to Uummannaq**

After breakfast we take an exciting and scenic flight north to the small settlement of Qaarsut where we will transfer to a helicopter which takes us to Uummannaq our base for the next four nights. We will stay in local guest house accommodation above the harbour. The tourist infrastructure of the settlement is just developing

and our accommodation is warm, cosy and modern and right at the heart of this working Inuit settlement.  
Accommodation Guesthouse (B,L,D)

### **Days 3–7: Photography in and Around Uummannaq**

Our days spent in Uummannaq will be structured around the prevailing conditions, light and guest energy. Our focus as always is to get you to the best locations at the right time in the best light. We aim to give our guests a full immersion into Inuit settlement life and an opportunity to photograph some unique and very dramatic popular landscapes. We will not have a set day by day itinerary as we will photograph and explore according to the



prevailing conditions. Here are some of our photographic options:

### **Landscapes**

The landscapes around our base are spectacular. We will go by foot onto the sea-ice, where many icebergs are embedded and we will be able to venture relatively close and to get unique images, this is walking on the flat! The photographic potential of the icebergs is important, we can shoot them by both sunrise and sunset and also use them for aurora foreground. The heart-shaped mountain makes a fabulous backdrop for many of our images. There is also a very beautiful clear ice lake above the settlement which provides a striking and changeable foreground for the heart mountain.

### **Aurora Borealis**

Whenever possible in the evenings we will go out to shoot the aurora in a variety of locations depending on local conditions and where exactly the aurora manifest. Uummannaq is so far north that quite often the aurora will be in the southern sky.

### **Dogsledding**

...is an ancient form of travel in the Arctic and a must-do experience when visiting Uummannaq during winter. This is the way the Inuit travelled during winter, and it is still a common form of transportation for hunters, fishermen and families once the fjord freezes over. Guests will have the option to dog sledge but this is not included. We will include a photographic session devoted to the preparation of the dogs by the musher before and after with some action shots of the dogs pulling the sledge with their musher. Dog sledging is not for all and in our experience the best images come from being an observer and not a participant. Additionally the dogs are tied up at stations around town which makes them easy to photograph and puppies up to six months are free to roam.

### **Snowmobiling**

...is a more recent way of travelling quickly across the sea-ice which means that the exposure to the cold is shorter than dog sledging. We will use this form of transport to our locations when necessary.



### **Uummannaq Settlement**

...is well-preserved with many historic buildings easily accessible around the harbour area. Its turf houses were used until as recently as 1989. These are fascinating constructions to examine from the outside and visiting the interiors will give an idea of the size of the dwelling that the Inuit extended families used to spend their winters together. The church is absolutely beautiful built out of granite cut from the hillside behind it. It is the largest stone church in Greenland and an icon of the town. There is a whale blubber house an odd collection of things that don't really have an explanation. It feels a little like a jumble/garage sale, though you can't buy anything! Upstairs you will find some interesting whale artwork.

### **Ice Fishing**

...is the other main activity locals engage in during winter. They fish through holes in the ice using lines of 500m or more for catching Greenland Halibut, Redfish or Wolffish.

### **Days 7,8: In and Around Ilulissat**

After a morning in Uummannaq we return in the afternoon by helicopter/flight to Ilulissat. During our time back in Ilulissat there will be many locations and experiences that our guests will want to explore more fully including sunrise and sunset over the Icefjord, a second optional sunset cruise or dog sledging, harbour and settlement life.

Accommodation Hotel (B,L,D)

### **Day 9: Homeward Flights**

After breakfast we will meet for a final time to enjoy a presentation of our best images. Whenever your homeward flight is scheduled, transfers are included to Ilulissat's small airport. Check out from the hotel will be around 11:00 am. You may be thinking of extending your stay in Greenland for a few days, if this is the case just get in touch and we may have some ideas to help you plan this! If you are planning to fly in from Iceland we will be happy to organise some extra days here too. Wild Photography Holidays services finish after breakfast and the transfer to Ilulissat Airport.

Accommodation Hotel (B)

### **FLIGHTS**

We have chosen to start this trip in Ilulissat to allow guests to choose the flights that suit their own plans best. The internal flight and helicopter to and from Uummannaq are included. [Air Greenland](#) flies daily to Ilulissat from Copenhagen from 800€ return. [Air Iceland Connect](#) fly Saturday and Tuesday into Ilulissat from Reykjavík from 900€ return. We have chosen to spend 2 days both before and after Uummannaq in Ilulissat to



first of all allow plenty of time to fully explore the amazing photographic opportunities here and secondly to allow for any delays on the local flight/helicopter front or international flight delays.

### **DEPOSIT**

A deposit of £700 is required to secure your place as we will need to book your internal flight and helicopter well in advance of the departure.

### **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- Transfers from/to Ilulissat airport
- All meals
- All accommodation
- Boat tours in as per itinerary
- Snowmobile transport to some locations
- Internal flight and helicopter to Uummannaq

### **WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED**

- International flights
- Alcohol or additional items ordered during meals
- Aerial Flights
- Dog Sledging
- Anything not mentioned in the included list

### **EXTRA ACTIVITIES**

During our stay in Ilulissat we can organise optional activities for example aerial photography, dog sledging. We have not included these outings in the price of the trip as often in the past the weather has proved inclement and participants have been disappointed.



### JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

Our first meeting as a group will be at 19:00 in the reception of our Hotel for introductions, an image presentation and trip briefing. Transfers to and from Ilulissat Airport are included.

### ACCOMMODATION

Our main base in Ilulissat is a centrally based hotel with views out over the Icefjord. Accommodation is included in the price of the holiday, in our Ilulissat hotel all rooms have private facilities. In Uummannaq we stay in guest-house accommodation close to the harbour where the rooms are modern warm, comfortable, well furnished and we share bathrooms. A small single supplement is available for this trip but this does not include the Uummannaq Settlement where participants will share a room.

### FOOD

We enjoy a good standard and variety of food, indeed the hotel in Ilulissat boasts Thai/Greenlandic chefs who have worked there for many years. They manage to produce an

amazing array of excellent menus using local produce including some Thai variations and several vegetarian options. In both Ilulissat and Uummannaq there will be an opportunity to try local food such as whale, seal, reindeer, halibut, berries, crab, lobster etc. all is optional! The price of the holiday includes breakfast, lunch and dinner (two courses) and tea/coffee with meals.

### ALCOHOL

This is fairly expensive, maybe consider bringing along a bottle of your favourite tipple. The Hotel and settlement guest house has a bar. In the settlement there are private sitting areas where guests can drink their own alcohol. Alcohol can also be purchased at the local supermarket.

### SPENDING MONEY

Wifi is free although quite slow. Snacks, sweets and gifts are expensive. Special purchases include bone and soap-stone carvings, skin products and beadwork. Credit cards are accepted; there is a bank and ATM in Ilulissat and Uummannaq



### TRAVEL INSURANCE

You are required to take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, death, repatriation, loss of baggage and cost of buying new flights/hotel accommodation due to unforeseen circumstances such as delayed/cancelled flights etc. Please send us a copy of your travel insurance before you arrive on the first day of the trip.

### PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

Please check with the appropriate authorities to check if you require a visa for Greenland. There is also some further information on Visas and Greenland on the [World Travel Guide website](#).

### LANGUAGE

The official languages are Greenlandic, an Inuit (Eskimo) language and Danish. Greenlanders connected with tourism will normally speak some English.



## CLIMATE

Greenland has an Arctic climate, but owing to the size of the country there are great variations in the weather.

Winters can be severe and the summers comparatively mild, particularly in areas which are sheltered from the prevailing winds. Precipitation, mostly snow, is moderately heavy around the coast from October – April.

September can be milder but expect temperatures from around freezing to 7°C. In February and March temperatures will be below freezing, sometimes -15°C.

## CLOTHING

The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof/waterproof jacket/trousers. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at anytime before the trip.

## SUGGESTED CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT

- Down or artificial fibre duvet jacket
- Warm trousers that allow flexibility of movement
- Long sleeved thermal tops and leggings
- Light fleece/wool jumpers

- Thicker warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks, a few pairs
- Warm Boots good for walking in e.g. Sorrels
- Warm hat
- Neck warmer such as 'Buff'
- 1–2 pairs warm gloves that enable using camera controls whilst wearing
- Casual clothes, jeans etc for hotel wear
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Sun cream and sunglasses



- Ski poles useful for walking in snow (optional)
- Head torch
- Small basic first aid & any personal medicines
- Wet wipes
- Small towel
- HotHands or similar hand warmers
- Wash kit
- Ice grips, see below

### ICE GRIPS

For your own safety we advise you to bring with you a pair of ice grips to put on your boots. These grips are very straightforward to use and will allow you to walk safely on icy or slippery surfaces. You will hardly know that you are wearing them unlike spiky crampons. You will be advised when to wear them by our guides. There is a variety of makes and designs. We have found the rubber ones with coils and a velcro strap, such as the [Yaktrax Pro](#), to work best. The strap is important as it ensures that you don't lose them. You might want to

check in a local outdoor store first. They usually have a selection of suitable models.

### PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...  
For full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.
- Spare camera (highly recommended)
- Sturdy tripod – not only useful for low light photography but also for accurate framing and composition of landscape and close-up images.



- Cable release – mechanical or electronic remote to avoid shake on long exposures.
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these. At least a neutral density filter in the range of 4–6 stops would be a good addition to your kit.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Rain cover for camera and camera bag.
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor. The hotels have WiFi but it can be slow at times.
- Backup storage device (optional)



- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are European two-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

#### **PARTNERS**

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs.

#### **MORE QUESTIONS?**

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

#### **BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY**

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1630 647828.

#### **LINKS**

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website. Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)