

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



WEST GREENLAND WINTER

ICEBERGS, GLACIERS AND
INUIT SETTLEMENTS

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Flights Reykjavík – Ilulissat – Reykjavík
- Hotel overlooking the Icefiord
- Wild winter landscapes
- Glacial Photography
- Sunset by boat in the Ice Fjord
- Possibility of aurora borealis
- Superb short walks to fine viewpoints
- Qqaatsut village settlement
- Colourful wooden houses
- Two nights in Reykjavík, Iceland
- Aerial photography (optional)
- Dog sledging (optional)
- Greenlandic local life

INTRODUCTION

Wild Photography Holidays are excited to add a brand new winter trip to Greenland. The dates of these first two departures have been chosen to make the most of the fabulous winter landscapes and low light that can be found in Greenland at this time of year. The sunrises and sunsets tend to be spectacular and the big arctic skies are dark enough for the possibility of aurora. We start and finish the trip in Reykjavík giving participants the chance to add a few days in Iceland before or after the main trip. Our main Greenland base, Ilulissat (formerly Jakobshavn) means “Icebergs” in the West Greenlandic language. Each year, the massive Jakobshavn Glacier calves some 35 billion tons of icebergs into the sheltered

waters of Disko Bay and the Icefiord. 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. The whole fiord gives an ever-changing vista as huge icebergs float past in dramatic light en route to open sea. It’s believed that an iceberg that calved from this magnificent glacier sank the Titanic itself. A first sighting of this unique arctic wonderland is guaranteed to make your photographic heart beat faster. In wintertime the snow cover means that dog sledging becomes a 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. Travelling by boat, we navigate the ice-filled waters at sunset. We sail to small settlements still alive with ancient traditions with a culture still very much tied to the ocean and prevailing weather conditions. Spending two nights in one settlement allows us to really get 'under the skin' of daily life there. Brightly coloured wooden houses sit on snow covered rocky bluffs; small fishing boats bring in Halibut, Crab plus the occasional Seal. There may be an optional opportunity to experience some aerial photography and dog sledging. This is a truly an inspiring adventure exploring locations that are only now becoming more accessible to photographers.

PHOTOGRAPHIC TUTORS

Contact the WPH office for Information regarding the tutors on your departure.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Reykjavík

Transfer from Keflavík, Iceland's international airport to our hotel in the heart of Reykjavík. We meet in the evening for introductions, a trip briefing and dinner together in town.

Hotel Reykjavík

Day 2: To Ilulissat Greenland

This morning we take a flight north over Iceland followed by Greenland's vast Ice Cap. Remote Greenland is the world's biggest island and eighth largest country. The sea that surrounds it is either permanently frozen or chilled by the mainly cold currents. In the centre of the country ice can be up to 3km thick. It is no wonder that most of its population huddles around the ice-free coastal region. Our destination Ilulissat is on the west coast of Greenland. On arrival we make the fifteen-minute journey through a wintry landscape to our hotel that is perfectly situated and overlooking the ocean, which is often littered with ice floating away from the ice fiord. The hotel is modern, well run and with great selection of food including many vegetarian options.

We spend the afternoon exploring by foot the photographic potential of the area. It is possible to photograph the ice in the ocean and fiord from many places around the town; indeed some photographs in the accompanying trip gallery were taken from the hotel veranda!

The town is littered with colourful houses, a picturesque church, sledge dogs, a couple of nice coffee shops and an assortment of shops. Markets (Kalaaliavaq) are found in all Greenlandic towns. Here you can buy the day's harvest such as seal, whale, musk, reindeer and fish



straight from the hunter and fisherman. These are usually situated close to the town's harbour; both make good subjects for photography.

In the late afternoon we will take a short ride above town where we make the half hour walk to one of the most incredible viewpoints on earth for sunset over the Kangia Icefjord. We return to the hotel for dinner.

Hotel Icefiord

Day 3: Sail to Ilimanaq Settlement

This morning we sail in our traditional wooden fishing boat past the massive icebergs of the Kangia Icefjord to the Inuit settlement of Ilimanaq. Our boat is well equipped and a qualified local guide will be on hand to take care of your safety plus answering any questions you may have. No doubt there will be some fine photographic opportunities en route. Just one generation ago the majority of the Greenlandic people lived in the many small settlements along the coast. Today most of them live in the cities. The municipality of Ilulissat still has four settlements that are thriving; Ilimanaq is one of these set-



tlements. It is situated in a most jaw dropping location south of the ice fiord giving us the opportunity to see and photograph the Kangia Icefjord from a totally different perspective. Ilimanaq settlement is one of Greenland's oldest, founded at almost the same time as Ilulissat at the beginning of the 1740s. Dutch whalers were originally present in the area at the beginning of the 18th century. In 1741 the place became a missionary station and in 1780 a whaling station was built. In the 19th century the town was awarded the status of a settlement, with fishing and hunting as the primary occupations. There is no suitable accommodation here so we spend the whole day exploring returning to Ilulissat at the end of the day. We will try to time our journey with sunset, the most spectacular time to be passing through the majestic icebergs of the fiord.

Hotel Icefiord

Day 4: Around Ilulissat

Sunrise can be special from many areas close by the hotel; the amount of ice floating in the vicinity is variable although reliable in the Ice Fiord itself. This morning 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 to Arctic Greenland. After breakfast during the morning, participants will be free to explore the area by foot or maybe take an optional helicopter ride. We have not included this in the cost of the trip as weather conditions can be fickle and aerial photography is not for everyone. A two-hour sledge ride could also be an option. The dog sledge is one of the strongest icons of Greenland. An Inuit tradition, dating 2000 years back in time! There are not many other means of transportation surviving for so long without change. The basic principle is still the same as in the

Viking age; dogs tied to a simple construction of wood. Whilst photography on the ride itself is tricky, there will be good photo opportunities before and after the ride. Mid afternoon we set off from the hotel to walk through the snowy landscape where we find some fabulous viewpoints over the ice fjord. We take it slowly as it seems that there is something worth photographing at each corner. We will be out exploring into the sunset hours returning to our hotel around 19:30. The amount of walking can be adjusted to individual's energy levels. Ski poles are a very useful aid for walking in snow.

Hotel Icefiord

Day 5–7: Oqaatsut

After breakfast we board a small private boat sailing to the tiny settlement of Oqaatsut. This settlement has only forty permanent inhabitants, a school with approximately four pupils, a small grocery shop and a community



house. Oqaatsut, formerly Rodebay, is an Inuit settlement in the Qaasuitsup municipality; the modern name of the settlement is Kalaallisut or “Cormorants”. There is not a single road here, just colourful wooden houses on stark rounded snow covered rocks. Each little house is uniquely built and painted in a different colour. Around the houses we find all the paraphernalia associated with Greenland in winter; sledges, dogs, fish racks, animal skulls, sealskins and furs. Fishing and hunting are the main occupation of the inhabitants, often we find fishermen trying their luck through holes in the local sea ice. To the south is a small harbour where a multitude of small fishing boats are moored or frozen in the sea ice. Our boat will drop us at the sheltered harbour, we will probably have to walk a short distance across the sea ice to get to solid land and our hotel. Our tiny hotel is in the middle of the settlement and is owned by Ole a local man who is also the mayor of Ilulissat! The rooms are warm, comfortable, well furnished. There is an excellent windowed dining/meeting area with fine views of the surrounding settlement and mountains. Shower and toilet

facilities are shared. We spend the following two days exploring and photographing Oqaatsut settlement and the surrounding landscape. Ice from the fjord makes its way here and is often lit up with a spectacular light. The light pollution is minimal and we are easily able to find great aurora locations in our immediate surroundings. Settlement Hotel

Day 8: To Ilulissat

After breakfast we board our boat for the return journey to Ilulissat and the ice fjord. Arriving back mid morning we are in plenty of time for exploring Ilulissat further. There will be a last chance to photograph magnificent icebergs in the sunset followed by dinner and a presentation of images taken during our fabulous arctic adventure.

Hotel Icefiord

Day 9: To Reykjavík

Hopefully this morning there will be a final opportunity to photograph sunrise before breakfast and our midday flight to Reykjavík. We meet in the evening for a final celebratory dinner.

Reykjavík Hotel

Day 10: Homeward flights

After breakfast, or before if your flight is very early, there is a Flybus transfer to Iceland’s international airport for homeward flights. You may be thinking of extending your stay in Iceland for a few days, if this is the case just get in touch and we may have some ideas to help you plan this! Sometimes it is possible to tie up a Greenland trip with one of our Iceland trips. The particular option is



often attractive to our participants who travel a long way for our trips.

Aurora Borealis

This is the ‘aurora’ time of year and given we have clear skies we will try to capture this incredible phenomenon. 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.

WHAT’S INCLUDED

- Flights Reykjavík – Ilulissat – Reykjavík
- Domestic airport transfers in Iceland, Greenland
- All meals
- All accommodation
- Boat tours in as per itinerary

WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights to and from Iceland
- International airport transfers in Iceland
- Beverages or additional items ordered during meals
- Anything not mentioned in the included list

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The trip officially starts on Day 1 with a meeting at the first night hotel in Reykjavík for introductions and a trip briefing followed by dinner together. Wild Photography Holidays services finish after breakfast on the final day of the trip.

Flybus Airport Transfer in Iceland

The Flybus is the most convenient way to get from Iceland's international airport to your hotel and back. The buses run all day and the bus stop is right outside arrivals. The bus takes you to the BSÍ central bus station. There you will be directed to a smaller bus that will take you to your hotel.

It's easiest to purchase your ticket at the **Reykjavik Excursions** desk in the arrivals hall, but you can also do it [in advance online](#). For hotel transfers you need a **Flybus Plus Return** ticket. All major credit/debit cards are accepted. If you need any help booking your tickets, please contact our office.

The Flybus transfer is not included in the price of the holiday.

ACCOMMODATION

This is included in the price of the holiday, single/double rooms are the norm with private bathrooms. The only exception is two nights in the settlement hotel of Oqaatsut. Here, there will be two to a room with shared bathroom facilities. There are hot showers. It has to be noted that this is a rather remote Inuit settlement. The standard of rooms and furnishings are very warm and comfortable. Single supplements are available for this trip and

will ensure a single room with private facilities in all hotels except Oqaatsut Settlement.

Our main base in Ilulissat is the Hotel Icefiord. Check out [their website for images and videos](#)



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. 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 expensive, maybe consider bringing along a bottle of your favourite tittle, this can be purchased at the Iceland airport on the way out to Greenland.

SPENDING MONEY

You will need money for Wi-Fi. This will cost around 10 UK pounds for 2 hours and can be used over a long period of time. It will not be available at Oqaatsut Settlement. Snacks, sweets and gifts are expensive. Special purchases include bone and soapstone carvings, skin products and beadwork. Credit cards are accepted; there is a bank and ATM in Ilulissat.

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 in general here www.worldtravelguide.net/greenland/passport-visa

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 deg 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 – we wear [Rab](#)
- 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
- 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.
- Head torch
- Small basic first aid & any personal medicines
- 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 to work best. The strap is important as it ensures that you don't lose them. For an example see the [Yaktrax Pro](#). 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.
- Any extra equipment that doesn't fit in your camera bag/hand luggage will need to go in a hard case that can be put in the aircraft hold.
- 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. All of the places we stay in (except Oqaatsut) have Wi-Fi but it is very expensive.

- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are European two-pin compatible, 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

[Hotel Icefiord](#), our base in Ilulissat

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)