

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## GREENLAND IN WINTER

### ICEBERGS, AURORA AND INUIT SETTLEMENTS

#### HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Hotel with views of the Icefjord
- Helicopter to the settlement
- Spectacular glaciers
- Sunset by boat in the Icefjord
- Possibility of aurora borealis
- Superb short walks to fine viewpoints
- Oqaatsut village settlement
- Colourful wooden houses
- Aerial photography (optional)
- Dog sledging (optional)
- Greenlandic local life

#### INTRODUCTION

Wild Photography Holidays are pleased to add a new look winter trip to West Greenland. The dates of these 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. 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 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. 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 a small settlement with under 50 inhabitants, it is still alive with ancient traditions and a culture still very much tied to the ocean and the prevailing weather conditions. Spending three 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. We start and finish this trip in Ilulissat Greenland giving participants the possibility of choosing their own route, generally via Copenhagen, Denmark or Reykjavík, Iceland. The start/finish dates coincide with the Air-Iceland Connect flights operating only out of Reykjavík and Air Greenland who fly regularly from Copenhagen. This is a truly an inspiring adventure exploring locations that are only now becoming more accessible to photographers. This will be the fifth year that we have been running our Greenland departures and it is

fair to say that we have a great sense of all the best locations for photography

### PHOTOGRAPHIC TUTORS

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

### DAILY ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Arrive Ilulissat Greenland

A flight north over Greenland's vast Ice Cap brings us to Ilulissat on the West Coast where an airport transfer is included. Our hotel is perfectly situated and directly overlooking the Icefjord. The hotel is modern and well run with a great selection of food including many vegetarian options. If you are early you may choose to take an initial stroll to the nearby locations for photography. The town is littered with colourful houses, a picturesque church, sledge dogs, a couple of nice coffee shops and an assortment of shops. Our first meeting as a group will be at 16:00 in the reception of the our hotel for introductions, an image presentation and a trip briefing. We will have an early evening meal followed by a spectacular sunset sailing on board a private boat to photograph icebergs at close quarters in the dramatic evening light. Hotel Ilulissat (D)

#### Day 2-3: Around Ilulissat

Over the next two days we will explore Ilulissat and it's surrounds. There are many fabulous view points overlooking the Icefjord. Sunrises and sunsets can be special from many areas close by the hotel, even from the veranda! The amount of ice floating in the vicinity is variable and reliable in the Icefjord itself, it is always awe-



inspiring to witness the giant ice structures floating 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 to Arctic Greenland. During the daytime participants will be free to explore the area by foot or maybe take an optional helicopter ride or a dog sledge excursion. 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 good photo opportunities before and after the ride. Dogs and sledges are everywhere, the town comes to life in Winter with an energy that is tangible, punctuated by the howls and yapping of



these very attractive albeit non-domestic dogs. The amount of walking each day can be adjusted to an individual energy levels. Ski poles are a very useful aid for walking in snow.

Hotel Ilulissat (B,L,D)

#### **Day 4–6: Oqaatsut Inuit Settlement**

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; Oqaatsut is one of these settlements. After lunch we board a small private boat sailing to the tiny settlement of Oqaatsut. This settlement has only around 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 used to be the Mayor of Ilulissat! The rooms are warm, comfortable, well furnished, we share the

bathroom. There is an excellent windowed dining/meeting area with fine views of the surrounding settlement and mountains. Hot showers are available in the community house next door to our accommodation but one needs to be prepared for the fact that sometimes the water pipes freeze rendering the showers useless. We spend the following two days exploring and photographing Oqaatsut settlement and the surrounding landscape. Ice from the fiord makes it's way here and is often lit up with a spectacular light. The local inuits are friendly and are very happy for the contribution that we make to the community. Our food will generally be sourced and cooked by a local person. The light pollution is minimal and we are easily able to find great aurora locations in our immediate surroundings.

Settlement Hotel (B,L,D)



### Day 7: Around Ilulissat

After sunrise and breakfast we board our boat/helicopter for the return journey to Ilulissat. Arriving back mid morning we are in plenty of time for exploring Ilulissat further, there is still so much to see and photograph. The energetic may want to the ancient settlement area around Sermermiut. For 4000 years, different Inuit cultures lived in the settlement sustained by the rich fishing to be had in the Icefjord. Even today, you can still see the mounds of the dwellings indicating times gone by. The vistas from here over the Fjord are superb, although it is wise to keep to the high ground as turning Icebergs often cause spectacular waves. In the afternoon you may choose to take an optional sunset cruise to photograph the Icebergs in the Icefjord. In the evening we meet for a final celebratory dinner.

Hotel Ilulissat (B,L,D)

### Day 8: 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 Ilulis-

sat'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 or perhaps a some days in Iceland, if this is the case just get in touch and we may have some ideas to help you plan this!

(B)

### Aurora Borealis

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. We will need clear skies for aurora photography. Our three nights out on a remote settlement are perfect for this

### JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

Our first meeting as a group will be at 16:00 in the reception of the our hotel for introductions, an image presentation and a trip briefing. Wild Photography Holidays services finish after breakfast on the final day of the trip.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfers from/to Ilulissat airport
- All meals
- All accommodation
- Boat tours in as per itinerary
- Helicopter flight to settlement

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Alcohol or additional items ordered during meals



- Aerial photography 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 they are highly weather dependent.

### ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is included in the price of the holiday and all have en suite facilities with the exception of the settlement hotel in Oqaatsut. The rooms are warm, comfortable, well furnished and we share the bathroom. Hot showers are available in the community house next door to our accommodation although one needs to be prepared for the fact that sometimes the water pipes freeze rendering the showers useless. A single supplements is available for this trip but this does not include the

Oqaatsut Settlement where participants will share a room.

Our main base in Ilulissat is a centrally based hotel with views out over the Icefjord.

## 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 tippie, this can be purchased at the airport on the way out to Greenland. The hotel has a bar but the settlement does not. Alcohol can be purchased at the local supermarket.

## 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 your local 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 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. The hotel in Ilulissat has WiFi but not the settlement hotel in Oqaatsut.
- 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)1270 440222.

### **LINKS**

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