Facts about Greenland
Facts
Greenland is the world’s biggest island.
Area: 2,175,600 km², which is the same size as France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium combined. About 85% of the country is permanently covered by ice. The ice-free areas (341,700 km²) are bigger than Norway – or almost ten times the size of Denmark.

The Greenlandic name for Greenland is Kalaallit Nunaat, which means Land of the Greenlanders.

Population: 56,370 (2013). 80% of these live in 16 towns, the rest live in 60 villages. 87 % of the population was born in Greenland, 13% are immigrants from Denmark and other countries. The population density is 14/km² calculated on the basis of ice-free areas. 90% of the population lives on the west coast.

The capital is Nuuk with about 16,000 inhabitants (January 1st, 2012).

The official language is Greenlandic with Danish as the second language. Greenlandic, Kalaallisut, is closely related to the languages spoken by Inuit in Canada and Alaska.

The currency is Danish kroner.

National Day is June 21st and the national anthem is Nunarput (Our Country).
Greenland's flag was used for the first time on National Day in 1985.

Main exports: Prawns, fish products, skin products
Denmark is the main trade partner

**Time zones**

Greenland stretches across 5 time zones (incl. Thule Air Base), but practically all of Greenland uses GMT -3, i.e. 4 hours after CET (Central European Time). However, Ittoqqortoormiit uses GMT -1 and East American time; GMT -4 is used on Thule Air Base.

**Geography**

Geographically, Greenland belongs to the North American continent, but is mainly influenced socially and culturally by Scandinavia.

**Distances:**
From north to south: 2,670 km (same distance as from Bergen in Norway to Tunis in North Africa).
From east to west: 1,050 km (same distance as from Edinburgh to Stockholm).
Shortest distance to Canada: 26 km (16 miles).
Highest point: Mount Gunnbjørn, 3,733 m above sea level.

**Location:**
Southernmost point: Cape Farewell, about the same latitude as Oslo.
Northernmost point: Cape Morris Jessup, about 740 km south of the North Pole.
Westernmost point: Cape Alexander: about the same longitude as New York.
Easternmost point: Nordostrundingen, situated a little to the east of Iceland

Thus Greenland is east, west, north and south of Iceland.

**Inland ice**

Area: 1.8 million km2.
Volume: 2.7 million km3 – the equivalent of about 7% of all the fresh water on earth and therefore the earth’s largest fresh water reservoir. The highest point of the inland ice is 3,300 m above sea level and it is more than 3,500 m thick.

**Aurora borealis – Northern lights**

The aurora borealis is a fascinating phenomenon which it is often possible to experience in Greenland. The aurora borealis is created at 90-300 km’s height when energy-rich radiation bombards the atmosphere’s molecules and atoms.
It has characteristic colours that reflect the atmosphere’s composition. The predominant colours are white-yellow-green lines, but it can also take on shades of red and blue-violet. Many years of research have not yet fully explained the phenomenon, so it is still an exciting scientific challenge.

As with people all over the world, there are some early myths and omens connected to natural phenomenon. In the mythical world of the Inuit the aurora borealis is seen as the messenger between the living and the dead and should be treated with respect and reverence. By whistling at the aurora borealis it was possible to make contact and the aurora could answer with crackling sounds when the connection to the dead was established. You should therefore not whistle at the aurora just for fun, because it could rush at you and cut your head off.

A simpler, more poetic explanation is found in a legend which tells that the aurora borealis is the dead, playing football with a walrus skull.

Geology

Greenland’s geological history is the oldest known in the world with rocks that are 4,700 million years old. In comparison, it is thought that most of the European geology is only half as old as Greenland’s.

Greenland reflects a fascinating history of mountain chains that rose up and were eroded, of thundering volcanoes and tropical coral reefs. It is possible to read this development in the bare rock and this is particularly relevant at the moment with relation to the mineral resources and oil and gas deposits in the underground.
The land in Greenland consists of Arctic mountain landscapes almost without vegetation and with rocks that are often polished by inland ice and local glaciers. The landscapes are ideal for geological studies, as the rocks, the structures and the strata are freely accessible.

The country’s geological foundation consists of compound bedrock with folded gneisses that developed more than 1,600 million years ago. 60-55 million years ago volcanoes thundered in Greenland and development continued with the effects of the ice ages over the past couple of million years, while the country was covered by ice.

**Minerals**

Greenland conceals – on a global level – a unique wealth of minerals and the country is facing a new phase of mineral exploitation through mining. Among the countless deposits are:

Gold, telluric iron, diamonds, graphite, galenite, molybdenum, villiaumite, halite, cryolite, pachnolite, quarts, magnetite, corundum, pyrochlore, calcite, ikaite, barium sulphate, rozenite, apatite, garnet, kornerupine, allanite, leifite, turmalin, eudialyte narsarsukite, talcum, lazurite, tugtupite, asfalt, nabesite and Greenlandic marble.

**Climate**

Arctic climate and permafrost. The average temperatures seldom rises above 10 degrees in the warmest month of the year, but even relatively low day temperatures can feel like warm summer days when the sun shines.

Coldest and warmest month at 2 selected destinations (average temperature):
- Nanortalik (March 2010) -10.4°C
- Ilulissat (Feb. 2010) -20.2°C
- Nanortalik (August 2010) +19.6°C
- Ilulissat (August 2010) +18.2°C

**Climate changes**

The Polar Regions are included in the places where the effects of global climate changes are most apparent. Since 2003, the ice has melted with increasing speed in Greenland, Alaska and Antarctica which increases the risk of flooding. From 1979 to 2006, summer melt on the ice sheet increased by 30 percent, reaching a new record of 230 gigatons (1 gigaton is the equivalent of one billions tons) and every year onwards since 2007.
In July 2012, a very unusual weather event occurred on the Greenland ice sheet. For a few days, 97 percent of the entire ice sheet indicated surface melting.

Research shows that the sea levels would rise by 7 metres if all of the inland ice in Greenland melts.

Current ice melt situations can be followed via this website: http://nsidc.org/greenland-today/
Infrastructure:

It is not possible to drive between Greenland’s towns and villages because there are no roads outside the built-up areas. However, there is lively automobile traffic in larger towns.

The infrastructure is based on air traffic and shipping.

The country’s national airline, Air Greenland, flies passengers and cargo across the Atlantic with 5-13 weekly flights to and from Copenhagen and also undertakes domestic air traffic with fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. In addition, Air Greenland undertakes a wide range of special assignments, such as slinging operations, service and ambulance flights. Air Greenland also services Iceland and Nunavut with regular flights. www.airgreenland.gl

From 2009 there are also flights between Iceland and 5 Greenlandic destinations in the peak (summer) season. www.airiceland.is

Arctic Umiaq Line operates passenger shipping between larger towns while smaller boats operate coastal traffic in the different regions. www.aul.gl

There are harbour facilities in 16 towns and jetties in 60 villages. In addition to the transatlantic airports in Kangerlussuaq and Narsarsuaq, there are 10 airports for fixed wing aircraft, 5 for helicopters (heliports) and 41 helicopter landing sites (helistops).

It is still possible to travel between towns and villages by dogsled, snowmobile or skis in the winter – and on foot in the summer.
In Greenland it is just as usual to have a motorboat, as it is to have a car in the rest of the world.

**Security of supply**

Whereas trade and commerce in the largest towns is governed by free enterprise and market economy, small villages and outlying districts are often dependent upon a supply structure that is publicly regulated through service contracts. Here, security of supply is a key phrase, since delivery in some parts of these regions is not a question of comfort – but more a question of necessity. It doesn’t take much to imagine the consequences of failure to supply energy and fuel to a small village in North Greenland, where the temperature in winter months can fall below minus 40 degrees Celsius.

![Image of boat on ice](image)

**Settlement patterns**

*Towns* have hospitals, schools, churches, institutions, police, shops, hotels, restaurants, businesses and service functions.

*Villages* have grocery stores and schools. Some also have a church, factory or nursing station.

*Settlements* are typically sheep farms and other forms of farm inhabited by one family.

*Stations and research centres* are manned with scientific personnel in isolated districts.

*Military installations* (Thule Air Base, Daneborg and Grønnedal).
**Government**

1721-1953: Danish colony
1953-1979: County-like status
1979: Home Rule
2009: Self Governance
2010: Taken over responsibility of the mineral resources

Greenland is a parliamentary democracy and part of the Danish realm with the Faroe Islands. The government of Greenland is divided between Inatsisartut (an elected parliament with 31 members) and Naalakkersuisut (the government), which is elected by the parliament and consists of 9 members (ministers).

Until January 1st, 2009 Greenland was divided into 18 municipalities which, following a reform in 2008, have been reduced to 4 greater municipalities. In addition, the largest villages have village councils.

**Elections**

Held generally every 4th year. Latest election was held June 2, 2009.

Distribution of mandates:
- Inuit Ataqatigiit (Socialistic) 14
- Siumut (Socialdemocratic) 9
- Demokraatiit (Social-Liberal) 4
- Atassut (Liberal) 3
- Kattusseqatigiit (Union of free candidates) 1

A coalition of the parties Inuit Ataqatigiit, Demokraatiit, and Kattusseqatigiit has formed the government since June 2009.

**Greenland and Denmark**

Greenland’s Representation in Denmark functions as an embassy and plays an important role in the considerable work concerning the commonwealth. The function was established in 1981 when several areas of responsibility were taken over from the Danish state. Part of its area of responsibility is to maintain contact to the authorities and decision-makers in Denmark.

**Greenland and USA**

The collaboration under the so-called Joint Committee is an extension of the agreements concerning technical/economical cooperation between Greenland, Denmark and the USA. The work involves everything from culture and education, to tourism, trade and energy. Hence the first contact with the US aluminium company Alcoa was established through the Joint Committee – and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed during a meeting in 2007.
**Greenland and EU**

Greenland is not included in Denmark’s membership of the EU, but left the Union in 1985 (as the only nation yet to leave the EU). There remains a close collaboration with the EU through several bilateral agreements on i.e. fisheries and education. Greenland’s Representation in Brussels was established in 1992. www.eu.nanoq.gl.

Through its OCT – status (Overseas Countries and Territories) Greenland has access to EU programmes, so Greenlandic businesses and institutions can apply on the same footing as businesses and institutions in EU countries.

Greenland also participates independently in the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP), which is an EU programme with reference to the common issues that thinly populated regions in the Arctic and North Atlantic experience in connection with commercial and industrial development, innovation, transport, tourism, sustainable development, research and education etc.

Greenland also participates in a large EU project regarding climate changes.
Education

The education system in Greenland is essentially similar to that of the other Nordic countries.

Vocational education
Vocational education alternates between school and practical work. Some vocational education takes place exclusively in Greenland and some requires periods at schools in Denmark. A place at a vocational school and a trainee contract regarding a practical training place are necessary in order to start vocational training.

Upper secondary or high school
In Greenland there are three different three-year secondary courses as well as two one-year preparation courses. In addition, there are two one-year secondary supplementary courses.

Further education
Further education is split up into short, medium and long courses of further education.

Amongst the shorter courses (KVU), taking 2-3 years are:
Academy Profession Degree in Financial Management with various special subjects (Greenland’s Business School, Nuuk).
Process technician (ATI branch school, Maniitsoq).
Service economist (Greenland’s Business School, Qaqortoq).
The courses alternate between school periods and work periods.

Medium-length further education (MVU) takes 3-4 years and is often directed at specific career or job functions. Several have internships and the connection between theory and practice is important. Some of the medium-length courses that can be taken in Greenland are:
Journalist (Institute for Journalism, Nuuk).
Teacher (Ilinniarfissuaq/Greenland’s Teacher Training College, Nuuk).
Social pedagogue (Social Pedagogic Training College, Ilulissat).
Social worker (social worker training, Nuuk).
Nurse (Centre for Health Care Training, Nuuk)
Mining professional (School of Mining, Sisimiut)

Greenland offers a limited range of lengthy further education. Ilisimatusarfik – Greenland’s University – offers a series of bachelor and graduate studies which are built up in the same manner as the Danish courses. Some have practical training and/or courses at educational institutions in Denmark.

Examples of long courses of further education offered in Greenland are:
Social Science (Ilisimatusarfik, Greenland’s University)
Arctic Engineering (Centre for Arctic Technology, Sisimiut)
Culture and Social History (Ilisimatusarfik, Greenland’s University)
Language, Literature and the Media (Ilisimatusarfik, Greenland’s University)
Theology (Ilisimatusarfik, Greenland’s University)

ARTEK
The Centre for Arctic Technology, ARTEK, was established in 2000. The purpose of the centre is to train and further educate students and business people in arctic technology. ARTEK holds courses and conferences on Arctic conditions and generally contributes to accumulation and communication of knowledge about Arctic Technology. This takes place through collaboration with businesses and different educational institutions in Denmark, Greenland and abroad. It is run in cooperation with Sanaartornermik Ilinniarfik/Building and Construction School in Sisimiut and Denmark’s Technical University in Lyngby.
Media and communication

The national TV and radio station is KNR, Kalaallit Nunaata Radoa.

Sermitsiaq, which is a weekly (Friday) and AG - Atuagagdliutit (Grønlandsposten), which is a weekly (Wednesday) are the country’s two printed newspapers. AG was first published in 1861 and Sermitsiaq in 1958. Despite a relatively small circulation, both newspapers play an important role in the social debate in Greenland.

Sermitsiaq.ag, and knr.gl publish news via the internet every day.

The English and Danish language magazine greenland today - www.greenlandtoday.com – comes out three times a year with articles on current affairs in Greenland, culture, business and portraits.

There are local radio and TV stations in the towns and some towns have small, local newspapers.

There are landlines and cell phone connections in almost all inhabited regions.

Telephone lines in use: 22,818 (2008)
Broad band subscribers: 12,000 out of 22500 households
International dialling code for Greenland: 299

All towns and most villages have internet access. Country code: .gl
After having used satellite connections, TELE Greenland opened up in 2009 for a new era with high-speed internet. A 4,600 km sea-cable costing 90 million Euros connects Greenland with Europe via Island and the USA. This has increased capacity by almost a factor 5,000, from 200 Mbps to 960 Gbps. Coverage in Greenland is therefore the best in the world, when area and population are compared.

There are several private film and TV production companies, among them multimedia company Inuk Media, which has won several international awards, and Deluxus Studios.


History

The first people came to the Thule Region 4-5000 years ago from Canada. In all, 6 Inuit cultures immigrated at various times and the present population are descendents of the Thule Culture that came to Greenland around the 9th century. It was about the same time as the Norsemen and Erik the Red arrived in Greenland in 982, as described in the Icelandic Sagas. Many of their ruins are still visible in South Greenland and near Nuuk and they are popular destinations for tourists.

Since then, there have been English and Nordic expeditions to Greenland - from the 16-1700’s it was particularly European whalers. The cleric Hans Egede from the Danish-Norwegian realm came to what is now Nuuk in 1721 in his search for the Norsemen. He never found them. Instead, he converted the Inuit to Christianity and the population today is predominantly Lutheran-evangelist.

During World War II Greenland was a strategic way station for Allied air transport between the USA and England. When the war prevented supplies reaching Greenland from Denmark, supplies came instead from the USA and Canada. From 1953 Greenland ceased to be a Danish colony and became part of the Danish realm. In 1979 Greenland attained home rule following a referendum and took over responsibility in a wide range of political fields. In 2008 Greenlanders voted for self-governance, which means that Greenlanders can decide for themselves when to take over responsibility for such fields as the police and the legal system. Self governance took effect from National Day, June 21st 2009.

In addition to the local museums which are found in most towns, the National Museum in Nuuk is also interesting. Exhibitions here include the world-famous mummies from Qilakitsoq, a unique find from a remote cave near Uummannaq in 1972. These very well-preserved mummies date back to 1475 and provide a very good insight into the clothing of the time.

www.museum.gl lists Greenland’s museums.
Special occasions and traditions:

National Day, which falls on June 21st, is celebrated with speeches and various events.

On Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve the children sing in front of people’s houses and they are invited in and given candy and sweets.

New Year’s Eve is celebrated in a big way in Greenland, where enormous amounts of fireworks compete with the stars and the aurora borealis to light up the skies above Greenland’s towns. There are three peaks with regard to fireworks: 20.00 hrs (to mark the turn of the year in Denmark), 21.00 hrs (for the Faroe Islands) and finally 24.00 hrs to celebrate New Year in Greenland.

On Twelfth Night (Mitaartut), which traditionally marks the end of Christmas, the children dress up and go round knocking on doors with sticks. They are offered small treats to eat.

Shrovetide, Easter and Whitsun are celebrated in the same way as in the other Nordic countries.

A child’s first day at school is a very special occasion in Greenland and it is celebrated by family and friends. Many of the children wear national costume.

Kaffemik is a special Greenlandic tradition which is a kind of open-house arrangement held on birthdays and at other celebrations. Coffee is served with many different cakes and there are often Greenlandic specialities.
In North Greenland the sun is often welcomed back in spring after the “dark period”, often from a vantage point where people sing songs and watch the sun rise over the horizon for the first time in months.

Dogsled racing is held in North Greenland, often around Easter.
Economy – key figures

Work force: 40,156 (15-64 year-olds born in Greenland (Jan. 2012).
Unemployment: 5.6 pct. (average percentage of the workforce unemployed in 2007)
Public budget: Revenue: DKK 9,6 billion. Expenditure: DKK 9,4 billion (2011).
Chief industries: Public administration and services, industry (including fish processing), transport, building and construction.
Agriculture: sheep and reindeer farming, fodder crops, vegetables, potatoes.
Exports: Fish and fish products 87 pct. (including 55 pct. prawns), skin and fur products.
Export markets: Denmark 80%, EU 14%, other countries 6% (2007)
Import of goods and services: 54,531 billion fob (2010).
Import markets: Denmark, Canada and USA (2010)
Block grant, incl. expenses covered by Denmark: DKK 3,513 million (2010)
Currency: Danish kroner (DKK)
Rate of exchange: 100 US $ = 562,5 DKK, 100 EUR = 743.6 DKK (March 2012)
Flora and fauna

Plants
Greenland has about 500 different species of plants, but because of the climate there is a great difference in the vegetation that is found in the high arctic, dry and desert-like areas in the north and that found in the relatively lush and mild South Greenland. There are no actual forests, but in the southernmost regions there are clusters of up to 3-4 metre high trees.

Animals
There are about 225 known species of fish and shell fish in the waters around Greenland. Greenland halibut, cod, redfish and crabs are important for the fishing industry, but most important is fishing for cold water prawns. There are salmon and Arctic char in the rivers and these are attractive fish for anglers.

Of the sea mammals, the most important are the ringed seal, the bearded seal, the harp seal, the hooded seal, the common seal and the walrus. All the whale species of the North Atlantic come to the waters of Greenland at some time or another. Among the toothed whales, the common porpoise, the long-finned pilot whales, the orca, the beluga and the narwhal can be mentioned. Baleen whales such as the blue whales, fin whales, sei whales, minke whales and humpback whales can be seen during the summer. The Greenland whale is – despite its name – a relatively rare guest at the edge of the drift ice. About 60 species of bird breed regularly in Greenland, while more than 150 species come as guests in the summer. The presence of large quantities of plankton and fish has resulted in an abundance of seabirds along the coasts.
Great flocks of razorbills, guillemots, kinglets and gulls breed on steep cliffs. Ducks include common and king eiders, long-tailed ducks, white-fronted geese, barnacle geese and pink-footed geese. Migratory birds that breed here include the snow bunting, the great ringed plover and the great northern loon. Arctic redpolls, ptarmigan, ravens, snowy owls, gyrfalcons and white-tailed eagles are land birds that usually spend the whole year in Greenland.

Greenland’s isolated location has impeded the immigration of wild land mammals so there are only eight species: polar bears, polar hares, arctic foxes, reindeer, musk-oxen, lemmings and wolves.

There is therefore a very poor selection of small land mammals and many animal groups are not represented at all, e.g. amphibians and reptiles. With regard to insects, there are no ants, grasshoppers, dragonflies or wasps.

Insects, of which there are a total of 700 species, are dominated by mosquitoes, midges and flies, but there are also 50 species of beetles, 2 kinds of bumblebees and 5 high arctic butterflies. There are 60 species of spiders.
Commerce

Fishing is Greenland’s main industry and it makes up about 85% of total exports – mainly prawns and Greenland halibut. Over the past decades, society has experienced significant progress in other commercial ventures, including the development of a wide range of land-based businesses in the fields of construction and service. 800 companies are registered members of Greenlandic employers’ associations.

Greenland’s natural resources could be a huge economic asset and mining development together with oil and mineral exploitation are expected to become the most important areas of commercial growth in the coming decades. Greenland’s government has therefore given greater priority to efforts in these fields and in many ways this will change the commercial structure of the country.

Multinational Alcoa, one of the world’s biggest aluminium producers is presently carrying out a series of feasibility studies in the area around Maniitsiq. The intention here is to build a smelting works based on hydro-electric power. If the project is completed, it will provide employment for about 1,200.

Tourism plays a growing role in Greenland’s economics. The country receives an increasing number of tourists from all over the world. In 2011 there were about 213,000 overnight stays at hotels and in addition to this there are a great number of cruise tourists. In 2010, more than 350 dockings by various cruise ships took place in various harbours in Greenland bringing almost 29,000 tourists.
**Agriculture and food production**

Many people believe that Greenland only consists of ice and snow, but the ice-free parts are equivalent to an area that is bigger than Norway. In South Greenland conditions are good for agriculture. Produce includes lamb, potatoes and an increasing variety of vegetables.

Neqi’s slaughterhouse in Narsaq processes 23,000 lambs each year. In collaboration with Greenland’s Catering School, Inuili, in Narsaq, there is intensive product development with special cuts and new charcuterie products both for the home market and for export. Inuili also provides various courses for professions within the hotel and restaurant branches and the food industry.

**Ingredients and gastronomy**

Greenland has some of the purest and healthiest food in the world. The isolated location and special climatic conditions provide the polar region with ideal living conditions for many animals and plants and they are renowned for their fine taste and large content of vitamins and minerals.

More and more restaurants are being noted for their high standard and, with inspiration from the world’s great kitchens, a new generation of cooks is making use of Greenlandic ingredients these years to create unique, culinary experiences.

Berries, plants and herbs have been used in cooking for centuries. The Nordic food ambassador, Anne Sofie Hardenberg, has revived the merits of original Greenlandic cooking traditions and has published books on, for example, the country’s wealth of natural foods.
Art and culture

If you would like an insight into modern Greenland, art and culture are important ways to approach this. There is both great scope and integrity to be found in traditional drum dance and mask dance, in abstract paintings, in the old art of storytelling and in new literature, in theatre and handicrafts - and in music.

Music
Greenland has a rich music culture with a great number of active musicians compared to the size of the population. Expressions vary widely from earlier composers to present artists who often attract attention from far beyond the boarders of Greenland: From Rasmus Lyberth’s emotional world-class performances to rock and rap and soloists with an international sound and star status. Greenlandic music is a fine expression of the creativity of the population.
Atlantic Music in Nuuk releases a large number of albums with Greenlandic artists. www.atlanticmusic.gl

Art
In later years, the distinctive character of Greenlandic art has aroused increasing interest. Artists like Hans Lynge, Aka Høegh, Anne Birthe Hove, Miki Jacobsen and Julie Edel Hardenberg are among many names that represent a wide diversity. In 2005 Nuuk Art Museum opened with a unique collection of oils, water colours, sketches, drawings, graphics and handicrafts collected over a period of 45 years by entrepreneur Svend Junge. Among them are 150 paintings by Emanuel A. Petersen (1894-1948). In addition, efforts are being made to establish a museum for modern Greenlandic art.
**Theatre and film**

There is a centuries-old tradition in Greenland for people to perform for each other, but the first professional theatre group, Silamiut, was not formed until 1984. Despite difficult conditions, Greenlandic actors have created many both entertaining and debate-provoking shows. A theatre school was established in 2011.

In 2009, the theatrical dance production “Polaroid” toured internationally with some of the country’s most skilled actors such as Nukáka Coster-Waldau, Varste Mathæussen Berndtsson, Vivi Sørensen and Kristian Mølgaard in the lead. The performance, in the much acclaimed production by Norwegian director Jo Strømgren, was a great success. The tour started in Greenland and Denmark and then went to Estonia, Northern Ireland, Latvia, Denmark, USA - and Norway, where Polaroid was performed at the national theatre, Riksteatret. In all, there was a total of 42 performances and in many ways this production has helped put Greenlandic theatre tradition on the global map.

The Danish film Heart of Light from 1998 was the first modern feature film in Greenlandic. In this film, Greenlandic actors are at the forefront with Rasmus Lyberth and Vivi Nielsen in two of the leading roles.

The premier of the first Greenlandic-produced feature film “Nuummioq” by Mikisoq H. Lynge and Otto Rosing took place 2009. Since then productions like Qaqqat Alanngui and especially Inuk found a large audience and won great acclaim worldwide.

**Literature**

Greenlandic literature started as storytelling, the verbnguilanal handing down of myths and legends. Many of these have since been written down and are now found in book form. Modern, European-inspired written literature has its origins at the beginning of the 1800’s. Despite a market based on such a small population, a long series of significant works has been published over the years.

Publishers such as milik publishing (www.milik.gl) and Atuagkat (www.atuagkat.gl) still publish a limited amount of literature in the Greenlandic language.

**Handicrafts**

Traditional Greenlandic handicraft has existed for thousands of years and it is closely connected to the hunting culture. The skill of generations used to make essential tools often gave rise to creativity in making other objects, e.g. masks, amulets, tupilaks, dolls and toys. The makers of tools and clothing in those days were also artists.

Today, there are many excellent artists, for example in the active workshops where you can see narwhal tusk, reindeer antler or soapstone transformed into beautiful or mysterious figures.
Tupilaks
The tupilak is one of the most well-known examples of Greenlandic handicraft. Today, it is known in the form of a small sculpture carved in tusk or reindeer antler. Although it often has a threatening and grotesque expression, it is considered to be an innocent and decorative souvenir. But it was once the symbol of a spirit you could call upon for help against an enemy. The motive could be envy, jealousy or a desire for revenge. According to old stories, the magical power could be conjured in several ways through spiritual ceremonies and by singing conjuring songs.

Fur production and fashion design
For hundreds of years, seal skins have been an indispensable part of the attire in Greenland’s Arctic climate, but in later years the traditional anoraks have been supplemented with elegant creations because Greenlandic design has experienced an explosive development, achieving a very high, creative level in just a few years. An individual and personal combination of Greenlandic expression and international style emerges from the inspiration from nature and the imaginative use of, e.g. appliquéd fur and skin from seals and other animals. Among the most known Greenlandic designer names are Great Greenland, Lennert Design, Isaksen Design and Bibi Chemnitz, but other are also other, important talents.

National costume
The national costume of Greenland is worn at festive and ceremonious occasions. The men’s costume is plain and consists of a white or blue anorak and black trousers and black boots (kamiks) or shoes. The women, on the other hand, wear a colourful anorak with a bead collar and cuffs, sealskin pants with embroidery and boots (kamiks), also with intricate leather embroidery. Sowing a women’s national costume is an enormous undertaking. It requires skill which only a few, older women possess. At first glance and at
a distance, the women’s costumes look identical, but in reality they are very individual. They send signals to their surroundings regarding age, status, regional identity and population group.

Sport

Both elite and recreational sports play an important role in Greenland and the number of athletes is increasing in step with the development of sports facilities. In total, there are about 10,500 (2012) active members of 210 clubs which are organized under 9 associations. Among the most popular sports are football, hand ball and badminton – but Greenland does well internationally not least with ski sports and taekwondo.

Greenland’s topography and climatic conditions make it suitable for various disciplines within extreme sports. Some of the most internationally-famous events are:

Arctic Circle Race is the world’s toughest ski race and it takes place each year in April over three days on a 160 km long course in the terrain between Sisimiut and Kangerlussuaq.

Greenland Adventure Race is held over five days in a mountainous region in South Greenland. The competition consists of 40 kilometres of kayaking, 50 kilometres of mountain biking and 95 kilometres of running.

Polar Circle Marathon is a classical 42.195 km marathon race. However, it does take place in untraditional conditions, as it is carried out at 66° northern latitude – also known as the Polar Circle. The temperature is therefore
relatively low (in the summer it is minus 5°), and it is possible to experience both the midnight sun and the aurora borealis.

Other large sporting events include the Nuuk Marathon, in which about 400 people take part – and the “Make May Healthy” event, which consists of many activities, among them running, swimming, Nordic walking, aerobics and cycling taking place during the entire month of May every year.

Competitors who have represented Greenland at World Championships and Olympic Games over time:

_Ski_ sport
Apollo Lynge, cross-country (1960s)
Daniel Skifte, cross-country (1960s)
Michael Binzer, cross-country: 3 x Olympics and 5 x World Champ. 1993–1999.

_Hand_ ball

_Badminton_
World championships for teams in 2001 in Italy.

_Taekwondo_
Greenland’s Taekwondo Association has been represented by many competitors in all the world championships since 1987, where many have done really well and won several titles.
Supplementary information:

**The Arctic capital – and the next-biggest municipality in the world.**

On January 1st, 2009, as a consequence of the municipality reform, Nuuk Municipality became a part of the new Kommuneqarfik Sermasooq – the result of a merger of the former municipalities of Nuuk, Paamiut, Ivittut, Ammassalik and Ittoqqortoormiit. The geographical extent of the municipality is the next largest in the world (the biggest is Greenland’s northernmost municipality).

Nuuk is the country’s next-oldest town, founded by Hans Egede in 1728. There are about 16,000 inhabitants and in addition there are about 340 people in the villages of Kapisillit and Qeqertarsuatsiaat. As the country’s capital, Nuuk houses Naalakkersuisut (government), Inatsisartut (parliament) and the central administration as well as Greenland’s University Centre, Ilulissatik, the teaching college, the cathedral and Greenland’s National Museum, where it is possible to immerse yourself in the country’s fascinating ancient history. Most of the educational institutions are found in Nuuk, among them lisimatusarfik, the university.

In December the sun rises at around 10.00 hrs and sets at around 14.30 hrs. On the other hand, from the end of May until the beginning of August it is light 24 hours a day. The climate is low Arctic with an average temperature of seven degrees Celsius in July and minus eight degrees Celsius in January.

The town was formerly known as Godthåb. Today the official Greenlandic name Nuuk (meaning promontory) is used.

**Culture in futuristic surroundings**

Greenland’s first and biggest culture centre, Katuaq in Nuuk, is a famed award-winner for its beautiful and exciting architecture. All year round there are a large number of concerts, meetings, theatre performances, art exhibitions and other events. Similar culture centres have been, or will be, built in other towns.

**The beautiful, but dangerous ice**

It is impressive to see the forces of nature unfold, but you must keep a safe distance. Being in a small craft too close to an iceberg can have catastrophic consequences, if the iceberg suddenly moves. If a large, floating iceberg breaks, it can cause flooding several kilometres away.

**Broccoli grows in Greenland**

Global warming has lifted the average temperature in South Greenland from 0.63 to almost 2 degrees over the past 3 decades. This means that the climate is warm enough to grow broccoli in the summer. The first endeavours are promising. Today, potatoes and carrots are already grown, but most vegetables served on Greenlandic dinner tables still come to the country by air, in spite of everything.
Dogsledding
"Give me winter, give me dogs and you can keep the rest..." said polar explorer Knud Rasmussen. To experience the Arctic nature from a dogsled is an adventure of speed, teamwork and magnificent scenery. The sled feels as though it is alive under the reindeer skin as it moves with the terrain. The dogs enjoy it and the curled dog tails confirm that our "motor" is running evenly on all cylinders...

Dogsledding can be enjoyed on the west coast north of the Arctic Circle and on Greenland’s east coast. On Disko Island it is possible to dogsled on a glacier at a height of about 800 metres above the town of Qeqertarsuaq.

Snowmobiles are forbidden in several areas because of the noise and so as not to frighten the game away. Snowmobiles are not considered safe enough for long trips, as they can break down or run out of fuel – with catastrophic consequences. But sled dogs – they never let you down.

The dogsledding season is from the end of February until the middle of May and the summer season stretches from June until the end of September.

Get a dogsled licence in Tasiilaq
Destination East Greenland and the hunters in Tasiilaq offer the possibility for tourists to take a licence to drive a dogsled. It provides the necessary skills to handle a sled with 6-8 dogs - and to function as assistant driver on a sled with up to 14 dogs.

Midnight sun and winter darkness
The midnight sun is almost a frame of mind, where the concept of time has no meaning. Leave your watch in your suitcase, because the day is endless. Children run on roller-skates in the middle of the night – with the sun in their eyes. Small motor boats chug out of the harbour and groups of people sit on the mountainsides enjoying the endless sunshine. This can be experienced from mid Greenland and to an increasing degree, the further north you travel. In Disko Bay there is midnight sun from about May 20th to July 25th.

The winter darkness is the midnight sun’s equally fascinating opposite. For weeks, the sun doesn’t rise above the horizon, but the landscape, which is white with snow and ice, reflects the weak light of the stars, moon and aurora borealis so it isn’t completely dark. It feels both real and unreal, like in a dream.

How do you get to Greenland?
Travel agents all over the world offer trips to Greenland. From Denmark there are – depending on the time of year - 5-14 weekly connections from Copenhagen to Kangerlussuaq and Narsarsuaq with Air Greenland. From Iceland there are connections from Keflavik and Reykjavik to 5 destinations in
Greenland, primarily in the summer. In 2012 Air Greenland introduced a summer route to Iqaluit, Canada. There are no passenger ships that sail to and from Greenland, but it is possible to sail with a cruise ship from Europe or North America. Despite the climate and the untamed nature, it is safe to travel both by air and by ship in Greenland. Safety regulations are amongst the most stringent in the world.

**Norse ruins**
In South Greenland there are some very-well preserved Norse ruins dating back about 1000 years, including the ruins at Hvalsey Church, the first Christian church on the North American continent.

**Original culture in modern life**
Elements of the old, traditional culture can still be found, even in large towns. Many build their own kayaks and drum dancing is still practiced – just as music, art and other aspects of culture have elements of old myths and legends – although today, they have a modern expression.

**Which is the most beautiful part of Greenland?**
Greenland is an enormous country with great regional differences. But regardless of whether you prefer the Norsemen’s mild, green South Greenland, or you are drawn by East Greenland’s glaciers and dramatic mountains, or North Greenland with its enormous icebergs and dogsleds, you will have the experience of a lifetime.

**How can you get to see the wildlife?**
On boat trips there are opportunities to see seals and whales, and on land you can see reindeer and musk-oxen. Birdlife in Greenland is not rich in diversity, but razorbills, terns, ravens, falcons, ptarmigan and several kinds of sparrow are often seen.

**Health services**
There is a hospital in all the towns and in the villages there is usually a nursing station. Travellers are recommended to bring their own medicine, since special products are not always available.

**Opening hours**
Most shops are open from 10-17.30 Monday to Thursday, 10-18 or 19 on Friday and 9-13 on Saturday, but many kiosks, small grocers and video shops have longer opening hours.

**Can you sell ice cream in Greenland? Yes!**
Despite the cold climate in Greenland, a survey made in 2002 showed that the population eats twice as much ice cream per person as they do in e.g. France or Italy.
Santa Claus
Santa Clause lives in Greenland, where he is known to have his house, his workshop and his reindeer sled high to the north. Lots of children around the world know this. All year round they write to Santa Claus and this is why he has to have the world’s biggest letter box. It is situated in Ilulissat. This is where all the letters and postcards arrive before they are opened and read by Santa Claus and his helpers. Every letter is answered; remember to tell the children that they should provide a return address.

The address is: Santa Claus, 2412 Ilulissat, GREENLAND - www.santa.gl

Photos: Branding Greenland DVD and media.gl