

# GREENLAND



## TUNU EXPEDITION: CULTURAL TOUR ACCOMPANIED BY INUIT HUNTERS AND THE ANTHROPOLOGIST FRANCESC BAILÓN

**DATES: 25<sup>th</sup> AUGUST TO 6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**CODE: XPGR02**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ammassalimmiut, on the east coast of Greenland, formed part of the last Inuit group that had contact with the «white man». It happened when the Danish explorer, Gustav Holm, found them in 1884. This is about the last direct descendants of the Dorset and Thule arctic cultures. Its relative isolation and strong ties with the past have led to an enormous maintenance of their cultural and survival traditions: even their dialect is archaic compared to the greater part of Greenland's population. Our goal will be to get submerged in this unique Inuit culture, learn from their skills, and be first-hand witnesses to their adaptation to the environment.

The name «Tunu» means: «the opposite side, back, back side», since it is precisely the largest human concentration that is found in the other part of the island, on the West Coast. And so, this region constitutes «the other face of life, the other look of Greenland». While we live together with the Inuit, we will learn their ancient methods of hunting and fishing, we will travel by boat, we will eat traditional foods (seal, whale, halibut, grouper, cod, etc.), we will visit traditional populations while enjoying the spectacular views of the fjords, glaciers and icebergs of this wonderful Greenlandic region. The possibility to observe seals, whales (basically sei and narwhals whales), polar bears and arctic foxes, and also of the majestic aurora borealis which can be seen from end of August.

## TRAVEL MAP



## **ITINERARY**

### **DAY 1: FLIGHT REYKJAVIK (ICELAND) - KULUSUK (GREENLAND)**

Arrival to Kulusuk, traditional town located, on an island that has the same name. Luggage pick up and transfer to the guest house. Free afternoon to take a first impression and do some contact with this majestic Greenlandic region and its residents. Lunch and dinner cooked by ourselves. Accommodation in an Inuit houses with shared bedrooms (sleeping bag).

### **DAY 2: KULUSUK - SERMILIGAAQ**

Last minute preparations and shopping. Boat trip along with the Ammassalimmiut towards the town of Sermiligaaq, located 50 km from Kulusuk. Along the journey, we will pass by numerous islands that are strategic entry points for the Inuit themselves, in their usual search of food for their subsistence. Workshop: during the way, we will learn how to observe and understand about the terrain, on how to be guided by the Arctic, and to recognize the signs of this wild and unpredictable nature. Arrival to Sermiligaaq, an active and efficient settlement for traditional hunting and fishing. Free afternoon to visit this ancestral town. Breakfast and dinner will be prepared by ourselves. Picnic lunch en route. Accommodation in an Inuit houses with shared rooms.

### **DAY 3: SERMILIGAAQ – KÂRALE AND KNUD RASMUSSEN GLACIERES - KUUMMIUT**

In the morning, we will go over to Sermiligaaq, straight to the impressive array of glaciers of the Kârale and Knud Rasmussen, located 20 kilometers away. This is one of the places where we can observe with greater clarity the retreat of the glaciers as a result of the planet's global warming. We will continue our trip through the Ikateq Fjord and visit a former American military base, Bluie 2, abandoned in 1959. In the afternoon, we will arrive to the traditional village of Kuummiut, located 40 km from Sermiligaaq. Picnic lunch en route. Breakfast and dinner will be prepared by ourselves. Picnic lunch en route. Accommodation in an Inuit houses with shared rooms.

### **DAY 4: KUUMMIUT – QENERTIVARTIT – TASIILAQ**

After breakfast, the morning is free to visit the village of Kuummiut. We recommend a visit to the fish market and the salted fish factory, the only factory of fish of the district and where the majority of catches of this region are processed. At the appointed time, we will continue with our navigation through the stunning Ammassalik Fjord until we reach the town of Tasiilaq, located 40 km away, the capital of the Tunu region, and for many, the most beautiful city in Greenland. During the trip, we will make a stop to visit the abandoned town of Qenertivartivit, which is preserved as its inhabitants left it. Breakfast will be prepared by us. Picnic lunch en route. Accommodation in a hostel with double or triple rooms.

**DAY 5: TASIILAQ**

In the morning, we will visit the town of Tasiilaq. First, we will go to the local museum, which is one of the most important and visited in Greenland. There you will see an exhibition about the history of the east coast of the country, which includes a display of masks, sculptures, antique photographs, and so on. Then we will visit the Potato House, reconstruction of a traditional Greenlandic house made of stone and peat, and then we will go to the Citadel, a building constructed in 1894 by the first Danish missionary, Revered Rüttel and his wife. We will also see the house of the missionaries, built in 1895, that served as a church, a school and as a hospital. We will visit the Trade Manager's House, a building constructed in the 20s, destroyed in the 50s, and reconstructed later. It was occupied between 1932 and 1933 by Knud Rasmussen (father of esquimology), when he came to make the film «*Palos Brudafaerd*». We will make a stop on the trip to have a Picnic and enjoy the beautiful views of this village. Accommodation and breakfast in a hostel with double or triple rooms.

**DAY 6: TASIILAQ**

Free day to walk around the town of Tasiilaq and observe the daily life of its residents. It is recommended to visit Skaeven o Stunk, which is the House of the Craftsmanship, one of the most important places in Greenland to contemplate the traditional Inuit crafts, especially the manufacture of masks and tupilaat. Also, we recommend you visit the Kalaaliaraq, the town's fish market, where hunters and fishermen bring their daily catches in order to be bought by the residents of Tasiilaq. Also, you could visit the house of Service of the Philately of Greenland, created in 1988 and with a lot of prestige in an international level. Finally, we suggest that you visit the church that was built in 1985, where in its interior we will be able to observe the religious syncretism that the Inuit have come to accept, called Shamanic Neocristianism, and that combines the traditional and the modern Greenlandic art. Picnic type lunch. Accommodation and breakfast in a hostel with double or triple rooms.

**DAY 7: TASIILAQ**

Reserve Day in case of adverse weather or by bad sea conditions. After breakfast, we will have the option of making a hike to the the valley of the Flowers. An easy excursion of about 3 hours. Another of the activities that you will be able to do is a panoramic tour by helicopter (paying a separate supplement), which will take us to the top of the Mitivagkat Glacier, located at an altitude of 1.000 meters and from where it is possible to observe the impressive landscape of fjords, mountain ranges, glaciers and the ancient layer of Greenlandic ice which is located in this region. However, the option we always recommend is a boat trip to the Nagtivit Fjord (paying a separate supplement), situated 50 km of Tasiilaq, a place full of icebergs that stain the bay with an intense blue. We can also observe the glacier front and the impressive Indlandsis, a layer of ice that covers more than 80% of the Greenlandic territory, and it is the second largest reserve of ice of

the planet. If the weather allows it, and also the sea conditions are suitable, we will try to go ashore to take a closer look at this impressive mass of ice. Picnic lunch en route. Accommodation and breakfast in a hostel with double or triple rooms.

### **DAY 8: TASIILAQ – IKATEQ – JOHAN PETERSEN FJORD – TINITEQILAAQ**

Today we will take on one of the most impressive routes by boat that could be taken in Greenland. After breakfast, we will board a boat to continue our tour of the magnificent Kong Oscar Fjord, and then we will continue by the impressive Ammassalik Fjord. We will make a first stop to visit the ghost town of Ikateq, which was abandoned a few years ago due to its remote and isolated location. Actually, this town is situated 13 km of Tasiilaq, is a traditional refuge of the Ammassalimmiut during their hunting expeditions. After we will continue sailing towards the marvelous Sermilik Fjord, an area full of drifting icebergs and where there is the possibility of spotting whales. We will keep on touring the beautiful coastline that bathes the Ammassalik Island and we will enter the impressive fjord of Johan Petersen, where we can contemplate an incredible circle of glaciers that will leave us with our mouths open. Finally we will arrive at to the small traditional town of Tiniteqilaaq and it means «United island to the mainland when the tide is low». Dinner cooked by ourselves. Picnic lunch en route. Accommodation in a mountain Inuit hurt with shared rooms.

### **DAY 9: TINITEQILAAQ – MANISILERTARPIA, APUSERAJIK AND MIDGAR GLACIERS – TINITEQILAAQ**

In the morning, we will take the boat to navigate the magnificent Sermilik Fjord and we will try to arrive to the Manisilertarpia Fronts, Apuserajik and Midgar Glaciers, which are the most productive in the area. After sailing through this entire area, and watch the many icebergs that sail towards to drift, feeding on ice the waters from the numerous fjords that are in this area, and also to contemplate at the majestic scenery of this region, then we will return to Tiniteqilaaq. Today we will hold a workshop: we will submerge into Greenlandic cuisine (the traditional Inuit diet is considered as one of the most healthy and balanced of the world) and we will learn how the food is cooked in the indigenous style. Picnic lunch en route. Breakfast will be cooked by ourselves. Accommodation in a mountain Inuit hut with shared rooms

### **DAY 10: TINITEQILAAQ**

After breakfast, we will go to an Inuit mass, in which we will observe a mixture of religious and modern traditions that never leaves anybody with indifference. Then we will visit this town of hunters and fishermen, Ammassalimmiut, which seems to be anchored in the past and where the time does not, makes us move forward, but instead it moves us backwards to an era where the human being was encountered in its purest state and without any contamination from the Western civilization. On the other hand, this region is rich in cape lines (*ammassat*, fish that granted its name to this Inuit group and to the region) and also arctic trout and that may be the reason we may have to watch some

Inuit fishing in these waters. Also, there is the possibility we may observe whales from the coast where those are accustomed to arrive as part of a group in these cold waters of the Sermilik Fjord. We will make a stop on the way to have a Picnic, and meanwhile we will look at the majesty of the Greenlandic nature. Free afternoon to go in search for peace and silence in such an unbeatable location. Breakfast and dinner cooked by ourselves. Accommodation in a mountain Inuit hut with shared rooms.

### **DAY 11: TINITEQILAAQ – KULUSUK**

In the morning and after breakfast, we will leave Tiniteqilaaq and will get on the boat to continue our trip towards the beautiful Iksartivaq Fjord, which will make us think that if we are not at the end of the world, maybe it is the closest thing to it. We will continue our navigation on the stunning Ammassalik Fjord and we will arrive in the afternoon at the traditional town of Kulusuk. Picnic lunch en route. Dinner and breakfast will be cooked by ourselves. Accommodation in an Inuit houses with shared rooms.

### **DAY 12: KULUSUK**

After breakfast, we will take a tour through the town of Kulusuk, whose residents still live there by traditional hunting and fishing. We will visit the school, the fish market, the museum and the local church. We will finish our visit at the cemetery to observe the eponomic ritual and also the religious syncretism, between Shamanism, Animism and Christianity, to which the Inuit have arrived to accept. Also, we will take on a workshop: we will practice Inuit traditional games and we will learn about the *Tordlut*, the anciently used element by the Inuit to resolve conflicts within the community. Free afternoon to walk around the beautiful surroundings of the Kulusuk Island. Optionally, there is the possibility to see an exhibition of the traditional drum (paying a separate supplement). Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be prepared by ourselves. Accommodation in an Inuit houses with shared rooms.

### **DAY 13: FLIGHT KULUSUK – REYKJAVIK**

After breakfast, we will transfer over to the airport. Return to Reykjavik (Iceland).

### **NOTES**

The program will vary in function regarding the weather and the sea conditions, and of the drifting of ice, the presence of animals and the decisions of the Chiefs/Inuit hunters at the time.

## PLACES TO VISIT

### Kulusuk

Population: 241 residents (2019)

The Kulusuk Island was, previously, the most populated place in the Ammassalik region, due to the good opportunity conditions for fishing and hunting. Kulusuk is located on a small rocky island between rugged mountains and vast fjords, and most of the time it is surrounded by icebergs and a crystalline sea of ice. In 1930, there were 165 people in the settlement of Kulusuk, in comparison with the 112 in Tasiilaq. Today, almost 300 residents of Kulusuk make it the third largest settlement in the region after Kuummiut and Tasiilaq. The main economy in Kulusuk remains to be hunting and fishing. Also, it is an important enclave to the local crafts, mainly on the manufacture of *tupilaat* and masks.

### Sermiligaaq

Population: 223 residents (2019)

Sermiligaaq is located approximately 100 kilometers north of Tasiilaq, in the beautiful Sermiligq fjord. The small and colorful wooden houses are located in the southern part of a large peninsula in the central lands on the east coast of Greenland. Sermiligaaq is an active and functional center for hunting and fishing. The waters that surround the settlement are the habitat of the grouper and the red fish. The catches are sold to the Kuummiut fishing plant. In this area, they also hunt different types of seals, narwhals and polar bears. At the bottom of an enormous fjord, there are two large active glaciers: the Knud Rasmussen and the Kârale. The waters of the Sermiligaaq Fjord are colored by the sediment originated by the glacier activity, which gives the fjord its characteristic milky blue color.

### Kuummiut

Population: 258 residents (2019).

Is the second largest settlement in the Ammassalik region and it is located approximately 40 kilometers north of Tasiilaq, in the depths of the Ammassalik Fjord. From that settlement you can enjoy incredible views, ranging from the fjord, all the way to the Denmark Strait. Kuummiut was established as a mission station in 1915. In this town, there is a salted fish factory, the only fish factory in the district. The famous artist and professor of eastern Greenland, Kârale Andreassen was born in Kuummiut in 1890, as well as the son of the Inuit spiritual leader, Shaman Mitsivarnianga.

The Kârale glacier is one of the most important glaciers of northern Kuummiut, and binds glaciers of all kinds, sizes and features, as well as countless peaks that rise on top of them.

### **Tasiilaq - Ammassalik**

Population: 2.063 residents (2019).

Tasiilaq is considered as one of the most beautiful cities in Greenland, and it is surrounded by tall mountains that reminds us pretty well of the Swiss Alps. It is located in front of one of the most beautiful fjords in Greenland, the Kong Oscar Fjord. This town has many attractions, like its museum, one of the most important of Greenland, and several colonial homes that have more than 100 years. Without a doubt, this is the place where we can see with greater clarity the harmonious balance between traditional and modern worlds to which the Inuit have reached.

### **Tiniteqilaaq**

Population: 106 residents (2019).

Traditional Greenlandic village located in one of the most impressive enclaves in Greenland, in front of the majestic Sermilik Fjord and the largest glaciers on the Ammassalik Island.

During our boat tour, along the Sermiligaaq, Ammassalik and Sermilik Fjords, there are located 229 traditional houses of stone and peat in ruins that are spread over 94 abandoned settlements.

## **TALKS ALONG THE TRIP**

History of Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland

Environmental pollution and climate change. The future of the Inuit

Tales and legends of the Inuit around the fire

The religion of the Inuit: between shamanism and Christianity

Minik. The history of an Eskimo that lost its identity

The Ammassalimmiut, residents of the east coast of Greenland

Arctic expedition's stories: the tragedy of the expedition of Sir John Franklin and the conquest of the North Pole

## **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

Traditional Inuit games

Learn from the history and culture of the Inuit through the people themselves, or the X-Plore guide and specialized anthropologist in the Inuit culture, Francesc Bailón

Learn to navigate through the Arctic and to recognize the signs of nature

Learn to prepare and cook the local foods

Learn some words in Tunumiutut (the local dialect) and in Kalaallisut (official language of Greenland)

Observe the traditional methods of hunting and fishing  
Observation of the aurora borealis

## **NOTES**

In this expedition, there will be no cook traveling with us, so the preparation of the food will be a team work. The lunches will be picnic food style, although varied, due to the lack of infrastructure in this area, and also because the activities at the time that we may be doing. European food will be mixed with local food, and will be prepared by the group.

The guide will adapt the program and activities in function of the group. The participants will obtain material about the Inuit and Ammassalimmiut cultures, and the residents of the east coast of Greenland. The indigenous experts will accompany us to show us more about the Inuit way of life, and will give us explanations along the excursions and a visit to the museum, the cemetery and the fish market. There is also the possibility to observe the Inuit in activities such as traditional hunting or fishing (there will not be any organized hunts for us, but the ones that are being carried out by them and that could happen during the boat trips).

The order and contents of the expedition may vary. We will adapt the route and its contents depending on conditions and options that may be offered to us in each moment.

Along our stay in Greenland's towns, there is the possibility of attending local festivities and other events, but it always will depend on the time and the realization of such.

Along the expedition, the cooperation of all participants will be crucial.

Although we will learn a lot about the traditional life of the Inuit through direct sources, we should keep in mind that their way of life has changed quite a lot. They do not dress in a traditional way, and they also use modern technology. In one way or another, they live in a harmonious balance between tradition and modernity.

## PRICES

### Per person:

Group 4 pax: **4.450 €**

Group 6 pax: **3.990 €**

Group 8 pax: **3.485 €**

Individual Supplement: **250 €**

## Included

- Flights Reykjavik – Kulusuk and Kulusuk – Reykjavik
- Transfer luggage Airport – Kulusuk, Kulusuk – Airport
- Accommodation in an Inuit houses (shared room) and in a hostel with double or triple rooms
- Complete board in Greenland except in Tasiilaq, which will be in the regime of half a board (breakfast and lunch).
- Dinner with an Inuit family
- X-plore specialist guide: an expert anthropologist in Inuit culture
- Activities and Workshops mentioned in the program
- Ship patterns and/or local hunters
- Boat trips
- Arctic security equipment
- Satellite telephone, Spot
- Permissions and entries
- First-Aid kit

## Not included

- Flights from/to Iceland
- Airport taxes (200 Euros)
- Personal expenses, such as drinks, museum entrances, phone calls, etc.
- Travel Insurance
- Excess luggage
- Clothing/individual equipment, backpacks, clothing, etc. (contact us for advice)
- Any service in Iceland
- Satellite telephone calls (€2 per minute)
- Travel by helicopter to the Mitivagkat glacier
- Exhibition in Kulusuk of the drum dance
- Boat Tour to Nagtivit Fjord (1.300 DKK)
- All the services that were not specified in the «included» section

**TRAVEL IMAGES**

