This tour is arranged by Greenland Outdoors

Iluliartoq and Ice Cap trekking tour with hunting and 2 day kayaking, 12 days

Deep in the Arctic wilderness lies the lake Iluliartoq. Far away from civilization this place has its own rhythm. It is not a place of total silence, as you might expect, it is a place of movement and life. The Ice Cap is ever so slowly moving and the enormous tensions in such a gigantic moving body is making loud, almost magical sounds that seems to come from another world. The raven and arctic fox call in the mountains and if you are really lucky you will see and hear the amazing show of two musk ox bulls banging their heads together at full speed, trying to determine who is the boss of the herd.

This trekking tour goes through Arctic landscapes of great variation and an abundance of wildlife including the world’s largest population of musk oxen. The area has a rich historical legacy and we pass graves and ruins from summer settlements with the untold story of nameless Inuit’s coming here to hunt for food, clothing and gather antlers for hunting tool material.

On this special tour we have two days of kayaking on Musk Ox Lake with chances of getting real close to the special animals in the elegant vessel created by the Greenland Inuit; the kayak.

Itinerary

Day 1, Aug 14th: You are welcomed by your guide Jens-Pavia at Kangerlussuaq Airport. We get your luggage and together distribute our tents, gear and food between us. We pack and drive to the end of the dirt road where we start our tour with a short hike just to get us started. Camping by the lake Tasersuatsiaq (Lake Ferguson). 3 km.

Day 2, Aug 15th: After breakfast we walk up towards the lakes Southeast of Tasersuatsiaq. We are already on the first day going well into the wilderness with good populations of musk oxen. 8 km and 380 vertical meters.

Day 3, Aug 16th: Kayaking half the group on Musk Ox Lake for thrilling musk ox sightings. Tanning the skin.
Day 4, Aug 17th: Kayaking half the group on Musk Ox Lake for thrilling musk ox sightings. Tanning the skin.

Day 5, Aug 18th: We start in hilly terrain in the Ammalortup Nunaal highland and descent to Lake Ammalortoq. On route we will have great views to the Ice Cap. We pass three graves which, as tradition dictated, is placed with good view to the lake and surrounding landscape. We also pass a summer settlement, which was used up to the 1920’s by a family from Kangaamiut who had their hunting grounds here, every year doing the long journey from the outer coast in kayaks and umiaqs. We cross a big stream, the slow running water is normally knee deep. Possibilities of catching arctic char (trout). 14 km.

Day 6, Aug 19th: From the plains in the low land we hike up the valley to the ice berg lake Iluliartoq. On our hike we will see the great change in landscape and vegetation. We are rewarded with an amazing view over lake, glacier and Ice Cap. 12 km and 370 vertical meters.

Day 7, Aug 20th: As we have two nights here we can leave the tents and do the hike to the Ice Cap with light bags. The route is hilly and there will be many breathtaking views on our way. If your guide finds it safe there might be a possibility of a short walk on the Ice Cap. 14 km.

Day 8, Aug 21st: We hike down the valley between Kiinnarissut Avannarliit and Kiinnarissut Kujalliiit (Northern and Southern Peregrine Falcons) and pass the most characteristic mountain in the area, which is easily recognizable for many miles. After crossing the big stream at Ammalortoq and find our idyllic camp by the water. Possibilities of catching arctic char (trout). 14 km.

Day 9, Aug 22nd: In the lowlands plains of old seabed we hike West on the old migrating routes of the Inuit. From the plains we go up the South-facing slope to our tent camp. 15 km and 450 vertical meters.

Day 10, Aug 23rd: The day starts with an ascend to a plateau about 625 meters above sea level. From here we have very good views to the Ice Cap, rivers and valleys. We camp in the high plateau. 8 km and 175 vertical meters.

Day 11, Aug 24th: We find the moraine that feels like a highway in the middle of the wilderness. We finish off with a descent to Tastersuatsiaq from where we drive to Kangerlussuaq and civilization. Night in youth hostel. 9 km.

Day 12, Aug 25th: Before checking in there will be some time to go sightseeing in the unusual settlement of Kangerlussuaq. Then transport to the airport and check in of luggage and departure.

Total trekking distance: 95 km.
Longest distance one day: 15 km.

Trekking experience is recommended.

Included:
One night in youth hostel.
Local transfer.
All meals from lunch August 14 to breakfast August 25.
English and Danish speaking tour guide.
Tent.
Kayaks.
Kayaking gear.
Cooking gear.
Plates and cutlery.
Satellite phone brought by tour guide.

**Not included:**
Airplane tickets to or from Kangerlussuaq [Air Greenland](#)
Personal clothing.
Trekking shoes or boots.
Sleeping bag.
Sleeping pad.
Rucksack.
Toiletries including tooth paste, soap, lotion, sun protection and towel.
Mosquito net.
Two ½ liter bottles.

**Wildlife:**
The wildlife in the area around Kangerlussuaq is abundant. The settlement of Kangerlussuaq has 550 inhabitants and the nearest populated place is Sarfannguit with 120 inhabitants on an island more than 80 km towards west. In other words there is lots of nature and the wildlife thrives here.
Kangerlussuaq has the largest population of musk oxen in the world. The musk ox was brought here by man in 1962 and 1965, 27 musk oxen in total was set out here where they found the musk ox paradise. The musk oxen have perfect conditions here and are bigger and reproduce better than in North Eastern Greenland from where they come. It is an exciting animal to meet; it is an animal linked to the ice and it gives a feeling of something ancient. Musk oxen are generally very calm, but they must be treated with some respect; the bulls are protectors of the herd so do not get too close and never stand between the bull and his herd.
The caribou has been here before the first Saqqaq people came here, and it the reason why the Kangerlussuaq area was so important from ancient times. Here you find one of the largest ice free land areas in Greenland and some of the best caribou terrain in all of Greenland. Their long legs, graceful movements and beautiful fur, give an impression of elegance, especially in contrast to the very robust and dense musk ox. The bucks can get antlers of very large size, and they are a thrill to see.
Arctic fox, ptarmigan and arctic hare is present in good numbers and ads to the life of the landscapes.
Birdlife is quite rich in summer time from the majestic eagle, the all present raven that can make the most incredible sounds, to the fast falcon and the many sparrows it feeds on. Geese and ducks are often seen and in the lakes and fjord the beautiful great northern diver sounds its laughter.
A few harp and common seals can be seen in the fjord during summer. The fjord and rivers contain a large number of good strong arctic char (trout). Here some of the best fishing in Greenland can be experienced, and people travel from all over the world just to fish here. They are not great in numbers and it is not crowded, the fjord and rivers are big and there is lots of space for all of us. For the kayaker fishing can be one of many experiences on the tour, which also gives a good supply of fresh caught food for our meals.

**History and ruins:**
The fjord and the vast landscapes have a unique and exciting history. The fjord has been a gateway to the great inland, and it has drawn people to hunt for caribou and fish arctic char, since the Saqqaq Culture some 4000 years ago. The Dorset Culture which followed has been here as well, the two cultures leaving only small subtle remains to be found. It is never the less a fantastic feeling to see a ring of stones, with two rows dividing the ring, and knowing this have been the home of Saqqaq hunters. The stones still lay in the same way they did when Saqqaq hands put them there.

More obvious are the ruins from the Thule Culture which extends back to the 13th century. From here there is a straight line to the use of the fjord today, the Thule Culture being our ancestors. Ruins from the whole period can be found and consist of tent houses, tent rings and graves, meat caches, cairns and much more. These ruins tell a story which can be told in relation to the many legends and sagas that have lived until today. Written testaments from missionaries, whalers and ethnographers give a picture of a strong culture that adapts to changes in climate as well as fluctuations in game populations. Seeing the ruins gives a great boost to the imagination, and being surrounded by nature that looks the same way as then, gives us a chance to see exciting sceneries of the past before our eyes. The Norse Culture was great explorers and may very well have been here in the fjord, but no evidence have been found of this yet.
Culture:
There is a straight line from the first signs of Thule Culture in the 13th century, to hunting camps of today. Many things have changed, but still the rhythm is the same; hunters and families set up hunting camps in summer to get an outcome of the wildlife in the fjord.

Today hunting is regulated and hunting for musk ox and caribou starts August 1st. The fjord is really two different things; the fjord before August 1st and the fjord after! The first 3-4 days of August is some sight, probably no other fjord in Greenland has as many boats, as the normally quiet fjord has in those hectic days. Are you kayaking in that period, we suggest you keep to the northern side of the fjord, where only those who live of hunting can hunt musk oxen, and it is much less crowded here! After August 4th activity in the fjord again gets calmer and the hunting mostly happens in the big summer settlements at Tatsip Ataa and Angujaartorfik (Robinson).

Families mainly from the settlement of Kangaamiut comes here for hunting until they return during September, the children not attending school in the hunting period. It is a cultural way of living you will see very clearly in this fjord, where hunting areas are divided by unwritten agreements between the families of the settlement. The hunting families are friendly people, and of respect to their hunting you should make agreements with them where to go, if you wish to go trekking in an area where a family has their summer settlement.

Our guide:

Jens-Pavia (born 1975) is raised in Nuuk (the capital in Greenland) and has from childhood had a special interest in nature and the great experiences the Greenlandic nature offers. He joined his first caribou hunt at the age of 9 in the Ameralik Fjord, as a part of many outdoor experiences during childhood and youth. He is a navigational officer and has sailed for 7 years along the Greenlandic coast and between Denmark and Greenland. He has been ice observer and head of the Ice Patrol in Narsarsuaq. On holidays he has been sailing along much of the West Coast in leisure boat, dingy and kayak, and has been trekking in many different parts of Greenland. The history and culture of Greenland are his very big interests, and he exchange information with archaeologists on the finds in the Kangerlussuaq area, where much is still to be found. Many of the observations have not been recorded before. Jens-Pavia has been trekking in Greenland since childhood and he started kayaking 11 years ago with the objective to be able to get around the coast without a boat, which ruins a bit of the nature feeling with its smell and noise. He is also fascinated of the idea of getting around by ones own means, not being dependant on fuel or mechanics. He is an examined BCU 4 Star Sea Kayak Leader and speaks English and Danish.
Useful info:

- You cannot bring tax free alcohol to Greenland anymore, but it is possible to buy some in the local store. So it’s sensible to take some with us for special occasions only.
- We carry tents and food in our backpacks. Since we are hunting we do not have to carry food for all 11 days and we have the opportunity to deposit some food after hunting, so we will not have the big burdens on our shoulders. Water we will get from the streams and lakes, so we do not have to carry a lot of water in our rucksacks either.
- Every participant is asked to bring: Personal clothing (list can be sent), Hiking shoes or boots, Sleeping bag, Backpack (minimum 60 litres), Inflatable sleeping pad (regular pad can be borrowed, but it is not recommended), Four ½ litre bottles (please write our name on them), Toiletries including tooth paste, soap, lotion, suntan lotion and towel, Mosquito net.
- It is also a good idea to bring a small camera and maybe small binoculars (you might be the one who sees the prey first). And maybe something to cover your eyes when sleeping, it is almost light all day and night at this time of year.
- You can take the tour without having to use any additional money, but you might want to have some to buy some Greenlandic art, musk ox wool or something else. The currency in Greenland is Danish Kroner.
- Greenland Summer (Daylight Saving) Time: GMT-2

Booking the trip is done directly via the Ladies Trekking club, please send an E-mail to: info@ladiestrekking.com