

Southwest Greenland

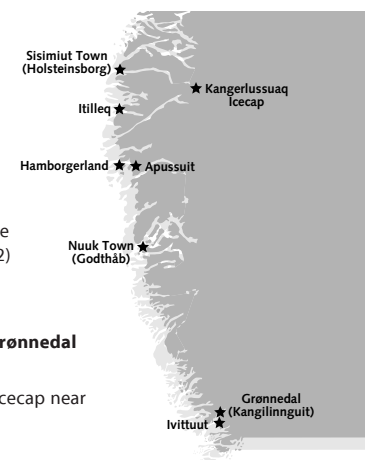


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HIGHLIGHTS

- Help yourself to dazzling mineral shards left strewn about the fascinating ghost town of **Ivittuut** (p138)
- Float through the fabulous scenery of **Hamborgerland** (p158) on the coastal ferry
- Savour gourmet Arctic gastronomy at Restaurant Nipisa in **Nuuk** (p151)
- Experience Greenland's west coast as it once was at the traditional village of **Itilleq** (p162)
- Explore the wilderness of the **Sisimiut to Kangerlussuaq trek** (p163)
- Spot muskoxen and Ikka Warriors around **Grønnedal** (p136)
- Touch the northern hemisphere's greatest icecap near **Kangerlussuaq** (p162)
- Ski the slopes at **Apussuit** (p157)



Southwest Greenland has its share of attractive scenery, great whale-watching spots, lovely fjords, and some of the world's most underestimated sport-fishing opportunities. However, the widely spread villages make transport relatively expensive, so many tourists simply pass through the region en route to Disko Bay, having arrived in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland's main international airport. Kangerlussuaq itself may not be especially beautiful, but it offers easy access to wildlife and the icecap, and some superb wilderness hiking. A popular long-distance trek links Kangerlussuaq to Sisimiut, which is above the Arctic Circle and is thus the southernmost west-coast town to offer dogsledding. Skiing is a possibility in several centres across the region, most notably at Apussuit, near Maniitsoq.

The nation's much-maligned capital, Nuuk, is not a primary tourist attraction, but behind its unaesthetic slab-block buildings lie a photogenic old-town area and a fine museum. Nuuk also has the country's best selection of restaurants, cafés and bars. It commands an impressive if very spread out fjord system, though rain and fog often obscure the views. South of Nuuk, Paamiut and Arsuk are quietly famous for carving crafts, and a few rare white-tailed eagles attract the occasional ornithologist. Tourists are even rarer. Ivittuut, once Greenland's most economically important settlement, is now a fascinating ghost town. It offers appealing mineral-collecting opportunities if you can afford to reach it. To do so, you could start at nearby naval base Grønnedal, the main settlement on the lovely Arsuk-Ikka fjord system. With a fine waterfall, a tidewater glacier and the unique underwater Ikka Warriors, this area could be a considerable tourist attraction were it more easily accessible. As at Kangerlussuaq, Grønnedal is an ideal place to spot those extraordinarily shaggy walking rugs known as muskoxen.

GRØNNEDAL, IVITTUUT & ARSUK

One of Greenland's least-known touristic gems, the lovely Arsuk-Ikka fjord system nonetheless has many attractions. It has a fascinating ghost town, offers unparalleled opportunities for amateur mineralogists and is home to muskoxen, white-tailed eagles and the unique Ikka Warriors. The short-distance hiking options are excellent, and accommodation is a relative bargain.

Maps show three towns. Arsuk is served by the coastal ferry but sometimes gets cut off by rough waves. Ivittuut was (and on paper still is) the main local municipality, but Ivittuut town itself is no longer inhabited and confusingly the municipality office (Ivittuut Kommunia) is physically in Grønnedal, 5km away. Grønnedal's position

would make an ideal tourist hub. However, it is fundamentally a naval base, not a town, and that means you need permission before you turn up. Getting this permission is usually straightforward, but make sure you arrange everything well in advance through Ivittuut Kommunia.

GRØNNEDAL (KANGILINNGUIT)

pop 154

Grønnedal (Kangilinnuit by Greenlandic translation) was founded as 'Green Valley' by the American navy during the Second World War to protect the highly strategic cryolite quarry at nearby Ivittuut (see p138). Since 1951 it has been the main Danish naval base in Greenland, focussed mainly on fishery protection, coastguard and rescue work. Neatly arranged wooden buildings are colourfully painted, there are no tank traps or fences and the friendly atmosphere is way more relaxed than you might



Information

At **Ivittuut Kommunia** (☎ 691077; sp@ivikom.ki.gl), contact Sonja Peary well in advance for all tourist information, accommodation and arrangements.

There are no bank or exchange facilities.

Sleeping

Contact Ivittuut Kommunia. If space allows they'll reserve you a place either in Ivittuut ghost town (see p138) or better still in the comfortable on-base **'hotel'** (B126; s/tw Dkr250/500), which is primarily designed for servicemen's guests. Neat, unfussy rooms off college-style corridors have private toilet and shower and share a very pleasant kitchen and sitting room. Sheets and towels are included. Walkers may use the Kommunia's basic rural huts (or at Arnaqqivassat a caravan that's been specially helicoptered in). There's no charge, but you should book ahead.

Eating

If you're classified as an official guest of the Grønnedal base, you'll be allowed to use the excellent-value **Kostforplejning canteen** (meals Dkr20-65; ☎ 7-8am, noon & 5.30pm sharp Mon-Thu, 7-8am, noon & 6.30pm Fri, 9-10am & 5.30pm Sat & Sun), the **Kostudsalg grocery shop** (☎ 3-5pm Mon, 2-4pm Wed & Fri) and the friendly **Nanoq Bar** (Konstabel Klub; beers Dkr16; ☎ 7pm-close Mon-Sat, 2-4pm Sun). There's no alternative shopping, so nonguests need to bring all supplies from Arsuk or beyond.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Kangilinnuit (code JGR), as Air Greenland calls Grønnedal, is on the viciously expensive Paamiut-Qaqortoq-Narsaq-Narsarsuaq helicopter route. Perversely, fares from Narsarsuaq (Dkr2042, 1½ hours) are cheaper than from Qaqortoq (Dkr2666, 40 minutes) or Narsaq (Dkr2431, 90 minutes). Some Paamiut flights (Dkr1726, 40 minutes) continue to Nuuk (Dkr4937, 2½ hours), but flying via Narsarsuaq (6½ hours) costs less (Dkr4409).

BOAT

The official rate for a boat transfer to Arsuk starts at Dkr1800, but it's not usually too hard to find someone who will take you for around Dkr600 if the weather is perfect. In unfavourable winds the ride can be totally impossible. For around Dkr2000 day-trip

expect from a military outpost. If you take time and make friends here you may be able to hitch boat rides or even borrow somebody's kayak. If not, there are plenty of tempting short hikes nearby. Grønnedal's fjordside setting is especially lovely when golden sunsets blaze behind distinctive Mt Kugnat.

charters are possible on the Ivittuut Kommunia boat (maximum capacity 12).

AROUND GRØNNEDAL Ivittuut (Ivigtut)

This well-maintained ghost town is built around an 80m-deep cryolite quarry. It's now filled with water but was once the single most important hole in Greenland (see the boxed text, below). Cryolite supplies ran out in 1987, and by 2001 the last families and even the town hall had relocated to Grønnedal.

The town is a dream for stone collectors. Over 90 types of mineral occur within a square kilometre. Rock fragments from the quarry workings lie all over town and make it very easy to find superb quartz and cryolite specimens embedded with glittery galena or shimmering gold-brown flakes of siderite. Every August there are residential hands-on courses on gem-finding, polishing and general geology. A large yellow house is slowly being converted into a **geological museum**, though don't expect much before around 2007. Of the other surviving buildings, the most delightful is a little gingerbread-style pavilion above a former tennis court. Known as the **Norwegian Tea House**, this was originally part of Norway's stand at the 1889 Paris World's Fair, making it a little brother to the Eiffel Tower. Behind is a poignant old graveyard, with white markers for men and black for women.

The large white mansion surveying the quarry hole is nicknamed the **Castle** and was

once the manager's luxurious home. Now it's getting spookily derelict. The large red building nearby housed the staff canteen, and the kitchens still look useable.

SLEEPING & EATING

Two well-kept former houses and a converted former clinic now make up a seasonal but unstaffed **hotel** (s/d Dkr250/500; ☎ Jun-Sep). Each has electricity, a kitchen, shared bathrooms and flush toilets. Bring food with you unless you have other arrangements with the Ivittuut Kommunia, where the keys are kept.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

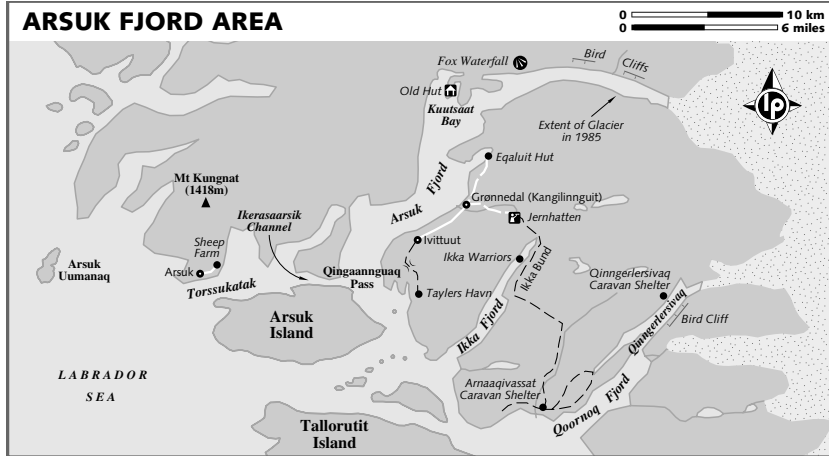
By arrangement (and snow permitting), someone from the Kommunia can drive you from Grønnedal to Ivittuut and back for Dkr100 per person including commentary. Otherwise it's a pleasant, easy walk, 5km each way along a fjordside gravel road.

Ikka Fjord

Ikka Fjord culminates in a perfect, high-sided U-shaped valley called Ikka Bund. Here, Inuit legends claim that an ancient force of invaders crashed through the ice and were petrified into stalagmite-like stone pillars. Up to 20m tall, the tops of these underwater **Ikka Warriors** reach within a metre or two of the fjord's surface. Though not always easy to locate, they are visible from a boat at low tide using a viewing periscope. Young pillars are composed of a unique 'living mineral' named Ikaite. Geologists discovered

CRYOLITE

Opaquely white, the mineral cryolite is known as *orsugiak* to Inuit fishers. They once used it to weight their fishing nets, as it's easy to drill holes in and doesn't dissolve in water. Cryolite means 'frost-stone' in Greek, but its value comes when it's hot. It had been used since 1853 for making soda for glass making and textile colouring, but in the 1890s someone noticed that adding cryolite to aluminium ore made it melt at half the normal temperature. This may sound an arcane scientific fact, but it was a revolution. Today, light, malleable aluminium metal is everywhere from aeroplanes to pans to 'tin' foil. It's made by electrolysing molten ore and, without cryolite, melting that ore was impracticably expensive. As the world's biggest source of cryolite, Ivittuut was made very wealthy by the discovery. The workers' dormitories came to be nicknamed 'millionaires' alley'. Between 1922 and 1956 the town even minted its own coins (examples are on display in the Ivittuut Kommunia office in Grønnedal). Cryolite's importance peaked in WWII. With aluminium essential for fighter planes and Denmark occupied by Nazi Germany, the US military rushed to safeguard the Ivittuut mine. America commandeered cryolite for the Allied war effort and in return supplied Greenland with basic food, clothing and essential imports. By the 1980s, however, a synthetic cryolite alternative had become available. With the natural source almost exhausted, the Ivittuut mine closed altogether in 1987.



that, when removed from the sea, this simply disintegrates into sand and a puddle of water. Older pillars, however, are stabilised by algae that excrete layers of chalky calcium carbonate, allowing mature examples like the one displayed in Ivittuut Kommunia in Grønnedal to be removed whole.

A lovely boat stop between Ikka and Grønnedal is **Taylers Havn**, an idyllic natural harbour where the pebble beaches are littered with mussels. It's named for one of the 19th-century geologists who explored the area on behalf of the cryolite barons. It's possible if rather taxing to trek back to Ivittuut from here across the 310m Qingaannuaq pass.

Arsoq Fjord

The attractive fjord culminates in an impressive, occasionally calving tidewater glacier with an ice cliff over 50m high. Although it's possible to get right up to the ice by kayak, it's strongly advised that you stay at least three times the height of the ice away from it at all times. Attractions en route include lovely **Kuutsaat Bay** (Ellerslie Havn) and the **Fox Waterfall**, named for Ivittuut's original cryolite-carrying clipper ship. When in full flow, these three-stage falls can be extremely impressive. An important **bird cliff** on the north shore towards the ice face is most active in spring, but close approaches are not allowed.

Hiking

A 1:75,000 Ivittuut hiking map (Dkr55) is sometimes available in Grønnedal. Easy but

very rewarding is the 1½-hour jaunt up **Jernhatten**, which offers breathtaking panoramas over Ikka Fjord and the rugged ice-streaked mountains behind. From the base, where the road turns 90 degrees, a very clear track winds up as far as a red hut at around 400m altitude (walk unconfessionally around any muskoxen that might block your way). From the hut, climb steeply beside the small stream, keeping right of a double lake. Jernhatten is the small, fairly unimposing rise behind. You could continue down to Ikka Bund, but without a boat you won't see the warriors.

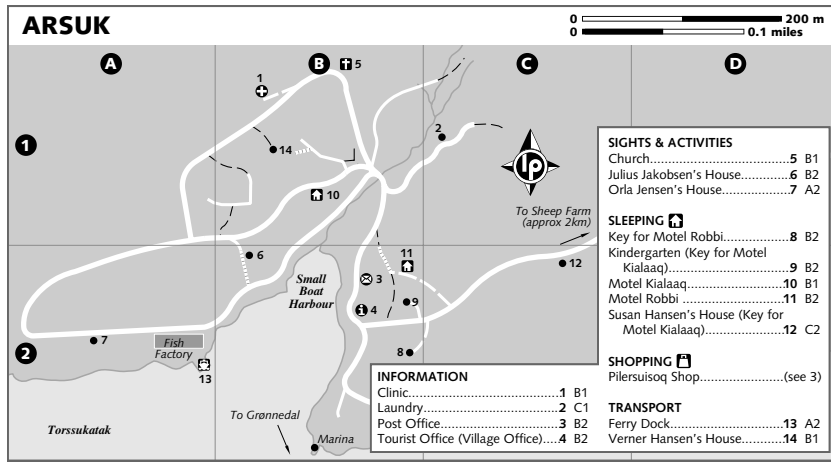
Egaluit is another short, simple stroll away. There's a hut if you want to stay overnight and there are excellent fishing opportunities for Arctic char.

ARSUK pop 155

Sweet little Arsoq, founded in 1805, is primarily useful as the ferry stop for Grønnedal and Ivittuut. Once, however, during the 1970s cod boom, it was one of the world's richest villages (per capita). Tales of BMWs and Mercedes are exaggerated, but there were indeed cars on the few hundred metres of paved roads. Perhaps this explains the strange misnomers of the town's two 'motels'.

Information

Post office (☎ 685044; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) Upstairs within the Pilersuisoq supermarket. Sells AUL tickets and can photocopy a town map for you.



Tourist office (☎ 685022; pemi@paamiut.gl; 🕒 10am-2pm Mon-Fri) Just a non-English-speaking gentleman in the village office with out-of-date Danish-language brochures. www.arsuk.gl/tak.htm Takes you to the relevant section of the (Danish-language) Arsuk Fjord website.

Sights

Arsuk's cute timber **church** (built 1930) has a double roof of grey-green shingles and a little black spire. Of several artists, the best known is the charming **Julius Jakobsen** (B186), who made a famous cryolite bear that was presented to Queen Margrethe of Denmark in 2001. During his 75th birthday *kaffemik*, the queen popped in to his Arsuk home to say thank you! Julius' work is in great demand (there's a long waiting list), but his wife's top-quality beadwork may be for sale. **Orla Jensen's house** (B865) has one of the loveliest bay views in town. Orla grinds, mounts and sells local minerals, including rare black Nuumiit, and also smokes trout and salmon.

Walk east beyond the sheep farm for a good chance to spot eagles.

In the sea west of town, curious **Arsuk Umanaq** island looks like the profile of Charles de Gaulle when viewed from offshore.

Sleeping

Two unoccupied houses offer rooms with equipped kitchen, sitting room and rudimentary shower. Both inexplicably call themselves 'motels'. The nicer is the lime-green **Motel Kialaaq** (B237; s/tw Dkr350/700), with flush toilet

and an airy lounge. Discounts for groups of six or more should be discussed with owner **Susan Hanssen** (☎ 685188; B825), who works at the kindergarten.

Deep green **Motel Robi** (B508; s/tw Dkr250/450) is nicer than the ragged porch settee and crumbling chimney suggest, though the shower is ropy and there's a Greenland-style box toilet. Get the key from B512.

Getting There & Away

Northbound coastal ferries stop in weekly en route to Disko Bay via Paamiut (Dkr330, 6½ hours) and Nuuk (Dkr980, 24 hours). Southbound they head for Narsaq (Dkr410, eight hours) and Qaqortoq (Dkr575, 11 hours), but in midsummer they stop in Qaqortoq (nine hours) first and extend the route to Narsarsuaq (Dkr840, 16 hours). In early summer ice can cause severe delays.

For a boat transfer to Ivittuut or Gronnedal, try **Verner Hansen** (☎ 685007, 576565; B761; no English).

PAAMIUT REGION

With a strong craft tradition, wildlife to watch and numerous abandoned villages to explore, the Paamiut region could be a treasure trove for tourists. However, the main town lacks the photogenic charm of other southern Greenland towns and transport is relatively awkward, so very few visitors ever take the trouble to stop.

PAAMIUT TOWN (FREDERIKSHÅB)

pop 2000

Lacking in sea views, Paamiut is a somewhat nondescript mix of colourful cottages and glum apartment blocks on a modest plain edged with rocky hills. The offshore waters are relatively good for watching humpback whales in September, and the region is ideal for spotting white-tailed eagles. Local outfitter Birger Knudsen is a particularly knowledgeable guide if you can find a moment when he's free. Don't worry about outdated rumours circulated elsewhere in Greenland that Paamiut is lawless or dangerous. Though it's somewhat economically depressed and has its share of drunken rascals, the sheer lack of visitors makes Paamiut a relatively easy place to make local friends.

History

Established in 1742 as Frederikshåb, Paamiut became the regional KGH fur-trading colony and was known for its whale products and soapstone artists. Until WWII the village was little more than the current museum district with a few harbourside warehouses and a sprinkling of turf homes opposite. Everything changed with the 1950s cod boom. Paamiut expanded, local villages were closed and people moved en masse into the town's new apartment blocks. The population was slated to grow to 10,000 by 1990. However, cod stocks evaporated virtually overnight in 1989. The fish factory, Paamiut's main employer, stalled. Suddenly the town had major unemployment problems, and the population dwindled. However, after several false restarts there's a certain newfound optimism with a 2004 refit of the fish factory to process snowcrabs. The town also hosts Greenland's maritime training school, a handicrafts co-operative and the country's only candle factory.

Information

Note that there is no public Internet access in Paamiut.

Birger Knudsen (☎ /fax 681019; PO Box 84, DK-3940 Paamiut) An outfitter with an exceptional depth of local knowledge, Birger knows where to find a wealth of local wildlife, is a mine of interesting historical tidbits, and can arrange reasonably priced boat excursions, mountaineering trips and local accommodation including getaway fjordside cabins.

Hospital (☎ 681211; Poul Ibsensvej)

Police (☎ 681222; Augo Lygnip Aq)

Post office (☎ 681255; Poul Ibsensvej 1; 🕒 8.45am-3pm Mon-Fri) Two ATMs inside.

Tourist office (☎ 681673) Within the museum. Has free town maps and sells 1:250,000 regional ones (Dkr50). Organises choir shows and kayaking displays for rare cruise-ship arrivals, but doesn't offer regular excursions for independent travellers. Staff changes frequently.

Sights

A circle of five historic stone-and-timber buildings around a turf-ringed former well-house constitute **Paamiut Museum** (☎ 681673; fax 681854; admission free; 🕒 10am-noon & 1-3pm Mon-Fri, 1-4pm Sun). The 1839 former **governor's residence** (B10) contains the main museum exhibition hall and tourist office. The **old trading post** (B55) has bubble-tar doors, a coopage and a geological collection upstairs. Downstairs the whaling exhibits include a very rare sealskin diving suit, a reproduction of an original sold in 1913 and now in St Petersburg. Other buildings such as the 1878 **goat house** (B19) have no exhibits, but the **Carpenters' House** (B17) still has the little bell that would ring to announce work availability. The **former post office** (B38) is used by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The original Inuit settlement was beside the current **Candle Factory** (Nanerusiorfik; Titkit B15; 🕒 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri), and one **turf house** has been reconstructed (get the key from the museum). The preserved 1948 fishing boat **Dina** beside it was the first of its type during the cod boom and was owned by controversial local godfather Anthon Petersen.

Fredenskirche (Othorsussuup Av B83), Paamiut's colourful 1909 church, has a Norwegian-style Hansel-and-Gretel façade. Incredibly the church was 'stretched' by 6m in the 1980s: try to spot the added two-window section. To visit the interior, enquire at the **priest's office** (Poul Ibsensvej B86; 🕒 10am-1pm Mon-Fri), which is a relatively grand red mansion across the footbridge. The neighbouring scraggy park has a **whalebone gateway** and a children's slide imaginatively formed around a sculpture of a harpoon and *ulo* (flensing knife).

Paamiut is known for its craftspeople, especially soapstone carvers. The **carvers' co-operative** (🕒 irregular) occupies a small room of a nicely renovated 1930s trade warehouse (upstairs on the left opposite the toilets). **Ujalok Gift Shop** (☎ 681329; Qunnemut B622; 10am-5pm Mon-Fri) has an attached sealskin workshop and sells decently priced souvenirs.

PAAMIUT TO NUUK

Running between Paamiut and Nuuk the coastal ferry's only stop is **Qeqertarsuaatsiaat** (Fiskenæsset). It's a small seal-hunting village rising unspectacularly on the northern tip of a large, relatively low-lying island. On the same island is the ghost village of **Akunaat**, founded by German missionaries as Lichtenfels, of which only a graveyard remains. To see anything else in this section you'll need a private charter boat.

About 60km north of Qeqertarsuaatsiaat, the abandoned WWII **Marraq airfield** site is still discernible thanks to a few oil drums and an old jeep. Another 12km northeast the narrow Amitsuaarsuaq channel leads into the extremely impressive **Alangorlia fjord**. The soaring southern wall rises almost vertically to around 1500m and is sliced through with glaciers, while the north shore is roamed by plentiful reindeer. The fjord is almost closed off by a constriction called Tinissaaq, where tidal water-level changes leave icebergs curiously stranded and can produce fearsome currents and waterfall-like sluices. It's only passable by small boats at mid-tide.

About 50km before Nuuk, the once-picturesque village of **Kangerluarsoruseq** (Færingehavn) is now abandoned and looted. The Danish name means 'Faroese harbour', as it was here that cod fishers from the Faroe Islands were granted permission to reside from 1900, setting up small cod-boat stations all along the coast. Færingehavn became a major cod-processing centre, and locals from Paamiut would at times consider it worth sailing all the way there to get better prices for their catch. In 1989 the cod disappeared and the village died.

NUUK REGION

NUUK TOWN (GODTHÅB)

pop16,200

Nuuk is Greenland's capital and by far its biggest, most cosmopolitan town. It commands a grand fjord system and is backed by a splendid panorama of mountains. From carefully chosen angles the town can look picturesque, and if you haven't seen anywhere else in Greenland you may find it almost quaint. But if you've been travelling around the country it's easy to get depressed by Nuuk's decaying heart of long-slab apart-

ment blocks and its rather pervasive sense of economic apartheid. You'd do better to start than to end a trip here.

History

Nuuk was home to 12 Greenlandic families in 1728 when missionary Hans Egede moved in and officially founded the trading-post village as Godthåb. Egede is now revered as the 'Greenland Apostle', yet his insistence on nuclear families caused enormous social change, the impact of which can still be traced today. One Greenlandic leader, Ulaajuk, dismayed at his people's growing materialism and dependence on mission trade goods, moved them away from Nuuk. Then in 1736 a smallpox epidemic decimated the remaining population. Hans Egede's wife, Gertrude Rask, was among the dead, and Egede himself returned to Denmark. Nonetheless, he left his sons to carry on his work, and their missions continued to attract people to Godthåb. During WWII the town became the administrative centre of Greenland. It boomed from the 1950s, when Denmark made a well-intentioned but retrospectively questionable attempt to launch Greenland into the 'modern' world. The giant, ugly housing blocks were initially a great opportunity for locals to escape the discomfort and sometimes unhealthy conditions of their turf homes. However, as elsewhere, the estates soon dislocated people from their culture and became centres of social discontent.

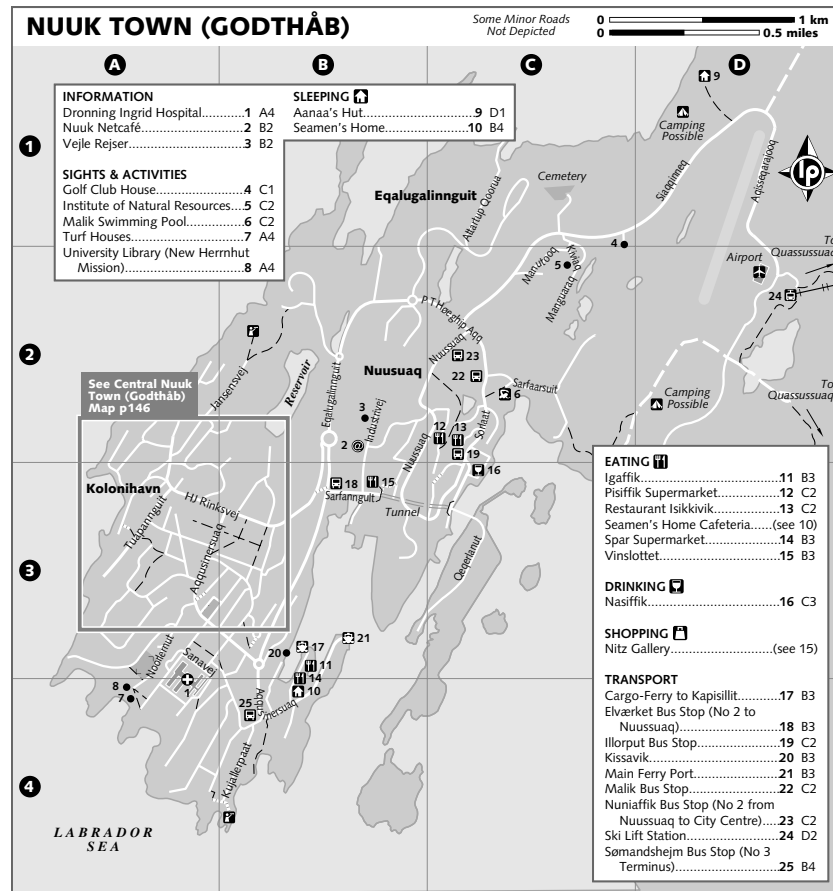
Orientation

Nuuk has two main lobes. The centre's architecturally functional commercial area is a V formed by Akqusersuaq and partly pedestrianised Imaneq. To the west (Kolonihavn) and south (university district) you'll find older homes with some real Greenlandic charm, but to the direct north and east are rows of spirit-crushing housing blocks.

Nuuk's second lobe, further to the north-east, contains the mostly residential Nuussuaq and Equalugalinnuit suburbs. Directly to the east but accessed by a long horseshoe of road is Nuuk airport, some 5km from the centre. Roads currently end at the disconnected new Qinngorput estate 2km beyond.

MAPS

The tourist office's excellent free city maps are also available in hotels including the



Seamen's Home, handy for those arriving by boat. The 1:75,000 *Hiking Map West Greenland - Nuuk* is sold at the tourist office for Dkr80, but be aware that Nuuk's road system has been extended considerably since its publication. The useful 1:250,000 *Vesterbygden* map (Dkr70) takes the Saga Nuuk Fjord map and adds historical and archaeological details on the reverse.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Atuagkat Boghandel (Map p146; ☎ 321737; atuagkat@greenet.gl; Imaneq 9; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Greenland's largest bookshop has a limited but extremely well-chosen selection of books in English dealing with Greenlandic history, culture, economy,

politics and natural history. Maps, and a few guidebooks and postcards, are also available. Mail order available. **Atuakiorfik** (Map p146; ☎ 322122; Hans Egedesvej 3; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Greenland's main publisher. The office is most useful to buy Dkr4 postcards and the *Birds in Greenland* guide (Dkr135).

EMERGENCY

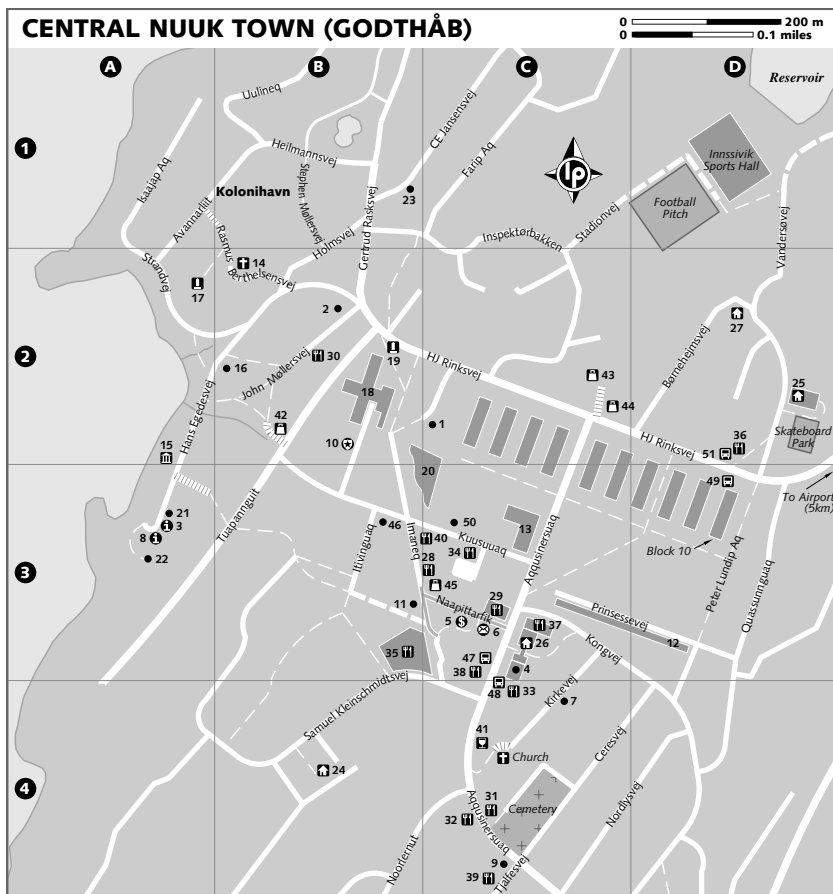
Ambulance (☎ 344112)

Dronning Ingrid Hospital (Map p145; ☎ 323312; Tjalfesvej B1826)

Police (Map p146; ☎ 321448; PH Lundsteensvej 1)

INTERNET ACCESS

Hotel Hans Egede (Map p146; per quarter/half/full hr Dkr25/45/80; ☎ 7am-10pm) Two computers in a foyer booth. Daily rate Dkr200.



Nuuk Netcafé (Map p145; Comby; ☎ 342677; www.nnc.gl; Industrivej 31; per half/full hr Dkr30/45; ☎ 4pm-midnight Mon-Thu, 4pm-1am Fri, noon-1am Sat, noon-midnight Sun)
Public & National Library (Map p146; Nunatta Atugaateqarfia; ☎ 321156; Centervej; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon & Wed, noon-7pm Tue & Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Half-hour slots are free at four Internet computers, but you often need to sign up a day in advance. Ten-minute slots on one other computer are available on a queue basis.

MONEY & POST

Grønlandsbanken (Map p146; Naapittarfik; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri) Charges Dkr75 to change travellers cheques. Expect long queues for the ATMs (open 6am to 6pm) at weekends.

Main Post Office (Map p146; ☎ 321855; Aqquinsuuaq 4; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Two ATMs inside.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Greenland Tourism (Map p146; ☎ 342820; www.greenland.com) Occupies the same building as Nuuk Tourism.

Nuuk Tourism (Map p146; ☎ 322700; www.nuuk-tourism.gl; Hans Egedesvej 29; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri year-round & noon-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug) Excellent free city maps, good souvenir shop and useful brochures. Its extensive range of tours are the easiest way to see the fjord without your own contacts, but maximum and minimum quotas apply so enquire well ahead. Staff are well meaning but sometimes poorly informed and uncreative at offering alternative suggestions and ideas.

Pikkori Sports (Map p146; ☎ 321888; butik@pikkori.gl; Aqquinsuuaq 16; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Morten Heilmann, the very knowledgeable manager, can offer valuable advice on where to hike,

INFORMATION

Atuakktik Boghandel.....1 C2
 Atuakktikfirk.....2 B2
 Greenland Tourism.....3 A3
 Greenland Travel.....4 C3
 Grønlandsbanken.....5 C3
 Main Post Office.....6 C3
 Nuuk Kontor & Bogføring.....7 C4
 Nuuk Tourism.....8 A3
 Pikkori Sports.....9 C4
 Police.....10 B2
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 Café Tuap.....(see 20)
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 Bycentret Bus Stop (No 2 to Nuussuaq).....47 C3
 Charoen Porn Bus Stop (No 3 to Airport).....48 C4
 HJ Rinksevej Block 10 Bus Stop (Slow No 3 to Airport & Qinnqorput).....49 D3
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mountain-bike or fish and can help you make contact with local boat owners and sports groups.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Greenland Travel (Map p146; ☎ 321205; nuuk@greenland-travel.gl; Hotel Hans Egede building; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm Fri)

Vejle Rejser (Map p145; ☎ 322899; www.vejle-rejser.gl; 43 Industrivej)

Sights

The city's main sights can be comfortably visited in a day, but you might want to allow several days more to find a boat to take you around the fjord or to wait for suitably cooperative hiking weather.

KOLONIHAVN

From certain angles, especially walking north from the museum, you could almost believe you were in an old-Greenlandic village. This is **Kolonihavn** (Map p146), the photogenic historic quarter of Nuuk, albeit still surveyed by concrete housing developments. On some summer weekends and evenings, you might catch a *qajaq* (traditional kayak) off the museum jetty. At any time, keep watching the sea, as humpback whales just might breach offshore as you pass.

The central focus of the area is a cliff-top **statue of Hans Egede** in a typical Danish preacher's ruff. On the strangely sparse area below is the simple 1849 **Frelser Kirke** (Church of Our Saviour; Rasmus Berhelsesvej 2). The sturdy 1728 **Hans Egede House** (Hans Egedesvej 15) is the oldest in Greenland and has a pretty vegetable

garden. Originally home to Nuuk's missionary founder, it's now the venue for official government receptions. Several other historic buildings and monuments dot the area. Nuuk city's coat of arms features the fine 1907 **Teacher Training College** (Seminarium; CE Jansesvej B144) backed by the horned silhouette of **Sermitsiaq** (1210m), a tent-shaped island peak. The latter is attractively viewed from several parts of town, notably the rocky knoll at the northern end of CE Jansesvej.

GREENLAND NATIONAL MUSEUM

The spacious, well-presented **Greenland National Museum** (Map p146; ☎ 322611; www.natm.gl; Hans Egedesvej 8-12; admission free; ☎ 1-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun May-Sep) is based in an extended 1936 warehouse. Its better exhibits include an interesting section on 1950s social change and a geological room emphasising that the world's oldest rocks (3.8 billion years old) come from the Nuuk region. However, the unmissable climax is the mummy room. Here a trio of mummified 15th-century women and a very spooky six-month-old child stare blindly out from their dimly lit display cases. Their fur clothes and *kammiks* (traditional boots) are intricately sewn and embroidered, but their cause of death remains uncertain. Found at Qilakitsoq near Uummannaq, they made the cover of *National Geographic* and are an eerily unforgettable sight.

Several other nearby buildings also fall under the museum's protection, including a restocked **cooper's workshop**. A display of

blubber vats & presses is accompanied by brief notes on the train-oil industry that only died out in 1963.

SANTA CLAUS POST HOUSE

Entered from within the tourist office, the appealing little **Santa Claus Post House** (Map p146; Hans Egedesvej 29) is a Victorian-style mailroom with Christmassy décor and framed curiosities like a 1946 letter from Ireland to 'Santy Claus, Greenland'. The mail desk is used in December to write and send Christmas greetings cards from Father Christmas. You can order one for the child of your choice: pay for and address it at the tourist-office counter. Some of the Dkr25 charge goes to help local charities.

Hidden around the far side of the building is a gigantic red **Santa Mailbox**, which rates as one of Nuuk's more photogenic sights. It's full of letters sent to Santa, Greenland, all of which get answered by...well, Santa of course.

Close by is **Kittat** (Map p146; ☎ 325557; Hans Egedesvej 29; 🕒 10am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-2pm Fri), a low-key fur workshop that specialises in making traditional style costumes and *kammiqs*. Anyone can peep inside at the small, functional flensing and sewing rooms. The skin-drying racks are outside. Along with the museum and a carver's co-operative, this is where you'd end up on the tourist office's rather pricey Dkr198 'handicraft tour'.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The **University Library** (Map p145; www.ilisimatusarfik.gl; Herrnhutvej B7) was established in 1747 as the New Herrnhut Mission (House of Moravian Brethren), originally set up by a trio of missionaries who arrived soon after Hans Egede. It's a most attractive red wooden building topped with bell-shaped campanile and set behind a forest of white, wooden grave posts. In the grass leading down towards a peaceful pebble beach are several ruins of old turf houses. The sea views are very pleasant.

CITY CENTRE

The spacious **Katuq Cultural Centre** (Map p146; Kulturip Ilorsua Katu; ☎ 323300; www.katuq.gl; lmaneq; 🕒 varies) is by far Nuuk's finest piece of modern architecture, a sinuous wooden wave edged in glass. It houses the Greenland Art School, the NAPA Nordic Institute and a reading library as well as hosting exhibitions,

conferences, concerts, a cinema and Nuuk's best café.

Nearby are the art-decked corridors of the **Home Rule Government** (Map p146; www.nanoq.gl; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Thu). Except on Fridays when it's in session, you are free to poke your head into the little **parliament chamber** (upstairs, room 66), though it's polite to ask first at the parliament secretary's office (room 62). There's not much to see, but a visit is more interesting accompanied by the political explanations of a guide (Dkr198, tours through the tourist office).

Outside parliament is Nuuk's most imaginative statue, a wonderfully grotesque two-headed bronze representing **Kassassuk**, a tormented mythical orphan child who fought back against the forces of evil. The sculpture is misattributed to Samuel Kleinschmidt (it's actually by Simon Kristoffersen) in an otherwise useful tourist pamphlet, *Memorials in Nuuk*, which brings a little life to Nuuk's many other rather less distinguished plaques and monuments.

The **City Hall** (Map p146; Nuup Kommunia; ☎ 347004; Kuussuaq 2; 🕒 10am-3pm Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Fri) is not architecturally distinguished, but it's worth looking inside to see the impressive 1998 tapestry of Inuit life. Curiously, it includes a vignette about missionary Hans Egede.

Graffiti-daubed **Block P** (Map p146; Prinsessevej) is Nuuk's biggest housing monstrosity. It's so depressing that it's almost an attraction in itself. Only five storeys high but 64 apartments long, it houses over 1% of Greenland's population under one roof.

INSTITUTE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

At the north edge of town near the sweet little golf course is the **Institute of Natural Resources** (Map p145; Kivioq), in a pair of glass-nosed wooden-slab buildings that look passingly photogenic in low evening light. A tourist-office tour (Dkr198, one hour) takes you inside on certain working-day afternoons.

AURORA BOREALIS (NORTHERN LIGHTS)

Aurora the distraction of city lights, even in Greenland's 'big city' it's quite possible to see the aurora borealis from unlit areas of town.

Activities

CLIMBING

Nuuk region's basaltic cliffs are less suitable for climbing than Nanortalik's granite, but in

spring the ice-climbing is promising and you can hire equipment from the tourist office.

FISHING

The world's sports fishermen are just discovering that certain trout and salmon beats around Nuuk are almost as good as on the celebrated Kola Peninsula (Russia) and with slightly fewer of those pesky midges. However, there are virtually no facilities. Access to some of the best sites on the Akia (Nordlandet) Peninsula and up the Qussuk inlet of the Nuup Kangerlua fjord requires expensive boat charters, wild camping and occasionally arduous hiking. Nuuk Tourism hires equipment and has extensive information. Greenland Tourism has helped some fishers find boat transfers.

GOLF

There's a small golf club out towards the airport. Locals claim it's one of the world's hardest, and lost balls abound.

HIKING

Rising east across a bay from the city is the stark rocky mass of **Ukkusissat** (Store Malene). Although it looks scarily steep, the three-to-five-hour climb is not too difficult when you summit from the north. Start the hike from the new Qinngorput suburb, reached on one of the extended-route No 3 buses (five daily, Monday to Friday only). From there follow the power lines northeast past an attractive lake to a mountain saddle at around 400m. Here you double back to the twin summits (761m and 772m). Views are superb over Nuuk, its landmark island peak Sermitsiaq (1210m), the vast Akia (Nordlandet) Peninsula and the battalions of mountain peaks that line the grand fjord system. The white needle-shaped mountain in the middle distance is 1616m Qingaaq. The big glacier across the water to your south is Teqqiingallip.

Less energetic hikers can enjoy views nearly as lovely for much less effort or danger by climbing 443m **Quassussuaq** (Lile Malene). The most obvious of several possible routes follows very close to the line of the ski-lift from behind the airport. It takes a little over an hour to get up, much less descending.

Be aware that on either of these mountains the rock gets very slippery after rain, and clouds descend very suddenly, obliterating visibility. If conditions seem inclement you'd

be much safer walking the valley between them known as **Paradisdaalen**. It has traditionally been considered a clockwise loop but is now more sensibly approached as a north-bound arc using the Qinngorput bus out-bound. Return along the coast to the north end of the airport runway and hitchhike or take bus No 3 back into town.

KAYAKING

Adventure Sula (☎ 245671; www.sula.gl; PO Box 378, 3900 Nuuk) offers guided sea-kayaking trips at weekends or on evenings, rents equipment to experienced paddlers, and has occasional training courses and longer expeditions.

SKIING

From January to May, two ski-lifts behind the airport charge Dkr50 per day to tow you up Quassussuaq (Lile Malene) for alpine skiing. You can hire skis, boots and poles for Dkr150 to Dkr200 per set per day. Older equipment is cheaper rented from the tourist office. Snowmobiles are not officially available for rent, but (uninsured) paid-for rides are easy enough to arrange if you ask around.

SWIMMING

Nuuk's splendid new **Malik Pool** (Map p145; ☎ 342600; Sarfaarsuit 4; adult/child Dkr45/35; 🕒 6-8am, noon-4pm & 6-8pm Mon-Fri, 6am-6pm Sat & Sun) offers indoor swimming but is better for splashing about while enjoying lovely bay views through the cleverly designed glass walls. In midsummer it's open all day from 6am till 9pm. Take bus No 2.

WHALE WATCHING

From Nuuk's university area, or from the public ferries, you are reasonably likely to see whales. To improve your chances you could join one of Nuuk Tourism's four-hour **whale-watching trips** (Dkr550), which operate most evenings from 15 June to 15 September, fewer in the off season. Trips start at 4pm if a minimum of four people have signed up. You don't go particularly far out into the bay, and some visitors report that the equivalent trip in Aasiaat is more inspiring, but much will depend on your boat captain.

Tours

The tourist office organises numerous other day tours; check the calendar on www.nuuk-tourism.dk. Booking is wise, as all have

minimum and maximum group sizes. Popular options include a hike around Ukkusissat (Dkr595, six hours), themed city tours (Dkr198, two hours), and various fjord cruises (see Nuup Kangerlua, p154). The interesting 1½-hour **Home Rule tour** (Dkr198; ☎ 11am Mon & Thu) explains government functions and shows you the administrative offices, the city council building and Parliament Hall.

Festivals & Events

In midsummer there's the **Nuuk Marathon** (www.arctic-marathon.gl) and a small arts and music festival. The **Snow Sculpture Festival** (www.snow.gl; ☎ Mar) is open to artists from around the world. It's supposedly annual but was cancelled in 2004 for lack of snow!

Sleeping

Note that Hotel Nuuk currently only lets whole floors (to institutions) and that Hotel Godthåb is a restaurant complex, not a hotel at all.

BUDGET

The tourist office lists around a dozen B&B homestays for Dkr325 per adult. Off season you may be in the centre, but in summer you'll probably be further out – not necessarily a bad thing, especially if you're planning to go walking. Having a host family also makes it easier to find a friend of a friend to take you sailing on the fjord.

Godthåbshallen Youth Hostel (Map p146; Sports-hallen Sleep-in; ☎ 321654; Vandsøvej 2; dm Dkr110) In an ageing sports centre behind Nuuk's most unappealing housing estates, Nuuk's youth hostel has 17 beds, a kitchen and a dining table all in one big room. That's fine (if a little eerie) when you're alone. But when it's full with schoolchildren or athletic groups it can get very cramped, and the single shared shower soon runs out of hot water. Friendly manager Jens is generally in the front office between 8am and 4pm, but you're better off booking via the tourist office and collecting the key on arrival (from the airport or Seamen's Home). Use the white door at the rear.

Aanaa's Hut (Map p145; Siagqinneq; hut Dkr625) In principle it's a fantastic idea to sleep in a reconstructed traditional Greenlandic turf hut. However, while the structure's lonely coastal setting and fjord panorama are delightful, the price is high considering there's no toilet

whatsoever and the only water for washing or cooking is a dribble of nearby stream. It only makes financial sense if you squeeze in half a dozen good friends to sleep on the floors and cuddle together on the traditional *Illeg* bed. Aanaa (literally 'grandmother') can prepare coffee and cakes (Dkr40) and Greenlandic meals (Dkr80) on request. Organise bookings through the tourist office.

There's no organised camping, but wild camping is possible along the north coast, close to Aanaa's Hut off the airport road. Grassy areas around the university look appealing, but these form a protected archaeological zone and camping is not permitted. Nuuk Tourism can hire you camping gear including a (large) tent for Dkr150 per night or Dkr650 per week. There's a Dkr1000 deposit. Several sports shops sell tents, boots and backpacks.

MID-RANGE & TOP END

Centerbo Mini-Apartments (Map p146; Samuel Kleinschmidtsvej 11; s/d Dkr595/795) Centerbo offers relatively reasonably priced rooms, each with hotplate, sink, fridge and shower-toilet unit. The bed is a small, foldout double. There's no reception, and all arrangements are handled by **Nuuk Kontor & Bogføring** (☎/fax323901; Kirkevej 1; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri), a local book-keeping company that also deals with simple hut lets in the Eqaluit Paarliit valley (Dkr700 to Dkr800 per week, access by boat, then hiking).

Nordbo Hotel Apartments (Map p146; ☎ 326644; nordbo@greenet.gl; Vandsøvej 13; s/d/apt Dkr650/850-950/1250) Another short-term rental unit close to the youth hostel.

Seamen's Home (Map p145; Sømandshejm; ☎ 321029; nuuk@soemandshjem.gl; Marinevej 3; s Dkr735-945, d & tw 1050-1245) Near the main port; most of the rooms are now fairly smartly upgraded with private bathrooms. The best are brand new, but cheaper ones are pretty cramped. The very cheapest Dkr595 singles have communal toilet and showers.

Hotel Hans Egede (Map p146; ☎ 324222; www.hhe.gl; Akqusersuaq 1-5; s/d/ste Dkr1185/1485/1600-2600) Nuuk's self-proclaimed 'international' hotel is a blue-and-white slab of glass and concrete right in the town centre. All rooms have private bath, TV/video and mini-bar. 'Polar class' rooms cost an extra Dkr210 for better views. A few single rooms cost a reduced Dkr795 because they're beside the noisy elevator shafts.

Eating

Nuuk offers the best variety of dining in Greenland, but it's wise to reserve at least a day or two ahead for the better places.

RESTAURANTS

Restaurant Nipisa (Map p146; ☎/fax 321210; www.nipisa.com; Akqusersuaq 6; mains Dkr200-220; ☎ noon-2pm, 6-10.30pm Mon-Sat) Above the Maximut Pub, this smart but relaxed restaurant creates extraordinary gastronomic magic using superb fresh local ingredients. Dishes are artistic creations to be savoured at considerable length. The daily-changing set dinner (Dkr275/295 for two/three courses) might sound expensive but is actually a bargain for a world-class culinary experience that's heightened yet further if you accept the waiter's wine suggestions, which complement the flavours magnificently. Booking for dinner is almost essential, maybe a week ahead for weekends. Lunches (Dkr50 to Dkr80) are relatively simple.

Charoen Porn (Map p146; ☎ 325759; Akqusersuaq 5; mains Dkr80-120; ☎ 6-10pm Tue-Sun) Behind uninviting metal doors, warm soft lighting and oriental embroideries welcome you into Greenland's best and most genuine Thai restaurant. Very generous portions of Thom Kha soup (Dkr89) are delicious but very mildly spiced despite being labelled 'hot'.

Restaurant Isikkivik (Map p145; ☎ 327667; Sattiarfiag 26; mains Dkr45-130; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-11pm Sun) This good-value eatery is out in Nuussuaq with views across the marina. The dining room may not be lavish, but it's surprisingly pleasant for its odd position above a mini-market. Enter from Salliarnaq (the road behind). The reliably filling Dkr45 meal of the day is available from 11.30am and from 5.30pm as stocks last. Pizzas and steaks are also on offer. From central Nuuk take bus No 2 to the Illorput (marina) stop.

A Hereford Beefstouw (Map p146; ☎ 324222; www.a-h-b.dk/nuuk; Hotel Hans Egede, top floor; mains Dkr79-259; ☎ 6-10.30pm) The Nuuk branch of a relatively upmarket Danish steakhouse chain manages to give some atmosphere to an inherently characterless room by creative use of space breaks, chunky wooden furniture and flickering oil lamps. The limited salad bar costs an extra Dkr46, or Dkr88 if used as a complete meal in itself (including baked potato). The adjoining room with paintings and starched tablecloths is the upmarket **Gertrud Rask Spiesehus** (☎ 324222; mains Dkr180-210;

☎ 6-10pm Mon-Sat), where you may feel uncomfortable without a jacket or dress. Creative daily menus cost Dkr325/350 for three/four courses.

Hotel Godthåb (Map p146; ☎ 348042; Imaneq; full meals Dkr148; ☎ 6-10pm Thu, 7.30-10pm Fri-Sat) This family-atmosphere carvery has an interior of fake shopfronts that segues strangely into a period drawing-room area. Both sections have heavy new beams, happily mismatched pseudo-Victorian prints and photos of the *Hindenburg*. Thursday night there's a Mongolian barbecue. Friday and Saturday evening you get carved meats, garnishes and a half bottle of wine for the same price. After 10pm there's a DJ and bar till 3am.

CAFÉS

Café Tuap (Map p146; ☎ 323300; Katuaq; coffees Dkr15-100, mains Dkr45-85; ☎ noon-11pm Sat & Sun, 11am-11pm Mon-Fri) This stylishly minimalist gallery-café is within the light-suffused atrium of the Katuaq Cultural Centre. Lunches including reindeer and muskox steak or filled baked potatoes are served until 3pm. Otherwise, come here for real cappuccinos or a genuine Greenlandic coffee (*Kalaallit Kaffiat*, Dkr100); see p95.

Torve Caféen (Map p146; ☎ 322000; Hotel Nuuk; coffees Dkr10-15, mains Dkr79-259; ☎ 6pm-10.30pm) Good coffee and delicious slices of cake (Dkr20) are served in a screened-off area of hotel foyer illuminated by a video of a log fire.

QUICK EATS

Café Crazy Daisy (Map p146; ☎ 323636, 9; ☎ 8am-10pm) This diner-style place has a range of fast food (Dkr16 to Dkr50) but also serves cooked breakfasts (Dkr28 to Dkr56), fish, steaks, pizza and chicken, plus a menu of Chinese and Thai cuisine (Dkr55 to Dkr87) served through the dragon portal at the back.

Igaffik (Map p145; ☎ 322480; Qasapi; meals Dkr38; ☎ 8am-8pm) The no-nonsense canteen of Nuuk Transport serves a good-value Dkr38 set lunch (11.30am to 1.30pm) and dinner (5pm to 7pm), or snacks at other times. It's upstairs via a narrow atrium in a warehouse-style building off the trawler wharf.

Seamen's Home cafeteria (Map p145; ☎ 321029; Marinevej 3; meals Dkr50-55 ☎ 5.30am-8pm) The basic but tasty hot meals and good breakfast buffet are open to nonresidents.

Bella's Pizza (Map p146; ☎ 314031; pizzas 49-70; ☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Sat) This itinerant former

kebab wagon is usually parked outside Unik gift shop (Imaneq 29). It bakes remarkably good takeaway pizzas; Dkr15 to Dkr20 slices are available at lunchtime. Try the garlic-charged Firenze.

Dupond & Dupont (Map p146; ☎ 348060; www.hhe.gl/ghb/dupond.htm; Hotel Godthåb complex; ☎ 11.30am-10pm daily; 11.30am-2am some Sat & Sun) Here there's fast food that you order McDonald's style but can eat while sitting down in the nicer bowling-alley bar next door.

Other less interesting central options:

Café Milk (Map p146; ☎ 321506; Spindlersbakke 2B; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) Sandwiches and burgers.

Grill & Pizza Bar (Map p146; Kuussuaq; pittas Dkr31-39; ☎ 11am-10pm) At Trolles petrol station.

SELF-CATERING

Pisiffik supermarket (Map p146; Aqqusinersuaq 1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) A good selection of wines and food. There's a smaller **Nuussuaq branch** (Map p145; Saqqaa; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-8pm Sun) with a small fish market alongside.

Brugsen supermarket (Map p146; Aqqusinersuaq 2; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) is also well stocked with a separate **bakery** (☎ 6.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, 6.30am-7pm Fri, 6.30-4pm Sat & Sun) next door.

Other options:

Brædtet (Map p146; John Møllersvej, Kolonihavn) Great selection of fresh fish.

Nukøb (HJ Rinksvej; ☎ 7.30am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun) Handy mini-market for the youth hostel. Open late, but rather expensive.

Spar Tjallesvej (Map p146; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat & Sun); Qasapi (Map p145; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) Supermarket.

Vinslottet (Map p145; ☎ 311850; www.vinslottet.gl; Industrivej 2D; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Nuuk's best wine shop, with a small delicatessen.

Drinking

As anywhere in Greenland, Nuuk's pubs can be fun, rough or both. Visiting in a 'gang' may provoke trouble in some places.

Kristinemut (Map p146; Aqqusinersuaq 7; beers Dkr38; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, noon-3am Fri-Sat) Wild-west themed with wagon-wheel ceilings, this was Greenland's first pub, made (in)famous in Lawrence Millman's book *Last Places*. It remains an understandably popular, appealingly raucous place to drink and dance, with Dkr25 happy-hour beers before 8pm. There's

a live band every night from around 9pm. Attached is the electro-throbbing **Afterdark Rock Bar** (☎ 9pm-midnight Thu, 9pm-3am Fri-Sat), attracting a young crowd of late-night partiers.

Takuss (Map p146; Hotel Godthåb Complex; beers Dkr38; ☎ 4pm-midnight Sun-Thu, 4pm-3am Fri-Sat) Skis and kayaks decorate this brass-railed pub and dance floor. If you order food (basic mains Dkr49 to Dkr79, from 5.30pm to 8pm) you can get two beers for Dkr55. Some reports claim that the very local crowd is aggressively anti-Danish, but the authors found the atmosphere to be very friendly. Housed in a back room of the same complex, **Daddy's** (beers Dkr42; ☎ noon-midnight) has billiard tables, darts and padded leather seats.

Skyline Bar (Map p146; ☎ 324222; Hotel Hans Egede, top floor; beers Dkr42; ☎ 5pm-midnight Sun-Thu, 5pm-3am Fri-Sat) This is Nuuk's safest bar, but not its most character-filled. In daylight there's a curious view between the bottles of the bar out across the town centre, but after dark the ultraviolet glow is less appealing. There's a pianist some nights.

Nasiffik (Map p145; ☎ 329190; beers Dkr35, meals Dkr30-40; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, 8am-3am Fri-Sat) Although calling itself a restaurant, this is really more of a café-bar where most of the clientele are drinkers enjoying the pleasant marinaside location in Nuussuaq. Snacks are served, and there's a good-value meal of the day from 5pm till 7pm.

Entertainment

The one-screen **cinema** (Map p146; ☎ 323300; Katuaq Cultural Centre; www.katuaq.gl) shows a marvellously eclectic range of films in various languages and of various eras, generally with two or three screenings daily from Dkr50.

Bowl For Sjov (Map p146; ☎ 348080; Hotel Godthåb complex; ☎ noon-10pm Sun-Thu, noon-1am Fri-Sat) Tenpin bowling costs Dkr80 per lane for 55 minutes Monday to Thursday. You'll pay Dkr150 Friday to Sunday and Dkr300 after 10pm. Shoe hire is Dkr10 extra.

Shopping

Nitz Gallery (Map p146; ☎ 312929; Industrivej 2D; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Framing shop with a small but unrivalled collection of original lithographs and prints by both new and established stars of Greenlandic modern art.

Pikkori Sports (Map p146; ☎ 321888; butik@pikkori.gl; Aqqusinersuaq 16) Sells camping, hiking, fishing and skiing equipment plus all-important

anti-mosquito head-nets (Dkr40 to Dkr45). Knowledgeable and extremely obliging staff can offer exploration tips and contacts.

Outlets for craftwork, carvings and furs: **Anori Art** (Map p146; ☎ /fax 327874; anori@greenet.gl; Indaleeqag Aqqutaa 14)

Arktis Gaveshop (Map p146; ☎ 324944; HJ Rinksvej 23)

Kattaana Gifts (Map p146; HJ Rinksvej 33)

Unik (Map p146; ☎ 324096; unik@unik.gl; Imaneq 29) Small range of Greenlandic jewellery and furs, along with teas and Danish chocolates.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Controversy currently surrounds a possible airport extension. Many feel it would be wastefully expensive, as even the proposed new 1800m runway wouldn't handle the big Airbuses that **Air Greenland** (☎ 343434; Airport; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) currently uses on Copenhagen-Kangerlussuaq runs. Meanwhile, Dash 7 planes link Nuuk on weekdays to Maniitsoq (Dkr1021, 40 minutes), Narsarsuaq (Dkr2408, 1½ hours) and via Kangerlussuaq (Dkr1696, 55 minutes) to Ilulissat (Dkr1611 to Dkr2971, 2¼ hours) or Sisimiut (Dkr1666 to Dkr2574, 1½ to 2¼ hours). Weekly helicopters fly to Paamiut (Dkr3211, 80 minutes).

BOAT

The **AUL office** (Map p146; ☎ 349934; bktgoh@aul.gl; Kuussuaq; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) is easy to miss at the side of the Bang & Olufsen shop. Southbound weekly ferries link Nuuk and Qaqortoq (Dkr1075 to Dkr1435, 30 to 32½ hours) via Paamiut (Dkr540 to Dkr725, 15 hours), Arsuk (Dkr735 to Dkr985, 23 hours) and Narsaq (Dkr1050 to Dkr1400), going on to Narsarsuaq (Dkr1700 to Dkr2580, 37 hours) in summer. Northbound one or two weekly ferries visit Maniitsoq (Dkr355 to Dkr475, 8½ hours), Kangaamiut (Dkr460 to Dkr610, 12¼ hours), Sisimiut (Dkr660 to Dkr880, 19 hours), Aasiaat (Dkr1020 to Dkr1355, 32 hours), Qeqertarsuaq (Dkr1075 to Dkr1435, 36 hours) and Ilulissat (Dkr1175 to Dkr1505, 42 hours). Mid-June to mid-November the *Sarpik Ittuk* continues to Uummannaq (Dkr1610 to Dkr2145, 2½ days) and, until mid-August, to Upernavik (Dkr2715, 3¼ days).

AUL also sells passenger tickets for the cargo boat *Angaju Ittuk* to Kapisillit (1 September to 14 June/summer Dkr215/270, six hours).

Getting Around

City-bus timetables (*Køreplaner*) are downloadable in local languages on www.nuup.bussii.gl. Hourly bus No 3 runs from the airport into town (7.01am to 6.01pm weekdays only), reaching the youth hostel (Nukøb stop) in just 10 minutes and then winding through the city centre towards the Seaman's Home. However, the other way takes 40 minutes, with various suburban detours and a clockwise loop around Nuussuaq before continuing past Aanaa's Hut. Five 'extended No 3' services continue beyond the airport to Qinggorput. Bus No 2 is much more frequent (daily every 15 minutes from 6.20am till around 9pm, then half-hourly till midnight). Its convoluted suburban loops are most useful for linking the centre with Nuussuaq marina.

All taxis use a **central switchboard** (☎ 363636). To or from the airport costs about Dkr120 (metered).

At the time of research **NUIF** (Map p146; ☎ 347341; Kuussuaq 17; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri) was planning a free bicycle-ride service. Pikkori Sports hires mountain bikes for Dkr100 to Dkr150 per day.

BOAT RIDES

With some persistence and patience it should be possible to find a day's motorboat charter from Dkr1500 to Dkr5000 plus petrol, depending on distance covered. To find contacts, ask at Pikkori Sports or Greenland Tourism, or contact **Jes ('Yes') Burghart** (☎ 553 492; blaaside@greenet.gl; PO Box 18, 3900 Nuuk), who speaks fluent English. His biggest boat is a converted trawler, the 74ft *Kissavik* (www.kissavik.com), which has bunks to sleep 12 on minicruises. Reckon on Dkr8500 per day for up to six hours' sailing, and add Dkr400 per extra sailing hour.

You can always try asking around the marina or the trawler-port area, both of which have dozens of motorboats moored.

AROUND NUUK TOWN

Nuuk becomes a whole lot more appealing if you find boat access to its surrounding wonders. The intricate waterways of the **Akia (Nordlandet) Peninsula** are renowned for superb fishing. The fjordsides of **Ameralik Kangerlua (Lysefjord)** are famed for reindeer hunting, while steep-sided **Buksefjorden** culminates at a hydro-power station from

which a clear, easy track leads up to the vast Kangerlluarssunguup Taseressua lake. However, most tourists stick to the three parallel fjords of the grand Nuup Kangerlua (Godthåbsfjord) system.

Nuup Kangerlua

Of the three main choices, **Qornup Svudula** is the most photogenic fjord, especially where a glacier cascades down the side of 1616m Mt Qingaq on Qeqertarsuaq Island. Gently attractive **Qooqqut** (Qorqut) has new hut accommodation currently under construction, and the Tingmianguit Inlet is well reputed among anglers for red fish. Qooqqut is also the starting point for classic two- to three-day hikes to low-key **Kapisillit** (Kapisigdlit). Unassuming Kapisillit is the area's only village to maintain 'hotels' or a shop and is a great base for other regional hikes. In an easy day return from Kapisillit you could walk around the bay and across the narrow isthmus to look into iceberg-packed Kangersuneq Fjord. With several days you can explore the head of Ameralik Fjord and **Austmannadalen** (East Man Valley), where cele-

brated Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen descended from the icecap in 1888, having completed the first east-west crossing of Greenland. At Nansen's Teltplads he cunningly refashioned one of his tents into a boat and managed to row it all the way to Nuuk. If you're approaching Kapisillit by boat, notice 1220m **Pisigsarfik** above some desultory Norse ruins. Legend relates that Norse and Inuit rivals once held a fateful archery competition from the top of this cliff, shooting at a reindeer-skin target below. The loser had to jump and his people vacate their land. The Inuit won. Nobody saw the Norse again.

If you don't plan to hike and simply want an attractive Nuuk day trip by motor boat, don't bother with Kapisillit as **Qoornoq** village is more immediately picturesque. Although some houses are ruined, Qoornoq's sweet little church has been beautifully restored, complete with model *umiaq* hung from the rafters.

Sermitsiaq Island (Sadelø) is impressive from afar, but the grandeur is not necessarily improved by taking a boat trip closer, and the

touted waterfall on its northwestern flank runs almost dry later in the summer.

The whole Godthåbsfjord region was once the Norse Western Settlement (Vesterbygd) of 90 widely spread farms that prospered in the 11th century but died out by 1350. The biggest was **Sandnæs** (Kilaersarfik) at the head of Ameralik Kangerlua (Lyserfjord). Today, however, the only Norse ruin to bear a building-like form is at **Anavik** (Ujaragasuit), accessible on a helicopter excursion with Nuuk Tourism (Dkr2600). This tour continues even further down the south hook of impressively berg-packed Kangersuneq fjord, and stops off at both the inland ice and Kapisillit.

To the northeast of Anavik but hard to access is **Isukasia** (Isua supercrustal belt), well known to geologists as the source of the oldest rocks ever discovered on earth (3.8 billion years).

Sleeping & Eating

Two houses in Kapisillit function as mini-hotels.

Paarnat Cottage ('Boatel'; ☎ 359659; B285; dm/s/d Dkr180/225/400) This easy-to-spot bright-green cottage has a terrace offering panoramic views of the port and fjord system. The key is available from Kaaleeraq Ringsted (B1878), whose son Berthel speaks a smattering of English.

Barakki (☎ 359653; B1008; s/d Dkr200/300) Much less appealing than Paarnat, with basic cell-like rooms in a red hut off the path to Nuussuaq.

Nuuk Tourism can book either house. Neither place has running water, but you can get a shower (Dkr10) and do laundry (Dkr20) at the bright yellow **service house** (☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat).

Kapisillit's small **Pilersuisoq store** (☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-5pm Fri, 9am-noon Sat) sells limited food supplies.

Getting There & Away

The only public transport is AUL's *Angaju Ittuk* cargo boat (Dkr215 to Dkr270, six hours) sailing three to five times monthly between Nuuk and Kapisillit. Mid-June to mid-September, with a minimum of six people, Nuuk Tourism runs day trips to Kapisillit (Dkr12000 including lunch, twice weekly), around Sermitsiaq (Dkr810, Sunday) and to the icefjord (Dkr1200). Ask

about the multiday trips, too. For more flexibility, chartering an unlicensed, uninsured boat is possible for around Dkr6000 per day through personal contacts. Or, like Fridtjof Nansen, build your own! Walking between Kapisillit and Nuuk typically takes around five days, though the record is 21 hours by a drunken local heading for a party.

KONGSGAARDEN

pop 0

An indefinable distance from Nuuk is the world-famous workshop enterprise of **Kongsgaarden**, a colourful virtual house rumoured to be bundled full of consumer goods. Incredibly, these are given away absolutely free on a seasonal basis, especially in late December. As a result, Claus the manager receives more mail than anyone else in the whole of Greenland. Given the recent unreliability of reindeer-sleigh services, Kongsgaarden is only accessible by web (www.santa.gl). At the time of research, the entire business was planning to move back to the ancient Castle Royal at Greenland's northernmost tip in 2005.

MANITSOQ REGION

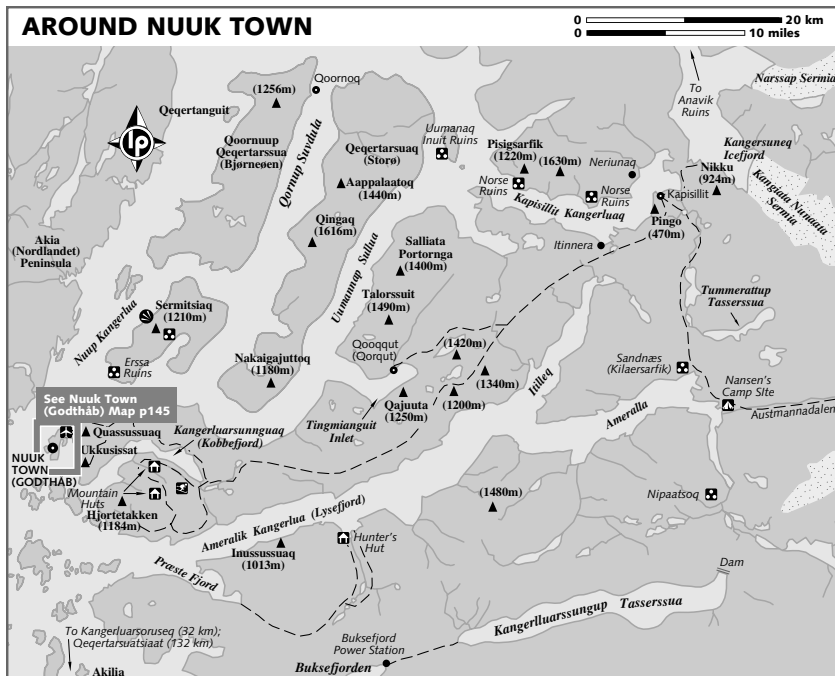
MANITSOQ TOWN (SUKKERTOPPEN)

pop 2883

Dramatic Maniitsoq blankets a series of rocky outcrops squeezed into a basin littered with islands and backed by cliff walls, canyons and low, rugged hills. It's traditionally known as 'the Venice of Greenland'; the analogy is pretty farfetched, but the wooden bridges and staircases that connect the rocky outcrops and leads of water do give it a very picturesque aspect.

Although Maniitsoq itself is pretty sleepy, the deep narrow fjords and high mountains that surround the town make the region ideal for kayaking, hiking and skiing. Tourism is just getting off the ground in the area, and the local economy relies mostly on services and some fishing and hunting. The discovery of deposits of niobium and uranium nearby may change all that in the future.

The town's Danish name, Sukkertoppen (Sugar Loaf), came from the towering peak that dominated its original location 65km north of here, now the site of the present-day village of Kangamiut.



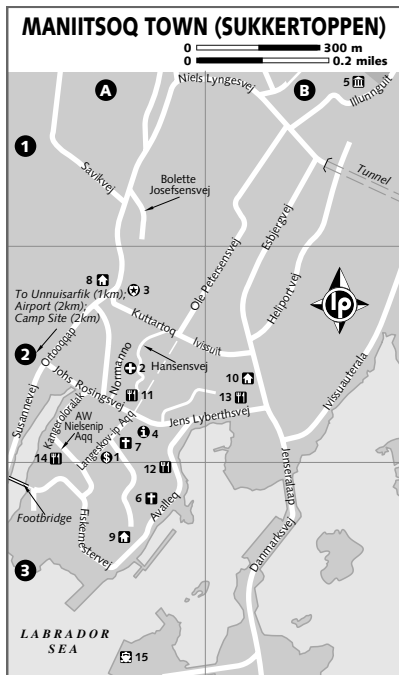
Information

Grønlandsbanken (Langeskov-ip Aqq 4) There's an ATM in the lobby.

Hospital (☎ 813211)

Police (☎ 813222)

Post & telephone office (A W Nielsen-ip Aqq 3) The post office is in the Pisiffik supermarket.



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Tourist office (☎ 813100; mantour@greenet.gl; Ilunnguut B56; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri)

Sights

Start your trip with a visit to the excellent **Maniitsoq Museum** (☎ 813100; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri year-round & noon-2pm Sun Jun-Aug), housed in a series of picturesque historic buildings constructed in 1874 and originally used to house a bakery, a blacksmith's shop and work sheds. The museum displays artefacts dating from Saqqaq times right up to the early 20th century. Another section is devoted to local art and features the work of Kangaamiut artist Jens Kreutzmann.

Maniitsoq's **old church**, built in 1864, is of historical interest, but its 1981 replacement is also worth a look. The altar and font at the **new church** are made of beautiful rough-cut stone, the altarpiece has a driftwood cross created by Greenlandic artist Aka Hoegh, and the altar itself is carpeted with sealskin.

Activities

Maniitsoq Island offers good hiking opportunities through its labyrinth of narrow gorges. Although it looks small on the map, it's a full-day hike to the northern tip of the island. Most of the valley floors are rather soggy, claustrophobic and plagued by mosquitoes, but the landscape of criss-crossing gorges, which is probably unique in the world, makes it worthwhile.

A good destination is Pattedfeld (570m); it takes about three hours each way, but it's hard to resist exploring several of the beautiful valleys and gorges en route. The most direct (and nicest) route is via Blomsterdalen, then over Kig Pass and down Langedal – the going is pretty easy. The southern slope of Pattedfeld is a nearly vertical granite wall. To reach the summit, cross Borgmester Pass and keep bearing right; the way to the top will be clear, although there's a lot of scree near the summit. Ask at the tourist office for the 1:75,000 *Hiking Map West Greenland – Maniitsoq* (Dkr80).

For cross-country skiing (late January to April), Maniitsoq Island has around 100km of tracks and 500 sq km of terrain. See also opposite. You can hire skis from the tourist office for Dkr100 per day.

Maniitsoq is an excellent area for kayaking, but at the time of writing there were no kayaks for hire in town. The tourist office

hopes to have kayaks and canoes available for hire by summer 2005 for Dkr150 to Dkr200 per day.

Tours

The tourist office can organise several tours including a 2½-hour city tour (Dkr165); a half-day kayaking trip to Ataa fjord or Sarfat (Dkr395); a half-day sea-angling trip to Ammaqoq (Dkr750); a half-day boat trip to Sermilinnuaq and Ikkamiut to see abandoned settlements and hanging glaciers (Dkr550); a half-day whale-watching trip (Dkr550); a day trip to Ikkamiut and Hamborgerland (Dkr895); and a variation of this last trip that includes a visit to the 2000m cliffs of Kangerlussuaq, the Taateraat Sermiat Glacier and Mt Atter (Dkr1795).

See p66 for details of skiing tours around Maniitsoq organised by US-based Mountain Sports.

Sleeping & Eating

The best place to camp is about 2km from town, near the airport and close to a lake. Alternatively, you can camp at the museum and use the toilets and water supply there.

Unnuisarfik (☎ 812047; unnuisarfik@greenet.gl; Annersuaq B626; r Dkr375; ☎) The unmarked youth hostel has excellent-value, spacious modern rooms, and a large kitchen and living area. It's about 1km west of the centre, towards the airport, but a pick-up can be arranged.

Seamen's Home (☎ 813535; maniitsoq@soemandshjem.gl; lvisuitt 3; s without bathroom Dkr555, s/d with bathroom Dkr695/920; ☎) The spacious modern rooms at this friendly place are a good bet and right in the centre of town. Although the décor is corporate style and functional, the rooms are good value and each has an ADSL connection. The cafeteria (mains Dkr18 to Dkr60) serves decent but predictable food such as burgers, chips, hot dogs and spaghetti.

Hotel Maniitsoq (☎ 813035; www.hotelmaniitsoq.gl; Ajoqinnguup Aqq B1150; s/d Dkr900/1300; ☎) Atop a hill overlooking the harbour, this place has comfortable rooms with TV, telephone, minibar and tea/coffee bar. There's also an annexe, just north of the town centre on Ortoqqap, with a guest kitchen; rooms here cost Dkr495/745, excluding breakfast. The restaurant (one/two courses Dkr295/335) is the best in town, with good food and great views of the harbour. It serves a range of traditional and Danish dishes.

Café Puiis (☎ 812228; Jenseralaap 15; mains Dkr40-70; ☎ 10am-9pm) The food at this place can be a bit hit and miss, but it's a good place to meet the locals. The menu consists of the usual burgers, chips and sandwiches as well as a good selection of Thai dishes.

For self-caterers the best selection is at **Pisiffik** (AW Nielsensp Aqq; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat), with a fine bakery, or **Brugsen** (Johs Rosingsvej; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun). A brædtet at the harbour sometimes sells caribou meat in August.

Getting There & Away**AIR**

Air Greenland (☎ 813759) has five weekly flights to Kangerlussuaq (Dkr1351, 1½ hours) via Sisimiut (Dkr1021, 40 minutes) and Nuuk (Dkr921, 30 minutes).

BOAT

The big **AUL** (☎ 813346; bktjsu@aul.gl) ferries call in weekly in either direction between Nuuk (Dkr475, 11½ hours), Kangaamiut (Dkr250, 3¼ hours), Sisimiut (Dkr525, 10 hours) and Ilulissat (Dkr1205, 37½ hours). The ferries normally stop for 30 minutes, but the landing is around 1km south of town, so you have no chance to look around.

AROUND MANIITSOQ TOWN Apussuit

From April to July, alpine skiing is possible on the 995m-high ice field of Apussuit, on the mainland 30km northeast of Maniitsoq. In spring good powder on the slopes, dramatic landscapes and the possibility of skiing right down to sea level make it one of the top heliski destinations in the world.

Apussuit is accessible by taking a boat to Tasiusaq Bay, about 20km from Maniitsoq. It's 10km from there to base camp, or you can go further up the fjord for a steeper 4km-long route to the base camp; it's accessible on skis or snowmobiles early in the season and on foot later in summer.

Base camp, 931m above sea level, accommodates around 30 people and has cooking facilities, toilets, showers and a sauna. Costs are based on group use, and accommodation is priced at Dkr5000 for up to 12 people per night. Boat transfer from Maniitsoq costs Dkr2500 one way for the group. To hire a snowmobile you'll pay Dkr350 per hour, and skis cost Dkr100 per day.

The main cross-country route goes 5km southeast from base camp towards South Peak (995m). The difficult run down the southern slope of Apussuit drops 200m in 1600m.

Kangerlussuatsiaq

Magnificent Kangerlussuatsiaq (Evighedsfjorden, or Eternity Fjord) has sheer cliff walls 2000m high and numerous glaciers along its length. It's one of Greenland's finest mountaineering and ski-touring areas. Recommended Maniitsoq outfitter **Adam Lyberth** (☎ 812225; adamoutfitter@greenet.gl) can transfer climbers to the Juletræet base camp below 2102m Assaasat and advise on routes. West Greenland's highest peak, Naparutaq (2211m), looms above the northern side of the fjord. The new *Hiking Map West Greenland – Evighedsfjorden* gives an excellent overview of the possibilities.

Hamborgerland

The dramatic island of Hamborgerland, also known as Sermersuut, to the north of Maniitsoq, is one of the most spectacular sights on the west coast of Greenland: an island of sheer and jagged granite spires, tangled glaciers and utterly forbidding terrain. Hamborgersund, the channel between the island and the mainland, is surprisingly well sheltered and normally remains calm. In fine weather the big ferries pass through Hamborgersund between Maniitsoq and Sisimiut, allowing excellent viewing. Don't miss it! To land on the island, you must charter a boat or take a tour from Maniitsoq.

SISIMIUT REGION

SISIMIUT TOWN (HOLSTEINSBORG)

pop 5247

Nestled between rocky peaks on either side of a wide valley, the bustling town of Sisimiut is an excellent base for travellers. It's the second-largest town in the country, with excellent facilities, and yet it still manages to feel like a small fishing village. The town lies 75km north of the Arctic Circle and is Greenland's northernmost year-round ice-free port, with a colourful harbour and better weather than most other parts of the west coast.

The surrounding countryside is ideal for hiking, skiing and dogsledding as well as trips to vast fjords and abandoned settlements. Sisimiut is also home to the most northerly PADI dive centre in the world.

History

Lying amid rich whaling grounds at the southern extent of walrus habitat, Sisimiut was originally an Inuit centre and also functioned as a trading place between the people of northern and southern Greenland. Dutch whalers and traders arrived in the 17th century, and conflict ensued when Danish missionary Hans Egede established a joint mission and competing whaling station at Nipisat. It wasn't until 1756 that the Danish successfully set up a mission, Ukiivik, 40km north of present-day Sisimiut. They named it Holsteinsborg, and in 1764 the settlement and some of its original buildings were shifted to its present site.

Although civil construction continued, the 19th century was characterised by plagues that decimated the local population. Late in the 19th century the whaling industry began to decline, and by the early 20th century it had been replaced with fishing and shrimping. Population growth resumed, and by the mid-1950s Sisimiut had transformed from a traditional hunting and fishing community into the shrimping centre of Greenland. It now processes around 10,000 tonnes of shrimp annually and is a thriving education centre.

Information

Grønlandsbanken (Kaaleeqqap Aqq 4)

Hospital (☎ 864211)

Laundry Tuapannuanut (☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Fri)

Buy a laundry card from Brugsen or Pisiffik for Dkr100 (allows four washes).

Police (☎ 864222)

Post office (☎ 866855; Kaaleeqqap Aqq 6)

Sisimiut Atuagaarniarfik (☎ 865590; Aqqusinersuaq 33; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat) Sells souvenir coffee-table books and a few English-language books on Greenlandic topics.

Sisimiut Library (☎ 865023; Guutaap Aqq 5; ☎ 10am–noon & 1–6pm Mon & Thu, 10am–4pm Tue & Wed) One computer with Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 864848; Jukkorsuup Aqq 6; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm & 6–9pm Sat Jun–Sep, 9am–4pm Mon–Fri Oct–May)

www.info-sisimiut.gl The town tourist site, with comprehensive information on everything from accommodation to tours.

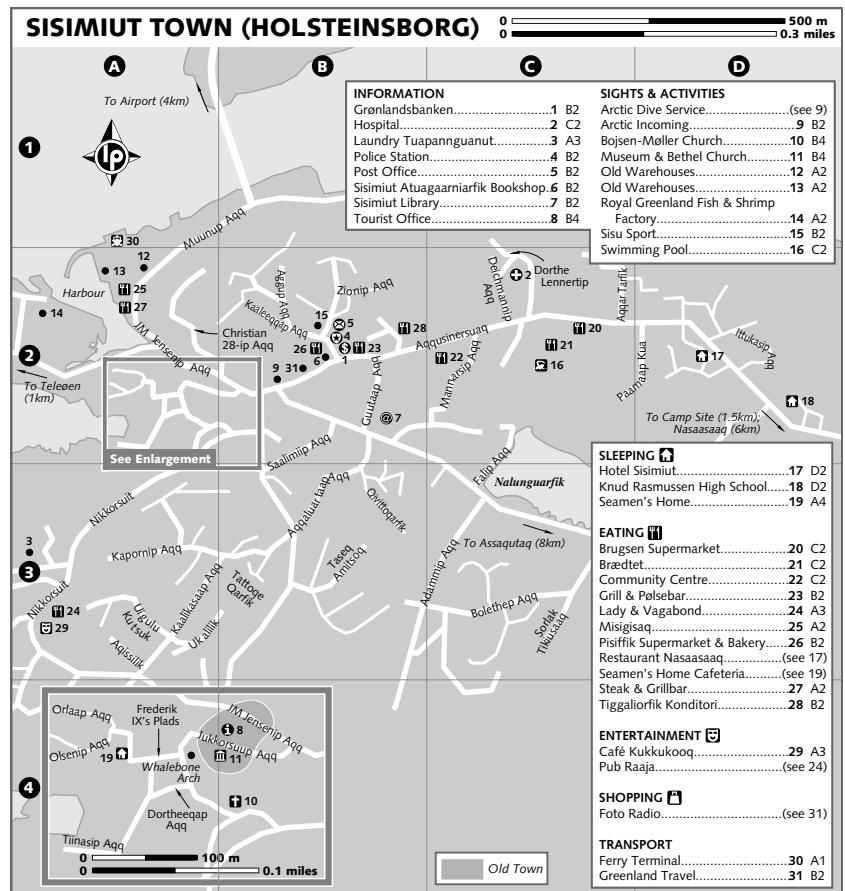
Sights

A whale-jawbone arch marks the entrance to Sisimiut's **old town**, a clutter of brightly coloured buildings dating from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries. For some background head to the **museum** (☎ 862550; Jukkorsuup Aqq 7; adult/child Dkr25/10; ☎ 2–5pm Tue–Sun Jun–Aug), which is housed in the Gammelhuset (Old House), dating from 1725, and the old general shop (1825). The museum displays the usual Greenlandic gamut of settlement history, hunting and fishing boats, tools and relics, and local art. It's also where

you'll find the key for the blue **Bethel Church**, Greenland's oldest church, which was consecrated in 1775. The **red church** on the hill was built by Bojsen-Møller in 1926 and extended to its present size in 1984.

Opposite the museum, the building that is now the tourist office was originally the vicarage. Behind it are two stone buildings; one was a blacksmiths' workshop and the other a hospital, laundry, post office and jail.

Beside the harbour are several **stone warehouses** built in the 1860s and extended to two storeys in the 20th century – the bottom storeys are made of stone and the upper of timber. One originally housed a cooperage, and the others were used for the extraction and storage of fish and whale oil.



About 1km west of the harbour, **Teleøen** is worth a visit to see ruins from the Saqqaq culture, graves, whale-meat storage houses and an old telegraph station. There are also some offshore islets where locals keep their dogs in summer. To get there, cross the bridge near the head of Sisimiut harbour and go through the gate on the left, just before the oil tanks. The walk takes about two hours return. Ask the tourist office for a free map and guide to the remains.

Activities

DIVING

The northernmost dive school in the world, **Arctic Dive Service** (☎ 527733; info@arcticdive.com; Aqqusinersuaq 23) offers PADI courses up to assistant-instructor level. A six-day open-water course, including a dry-suit course, costs Dkr5995. The dry-suit course alone costs Dkr1995.

The water temperature in summer is 3°C to 4°C, and visibility is usually 5m to 25m. For one boat dive, including equipment hire, you'll pay Dkr600; four dives over two days will cost Dkr1695.

HIKING

There are a number of good walks from Sisimiut; the following are two of the most popular, but the tourist office can help with other suggestions. The best map to use is the *Hiking Map West Greenland – Sisimiut* (Dkr75).

The 784m peak Nasaasaq (Kællingehæten) dominates the view inland from Sisimiut. The climb to the top is quite steep, and the return trip will take an entire day. Route-finding on this mountain isn't particularly easy, and the weather is changeable; even experienced trekkers may want to hire a local guide.

Begin by heading east past the old heliport and the lake to the east of town, then climb the ravine north of the massif, bearing right at the top onto the level area below the summit. From there, turn east and follow the clear route directly up to the summit; at one very steep bit there are ropes to assist you. The summit is marked with a large cairn.

Another option is the long day hike that will take you to a view of the abandoned village of Assaqtuaq, which lies on an offshore island. The route is well marked with cairns

and orange blazes, but visibility is often poor. It begins at Nalunguarfik (Spejdersøen, or Scout Lake) in town and heads south to the shore of Amerloq Fjord, following the bizarrely eroded and marshy southern slopes of Nasaasaq.

Halfway along is a deposit of garnet-bearing rock, which is known as Sisimit, and beyond are a couple of abandoned Inuit whaling settlements. Return the way you came or, if your orientation skills are exceptional, you can return the other way around Nasaasaq.

SKIING

In winter a ski-lift supported by the local ski club operates at the foot of Nasaasaq. It's usually open from February to April, and lift tickets cost Dkr50/100 per half/full day (Dkr200 for annual membership).

Sisu Sport (☎ 865501; www.sisu.gl; Kaaleeqqap Aqq 10) does ski and snowboard hire (including boots) for Dkr100/500 per day/week.

The three-day **Arctic Circle Race** (☎ 866830; www.aar.gl) is one of the toughest ski races in the world. It follows a 160km circular route around the mountains east of Sisimiut and usually takes place during the first week of April. Two nights are spent camping on the tundra, and dog teams follow skiers for safety reasons.

SWIMMING

Sisimiut's amazing and popular heated open-air **swimming pool** (☎ 865983; admission adult/child Dkr25/10; ☎ noon-6pm & 7-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-10pm Sat, 1-10pm Sun) is about 500m east of the bank, off Aqqusinersuaq.

Tours

Two main companies operate a huge variety of tours in Sisimiut, though all can be booked through the tourist office. Most tours have minimum participation numbers and operate weekly or even less frequently, so booking is advised.

Arctic Incoming (☎ 865595; incoming@greenland-travel.gl; Aqqusinersuaq 23) offers a half-day boat trip to Sarfannuaq and Itilleq (Dr495); a two-hour cultural history excursion to Teleøen (Dkr175); an easy four-hour hiking trip to Anker's House including Greenlandic food (Dkr375); a one-hour *kaffemik* with a Greenlandic family (Dkr125); and six-hour hikes to Nasaasaq (Dkr525).

Inuit Outfitting (☎ 865367; ingemann.m.m@greenet.gl) offers full-day combined boat and hiking trips to Assaqtuaq (Dkr890) and Kangerluarsuk Fjord (Dkr925); half-day fishing trips (Dkr500); a three-day family muskox and fishing safari (Dkr4590); a six-hour hike to Nasaasaq (Dkr275) and a half-day whale safari (Dkr500).

The above companies and several other outfitters offer dogsledding tours between December and January. A two- to three-hour trip will cost about Dkr425, a five-hour trip about Dkr625. Trips to the head of Kangerluarsuk Fjord (seven to eight hours) cost Dkr11250. To travel to Kangerlussuaq by dogsled takes three days and costs about Dkr5000. The truly die-hard can organise a 730km, three-week trip across the inland ice to Isortoq on the east coast for Dkr136,600. Ask at the tourist office for details.

You can also tour the **Royal Greenland Fish & Shrimp Factory** (☎ 864088; Umiarsualivimmut 25) for free, if it's not too busy – try between 9am and 4pm on weekdays.

Sleeping

The recommended free camp site is 2.5km east of town; there are toilets, and the river water is OK. There are several mountain huts on Kangerluarsuk Ungalleq and along the Kangerlussuaq to Sisimiut trek; ask at the tourist office for details.

Knud Rasmussen High School (☎ 864032; knud@greenet.gl; Aqqusinersuaq 99; s without bathroom Dkr300, s/d with bathroom Dkr400/600; ☎ Jun-Aug) During the summer months the high school lets its modern, renovated student residence as a hostel. Rooms are fairly functional but comfortable. Breakfast isn't included, but kitchen facilities are available.

Seamen's Home (☎ 864150; sisimiut@soemandshjem.gl; Frederik IX's Plads 5; s without bathroom Dkr555, s/d with bathroom 695/920; ☎) The freshly renovated and extremely comfortable Seaman's Home has bright, contemporary rooms with good bathrooms, a TV and a phone. Someone will pick you up from the airport if you let them know when you're going to arrive.

Hotel Sisimiut (☎ 864840; hotsisi@greenet.gl; Aqqusinersuaq 86; s/d Dkr895/1250; ☎) Newly renovated but still looking like something from the '70s, the functional corporate-style rooms at the town's hotel are very comfortable but

lack a little soul. Two-room self-catering flats cost Dkr1250.

Eating

Misigisaq (☎ 863888; JM Jensenip Aqq BV1064; mains Dkr75-125; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, noon-3am Fri & Sat) The Arctic meets the Far East at this Chinese restaurant, which is renowned in West Greenland for its superb food. Typical Chinese décor and bustling atmosphere form the backdrop to an extensive menu made up entirely of Greenlandic traditional foods cooked in Oriental style.

Restaurant Nasaasaq (☎ 864700; Hotel Sisimiut, Aqqusinersuaq 86; lunch Dkr110, dinner mains Dkr185, three-course dinner Dkr298; ☎ noon-1.30pm & 6-9pm) Excellent, contemporary cuisine is available in the corporate surroundings of the hotel restaurant. The menu features a good choice of Danish and international food as well as Greenlandic specialties (Dkr150, order one day in advance). There's also a dance floor and live music.

Community Centre (☎ 865740; Aqqusinersuaq; dishes Dkr50; ☎ noon-1.30pm Fri, 6-7pm Wed Aug-June) For a brush with true Greenlandic food, cooked and served by the locals for the locals, head for the community buffet, where you can sample real Greenlandic fare – including whale, seal, muskox, caribou and fish – for down-to-earth prices.

Lady & Vagabond (☎ 864889; Nikkorsuit; mains Dkr60-140; ☎ 6-9pm Wed-Sun) Low lighting and dark décor are supposed to make this place look intimate, but it falls a little short of the mark. The food is good if predictable, however, with a decent selection of pasta, pizza and some vaguely Italian meat dishes on offer.

Other options:

Grill & Pølsebar (Ane Sofiap Aqq 1; mains Dkr35-50)

Seamen's Home cafeteria (Seamen's Home; meals Dkr45-55) Snacks, fast food, simple meals and cakes.

Steak & Grillbar (JM Jensenip Aqq B1299; mains Dkr35-50) This and the Grill & Pølsebar have hot dogs, burgers and chips.

SELF-CATERING

Sisimiut has a **brædtet** (Aqqusinersuaq 54), and it also has **Brugsen** (Aqqusinersuaq 52) and **Pisif- fik** (Kaaleeqqap Aqq) supermarkets (the Pisiffik supermarket has a bakery). Located off the main road is Tiggaliork Konditori, which is a wonderful independent bakery and pastry shop.

Entertainment

The local folk-dance troupe performs irregularly but can be requested for group visits – ask at the tourist office for details.

Sisimiut's two pubs are side by side, so if you don't like the look of one you can always go next door. **Café Kukukooq** (☎ 665813; Nikkorsuit) is slightly the better of the two, with a more dignified atmosphere come closing time. **Pub Raaja** (☎ 864549) is the locals' bar and can get a bit rowdy at weekends.

Shopping

Arctic Incoming (☎ 865595; Aqqusinersuaq 23) sells a good selection of local crafts and carvings. For film, cameras and batteries, try **Foto Radio** (☎ 865610; Aqqusinersuaq).

Getting There & Away

AIR

Air Greenland (☎ 85199) flies six times weekly from Sisimiut to Kangerlussuaq (Dkr836, 30 minutes), Nuuk (Dkr1666, 1½ hours) via Maniitsoq (Dkr1021, 40 minutes), and Ilulissat via Kangerlussuaq and Aasiaat (Dkr2414).

BOAT

There's no AUL office in town, but you can buy tickets at **Greenland Travel** (☎ 865747; Aqqusinersuaq 23).

The three big ferries call in once weekly in either direction most of the year. There are connections to Aasiaat (Dkr610, 13 hours), Qasigiannuit (Dkr765, 23 hours), Ilulissat (Dkr820, 25 hours), Maniitsoq (Dkr525, 10 hours) and Nuuk (Dkr880, 22 hours).

An AUL cargo boat sails to Sarfannuit/Itilleq on Sunday (Dkr415). Book through Greenland Travel.

Getting Around

Regular town buses cost Dkr10 per ride. The **airport bus** (☎ 527390) costs adult/child Dkr25/10 and will drop you wherever you're staying. A **taxi** (☎ 865533) will cost you about Dkr100.

The charter boat *M/S Mimi* carries up to 12 people and is available for day trips or longer excursions to outlying areas and. It can be chartered for Dkr5000 per day; contact the tourist office for bookings.

Sisu Sport (☎ 865501; www.sisu.gl; Kaaleqqap Aqq 10) hires mountain bikes for Dkr100 per day.

ITILLEQ

pop 127

This tiny and very traditional village lies on an island sheltered from the sea about 45km due south of Sisimiut. It's worth a visit if you want to escape from other travellers and experience west-coast Greenland as it once was. The only accommodation option is to camp – you can get provisions at the Pilersuisoq shop. It's a fantastic boat trip to get there. For details, see above.

The Kangerlussuaq tourist office (see p164) offers trips to Itilleq including boat transfer down the fjord followed by a 9km hike across Itialinguaq pass and a boat pick-up on the far side to take you to Itilleq. You can overnight there, try out some deep-sea fishing and get a feel for village life before being transferred back to Kangerlussuaq. Prices are by arrangement.

SARFANNGUIT

pop 104

The village of Sarfannuit is easily reached on foot from the high route of the Kangerlussuaq to Sisimiut trek, or on a rather long detour from the low route. It's also often used as a starting or ending point for the Kangerlussuaq to Sisimiut trek, as it allows you to cut off the section between Sisimiut and the Nerumaaq Valley, which is the most difficult bit of the hike.

Sarfannuit, which is dotted with ancient Inuit ruins, has a community service house with beds for Dkr100 and a Pilersuisoq shop (with post and telephone services), where you can restock with basic supplies for the onward journey. Locals operate a free ferry service across Sarfannuit Channel (the village is on an island).

The village can also be reached by RAB cargo boat (see above).

KANGERLUSSUAQ (SØNDRE STRØMFJORD)

pop 490

Plonked at the head of Greenland's third-longest fjord, Kangerlussuaq looks and very much feels like an ex-military base. It's a surreal kind of place, spread out over a wide area and lacking any soul or Greenlandic feel. However, it's what is outside the town that is worth visiting. The icecap is accessible by road, it's the end of the fabulous trek from Sisimiut, and it's the best place in

SISIMIUT TO KANGERLUSSUAQ TREK

Greenland's most popular long-distance trek, the 150km-long hike between Sisimiut and Kangerlussuaq is one of the great walks of the world, offering you easy access at either end and pristine wilderness in between.

The trek takes between 10 and 14 days and requires careful planning, but anyone who can read maps well and is not daunted by the prospect of at least 10 days' walking can probably handle it. The trip can be done in both directions, but if you start in Sisimiut you'll be able to stock up on supplies and tackle the more challenging terrain and the possibility of less favourable weather while your legs are still fresh. You should notify the tourist offices at either end of the route of your intentions and be sure to promptly report your safe arrival.

Although there are technically two routes, a high route and a low route, the former is discouraged as it passes through sensitive caribou grounds and is more technically challenging. The walk description and the map in this book are intended as a rough guide only. All hikers need the three essential 1:100,000 hiking maps *West Greenland – Kangerlussuaq, Pingu and Sisimiut*, which show the route in detail.

Note that the compass deviation in this area was approximately 34°23'W in 2004 and is decreasing by approximately 0°31' every four years. Visit www.ngdc.noaa.gov/seg/geomag/jsp/Declination.jsp for the current compass declination.

To get information and advice on what to bring, details of the routes, terrain and weather conditions, and what kinds of things to expect, contact the Sisimiut tourist office or the Kangerlussuaq tourist office.

The Low Route

Leave Sisimiut on the trail to Nasaasaaq and head into the valley that lies immediately north of the mountain. Follow the southern bank of the river that flows down the valley and cross the pass at the top. Then make your descent along the eastern bank of the river that traces its way down the other side. Follow the dogsled track over the Qerrottusup Majoria pass, where you'll find a hiker's hut, and then descend the slope to the head of Kangerluarsuk Tulleq.

Follow the valley leading away from the fjord up to a pass near Peak 427. Just north of here a stream flows down to Hut Lake. Midway between the fjord and Hut Lake there's a mountain hut open to hikers. When you reach the lake traverse along the northern shore. On a hillock at the eastern end is an eight-person hut.

Hut Lake is part of a chain of lakes that you should follow westward along their southern shores. At the western end of Lake 290 you'll ascend to the highest point on the trek (400m) on Iluliumanersuup Portornga. The route then cuts south and follows a stream through the marshy valley Itinneq towards the enormous Lake Tasersuaq. About 2km from the western end of Tasersuaq you'll find a new hiker's hut.

The route continues south of the lake to the extended arm of Kangerluatsiarsuaq Bay. Follow another stream from here to the vast Lake Amitsorsuaq. Near the western end of the lake there's a big 30-person hut with canoes that can be borrowed (free) for paddling around the lake. From here it takes a day along the southern shore of Amitsorsuaq to an eight-person hut at the eastern tip of the lake.

Bear east and north along the arc-like southern shore of the large Lake Qarlissuit, and continue east past a chain of lakes and then north along the northwestern shore of the large elongated lake immediately to the south of Hundesø (marked Limnæsø on the hiking map). Pass around the southern shore of Hundesø and you'll soon come to a gravel track that leads down past Kellyville radar facility. From here it's just 2km east to Kangerlussuaq Harbour.

Greenland to observe native wildlife, with large herds of muskoxen and caribou surrounding the town and Arctic fox slinking over the hills.

Kangerlussuaq lies just north of the Arctic Circle and, thanks to its inland position, the climate is one of the most stable – and extreme – in Greenland, with temperatures ranging from -50°C in winter to 28°C in the 24-hour summer daylight.

History

Kangerlussuaq was never an Inuit settlement but a seasonal hunting and camping ground. The nearest major Inuit habitation was 90km away at Arnangarnup Qoorua, or Paradisdalen, where extensive ruins have been found; it's now a protected historic site and nature reserve.

After the German occupation of Denmark in April 1941, a defence treaty between the USA, the Greenland governor and the Danish ambassador handed the security of Greenland over to the US military. The stable climate made the long and narrow Søndre Strømfjord an ideal location for the US base Bluie West Eight, and in October of that year a military airfield and a host of personnel barracks were constructed overnight. During the war it became the main waystation for bombers and cargo carriers flying between North America and Europe, and at the height of WWII over 8000 military personnel were stationed here.

In 1950 the defence treaty expired and the base was handed back to Denmark. However, the continuing Cold War threat prompted a renewed agreement, and Bluie West Eight returned to US military operations a year later. From 1958 the Americans set up four DEW-line (Distant Early Warning line) radar bases in Greenland to provide early warning of a possible Soviet attack, and Sondrestrom became the main supply base for the stations.

After the Soviet Union collapsed and the 'communist threat' dematerialised, both the DEW-line and the air base became redundant. The DEW stations were closed in 1990 and 1991, and on 30 September 1992 the base was closed. The following day the base came under the control of the Greenland Home Rule government and was officially renamed Kangerlussuaq.

For information about the scientific research currently being carried out in Kangerlussuaq, see p28.

Information

There's no bank, but you can change money and travellers cheques and get a cash advance on credit cards at Hotel Kangerlussuaq.

Old Camp Hostel (Internet access per 15 mins Dkr40)

Police (☎ 841222)

Post office (☎ 841155) In the airport complex.

Tourist office (☎ 841648; www.kangtour.gl; airport terminal; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) At weekends you can get information at the Old Camp Hostel.

www.arcticchar.dk This Danish site has details on river and deep-sea fishing around Kangerlussuaq.

www.greenland-icecap.com Information on crossing the Greenland icecap from Kangerlussuaq.

www.kangtour.gl General tourist information about the Kangerlussuaq area.

Sights

In the former base commander's office on the old Sondrestrom US air base (south of the runway) there's a **museum** (adult/child Dkr35/15; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sun) dedicated to the history of Søndre Strømfjord/Kangerlussuaq. Exhibits also include meteorology, the recovering of aircraft wrecks and glaciology. A free shuttle bus runs from Hotel Kangerlussuaq (the main building at the airport terminal, see p166) every half-hour.

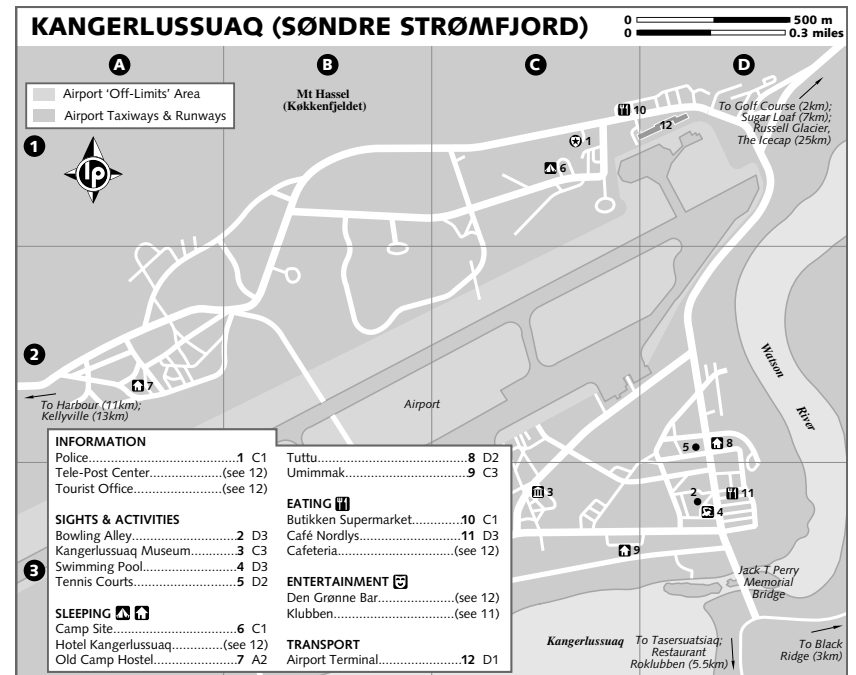
Kellyville, inland from the harbour and overlooking Lake Helen, is home to the operations of the **Stanford Research Institute**. It's currently conducting ionosphere research, with emphasis on the aurora borealis (see the boxed text, p31). Ask at the tourist office if you'd like to arrange to visit the facility.

Activities

Kangerlussuaq is the Arctic equivalent of Club Med, thanks to the American military, which left behind a host of recreational facilities – including a gymnasium, a bowling alley, an indoor swimming pool and an 18-hole golf course!

A round at the sandy **Sondie Arctic Desert Golf Club**, 4km east of the airport, costs Dkr100, including club and golf-ball hire. Pay at the tourist office. You'll need to take a **taxi** (☎ 237507) to get there.

The indoor **swimming pool** (admission Dkr40; ☎ 2-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-6pm Sat & Sun) also has a



gymnasium, complete with bodybuilding equipment and squash court. The **bowling alley** (☎ 5-10pm Mon-Thu, 12.30-6pm Sat & Sun), next to the swimming pool, hosts an open bowling tournament on Saturday.

Festivals & Events

In October the **Polar Circle Marathon** (www.polar-circle-marathon.com) takes place in Kangerlussuaq. The course covers a range of challenging terrain, including a section across several glacial tongues. On 8 October 2005 the event will be upgraded to the first Adventure Marathon World Championship, including tougher terrain and a 3000m ascent on the icecap.

Tours

Kangerlussuaq's tourist office (one of Greenland's busiest) has come up with enough tour possibilities to keep you occupied for days. Some must be booked at least a day in advance.

Tours include a 1½-hour muskox safari (Dkr175); a 3½-hour trip to the Russell Glacier or the inland ice (Dkr475), which

includes plenty of opportunities to see wildlife; a variation of this last tour that includes a barbecue (Dkr650); and a one-day boat trip on the fjord (Dkr695), an excellent opportunity for trout fishing. You'll need to buy a licence (one week Dkr200) at the post office.

Dogsledding tours run from December to April (Dkr895/3050, half day/overnight). Other winter tours include trips to view the aurora borealis (northern lights; Dkr3000, two hours) and ice-fishing expeditions on the frozen fjord (Dkr500, four hours).

See p160 for information about dogsledding expeditions between Kangerlussuaq and Sisimiut.

Sleeping

There's a free camp site west of the airport, but it only has a cold-water tap; toilets are at the airport terminal.

Old Camp Hostel (☎ 841648; kangtour@greenet.gl; beds Dkr275, family cabins Dkr1200; ☎ ☎) The Kangerlussuaq tourist office runs the flash and nicely renovated hostel, 2km west of the

KANGERLUSSUAQ WILDLIFE

The hills around Kangerlussuaq are the best place to see and photograph Greenlandic wildlife. Twenty-seven muskoxen introduced to Kangerlussuaq in the early 1960s thrived in the area and have increased to a population of more than 5000 animals. In 1986, several muskoxen were transplanted from Kangerlussuaq to Pituffik, and later some were also taken to Ivittuut in South Greenland, to Nunavik in the Upernavik region, and to Naternaq between Aasiaat and Qasiqianguit. Muskoxen from Kangerlussuaq have also extended their range south into the Nuuk region. Subsistence hunters are permitted to take an increasing quota of about 1500 muskoxen per year.

Late September is the season for love on the muskox calendar, and it's awesome to watch and hear amorous and headstrong males doing horn-to-horn combat for eligible females. The calves are born early in spring.

The best viewing spots for muskoxen are east and southeast of the airport. If you want good photos, a telephoto lens is essential. A cornered or irritated muskox can become extremely aggressive, though, so don't approach within about 35m or there could be real problems. If the animal begins to snort or rub the side of its face, you're too close, and it's preparing an attack. Be prepared: go to www.dpc.dk/wildlife and read the page entitled, 'Encounters with Wildlife in Greenland'.

There are also about 5000 caribou in the Kangerlussuaq area. This figure is down from an all-time high of 40,000 in the 1970s. The decline has been attributed to a shortage of the animals' favourite meal, lichen (reindeer moss). The best places to see caribou are found northeast of the airport.

Kangerlussuaq is also prime territory for spotting Arctic foxes, Arctic hares, ptarmigans, gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons and smaller birds.

airport terminal. The comfortable rooms only have two beds, there are good kitchens and living areas, and the price includes breakfast, linen and transfer to and from the airport.

Hotel Kangerlussuaq (☎ 841180; kangbook@glv.gl; s/d Dkr645/795, with bathroom Dkr995/1195; ☒ ☑) This hotel, built in the 1960s, comprises three buildings and has large, comfortable rooms with corporate-style décor. The Umimmak (muskox) and Tuttu (caribou) annexes are 1km south of the airport and are a little less comfortable than the main building.

Ice Hotel (s/d Dkr495/795) From the middle of December to the middle of April, Hotel Kangerlussuaq operates an ice hotel with two large central *iglo* connected by tunnel to six smaller double-room *iglo* that are kept at -12°C. Beds are on huge ice blocks, with mattresses, muskox skins and good sleeping bags. Guests have access to showers, and rooms in the main hotel if they can't stand the cold.

Eating

Restaurant Roklubben (☎ 841996; 1/2/3 courses Dkr188/219/239; ☒ ☒ noon-4pm & 6pm-midnight) In a

scenic location on the shore of Lake Ferguson, Restaurant Roklubben serves the best food in town, with muskox, caribou and Arctic char served in innovative modern dishes. A free shuttle bus runs from Old Camp Hostel every night.

Hotel Kangerlussuaq restaurant (☎ 841180; mains Dkr162-208; ☒ ☒ 6-9.30pm) This rather soulless place overlooking the runway does a decent à la carte menu featuring plenty of muskox, caribou, halibut and lamb, but service is a bit sloppy.

Cafeteria (☎ 841180; snacks & mains Dkr18-52; ☒ ☒ 6.30am-8.30pm) If you find comfort in familiarity you'll be relieved to discover that the airport cafeteria resembles its namesakes anywhere in the world. Its menu consists of cheap and predictable food ranging from burgers, fish and chips, and spaghetti Bolognese to dried-up sandwiches.

Café Nordlys (☎ 841440; Kangerlussuaq Entertainment Centre; mains Dkr50-100; 5pm-midnight Tue-Thu & Sun, to 3am Fri & Sat) A dimly lit grill bar straight out of the American Midwest, this place serves up hearty portions of respectable chicken, steaks, pasta and pizza and has plenty of loud music and snooker to help you work off the calories.

You can get a limited supply of groceries at Butikken, opposite the airport terminal.

Drinking

Den Grønne Bar (☎ 841180; ☒ ☒ 9am-1pm Mon-Sat, 5pm-midnight daily) Huge windows overlook the runway at the bright and modern Grønne Bar, located at the airport terminal. During happy hour, from 5pm to 6pm, the drinks are half price.

Klubben (☎ 841180; Kangerlussuaq Entertainment Centre; ☒ ☒ 6pm-midnight Sun-Thu, 9pm-3am Fri & Sat) Another remnant from the American occupation, this lively place is dimly lit and ideal for an evening's heavy smoking and propping up the bar.

Ice Bar (Ice Hotel; ☒ ☒ 7.30-10pm) For a cool drinking experience, the Ice Hotel also has its own bar, charging Dkr55 for drinks in a glass made of ice.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Air Greenland (☎ 841288) uses Kangerlussuaq as its main Greenland terminal. It has five weekly flights to Copenhagen (Dkr3900 return, 4½ hours), eight weekly flights to Ilulissat (Dkr1578, 45 minutes), six weekly flights to Aasiaat (Dkr1223, 45 minutes), Sisimiut (Dkr836, 30 minutes) and Maniitsoq (Dkr1351, 1½ hours), eight weekly flights to Nuuk (Dkr1738, 55 minutes), and two weekly flights to Kulusuk (Dkr3173, 1¼ hours).

BOAT

Kangerlussuaq is well off the beaten path for regular ferry lines, but cruise ships visit in summer. If you have the opportunity to sail, don't miss it. The outermost 50km of the fjord, constricted between high glacier-ravaged peaks, is nothing short of awesome.

Getting Around

Blue town buses cover the road between the youth hostel and the Umimmak building. They depart approximately hourly between 5.15am and 7pm from Monday to Friday (Dkr20).

The tourist office hires cars/scooters/bikes for Dkr900/375/100 per day. Kangerlussuaq has the longest road system in Greenland, with sandy, pebbly tracks leading to all areas. It's slow going on a bicycle.

AROUND KANGERLUSSUAQ Hiking

Although the Kangerlussuaq to Sisimiut trek is the star hiking route, Kangerlussuaq offers numerous other hikes, and if that's your emphasis you could spend an entire holiday exploring this area. *Walks Around Kangerlussuaq* (Dkr25), by Peter Fich, includes a map and is sold by the tourist office. The following are just several of the many possibilities.

BLACK RIDGE

A road out of Kangerlussuaq heads in a southerly direction and then crosses the Watson River by means of the Jack T Perry Memorial Bridge (he drowned in 1976 while trying to ford the river). Turn left after the bridge and follow the road to Black Ridge (1½ hours), where there's a great view of the outwash plain south of the airport. You may also see muskoxen on the ridge, especially near the curious salt lake Store Saltsjø, which is three hours' walk from the airport.

SUGAR LOAF

Sugar Loaf, east of the golf course, makes an easy 16km return hike from town. A gravel road leads up to the former radio installation, providing a great view of the airport and the glaciers spilling down from the inland ice.

RUSSELL GLACIER

The straightforward and easy three- or four-day return expedition to Russell Glacier can be done on the bumpy track or along the sandy plain of the valley floor. The impressive Russell Glacier is active and it's advancing 25m each year. Don't approach the 80m ice cliffs too closely, since the glacier frequently gives birth to some whopping chunks of ice. Temperatures on the glacier and inland ice can be up to 10°C cooler than in Kangerlussuaq, so bring warm clothes and a windbreaker. The tourist office can arrange a one-way 4WD transfer for up to five people (including luggage) from Kangerlussuaq. The cost is Dkr800.

AMMALORTUP NUNAA

For a complete feeling of getting away from it all and some wonderful views, head off

from Restaurant Roklubben on Lake Ferguson and walk east along the northern lakeshore. Then ascend the ravine beneath the southern slopes of Tasersuatsiaap Kinginera (630m) and follow the lake-studded pass down to Orsuarnissarajuttoq.

Continue southeast along the southern shore of the lake. From the southeastern

end of the lake, head southeast over a minor pass before descending steeply to the beautiful large lake known as Ammalortoq. If you use the lakeshore as your base camp, this area will be good for a couple of days' exploring. Departing from Kangerlussuaq, allow two or three days for this hike.