



Ayuittuq  
National Park

## Visitor Information Package

To arrive prepared, to identify backcountry challenges and to plan an enriching Arctic experience, please read this package thoroughly.



Photo: Michael H Davies



Parks  
Canada

Parcs  
Canada

Canada

# For More Information

Contact our Park Offices in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq, or visit our website.

## Pangnirtung Office

Phone: (867) 473-2500  
Fax: (867) 473-8612  
nunavut.info@canada.ca

## Hours of Operation

September through June  
Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
Closed weekends

April, July and August

Open 7 days a week, 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

## Qikiqtarjuaq Office

Phone: (867) 927-8834  
Fax: (867) 927-8454  
nunavut.info@canada.ca

## Season of Operation

Mid-March through mid-September:  
Hours are variable. Call in advance to arrange orientation times.

Closed late September through early March

[parkscanada.gc.ca/auyuittuq](http://parkscanada.gc.ca/auyuittuq)



## Related Websites

**Auyuittuq National Park website:** [parkscanada.gc.ca/auyuittuq](http://parkscanada.gc.ca/auyuittuq)

**Nunavut Tourism:** [www.nunavuttourism.com](http://www.nunavuttourism.com)    **Mirnguiqsirviit – Nunavut Territorial Parks:** [www.nunavutparks.com](http://www.nunavutparks.com)

### Weather Conditions

*Pangnirtung:* [www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-7\\_metric\\_e.html](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-7_metric_e.html)

*Qikiqtarjuaq:* [www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-5\\_metric\\_e.html](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-5_metric_e.html)

**Transport Canada:** [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)

**Pangnirtung Tide charts:** [www.waterlevels.gc.ca](http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca)

**What kind of explorer are you?** Find out how to maximize your Canadian travel experience by visiting [www.caen.canada.travel/traveller-types](http://www.caen.canada.travel/traveller-types)

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# Table of Contents

Welcome	v
Important Information	1
Pre-Trip, Post-Trip, Permits	1
Registration and De-registration	2
Planning Your Trip	3
Topographical Maps	3
Route Finding and Orientation, GPS Coordinates	4
Emergency Medical Travel & Visitors to Nunavut	4
How to Get Here	5
Air Access to Nunavut, Travelling with Dangerous Goods	5
Tides and Ice Break-up	6
Community Information- Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq	7
Activities	9
Hiking, Day or Weekend Trips, Skiing	9
Climbing & Mountaineering, Bouldering	10
Inuit Cultural Activities	10
Prohibited Activities	10
Tour Companies	11
When to Visit: Arctic Seasons and Your Trip	12
Important Safety Information	13
River Crossings, Map of Significant River Crossings	13
River Crossing Tips	14
Terrain Hazards	15
Polar Bears and other Wildlife	16
Climate and Extreme Weather	17
Minimizing Risk	18
Search and Rescue	19
Park Infrastructure / Facilities	20
Environmental Conservation Practices	21
Park Fees	21
Park Regulations	22



## Nunavut's Iconic Experiences

There are five national parks in Nunavut representing various examples of Canada's 39 natural regions - Quttinirpaaq (Eastern High Arctic), Sirmilik (Eastern Arctic Lowlands), Ukkusiksalik (Central Tundra), Qausuittuq (Western High Arctic), and Auyuittuq (Northern Davis). In order for you to be better able to enjoy your national parks in Nunavut, we begin in 2014 to roll out our "Iconic Experiences" - unique excursions packages, custom-designed for each park - with Quttinirpaaq National Park having the honour of kicking it all off.

Watch for new Iconic Experiences at other national parks in Nunavut in up-coming years!

# Welcome

Auyuittuq, Inuktitut for “Land that Never Melts”, has a dynamic landscape with craggy mountains, sheer granite cliffs, and glaciers that define Akshayuk Pass. Dramatic melt water streams and rivers thunder toward the fiords as intrepid travelers make their way through the pass.

Most visitors here expect silence and solitude during their Arctic trek. In Auyuittuq, you will be struck by a clash of expectations. Rock and glaciers along the pass channel the whoosh of the wind. Water gushing against stones, rock on rock clatter, gravel and scree crunching add to the percussion. The occasional caw of a circling raven or the yip of a fox are the sounds of surprise.

Take the time on your trip to meet Inuit in the communities; see carvers, print makers and weavers in action. Taste Arctic char from the fiords, stay for a community event and take part in local games or follow in the footsteps of family who may have lived and worked here in decades past.

The Arctic is an unpredictable place, with a variety of surprises and challenges. Travel here requires both your preparation and your patience, an attitude Inuit have lived by for centuries as they thrive in this environment. If you bring that respect and patience to your own adventure, your Arctic sojourn will be one that leaves you smiling for years to come.



Photo: Delia Berrouard

***Please read this package carefully. Your safety and enjoyment may depend on it!***

# Important Information

## *Pre-Trip*

**ALL visitors to Auyuittuq National Park MUST attend a mandatory orientation session, register, pay the applicable fees, and obtain a valid park entry permit.**

### **Before booking my travel I have:**

- contacted Parks Canada in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq
- made a reservation to attend a mandatory orientation and registration session (~ three hours) and allowed sufficient time before my trip to do this (taking flight and weather delays into consideration).
- received and thoroughly reviewed the Auyuittuq National Park Visitor Information Package (this!)
- received and thoroughly reviewed the Safety in Polar Bear Country brochure

### **For hiking or skiing I have:**

- provided Parks Canada with a detailed itinerary of my planned trip including any side trips
- ensured that my skills and experience are equal to the needs of the trip
- contacted local outfitters to arrange for transport into the park

### **For expeditions, mountaineering and / or glacier travel I have:**

- contacted Parks Canada well in advance to discuss routes and plans
- ensured that my skills and experience are equal to the needs of the trip
- requested and received permission from Parks Canada to create a base camp and / or cache, if applicable.

### **To setup a base camp or caches (a permit is needed in advance) I have:**

- provided Parks Canada with details of my planned trip including base camp operations and cache content and location.
- requested and received the necessary permit(s) for my planned activities from Parks Canada.

### **I have made a reservation to attend a mandatory registration and orientation session:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Post-Trip*

### **After leaving the park, all members of my group will:**

- contact Parks Canada to de-register (we prefer you de-register in person, if possible)
- complete the Nunavut Visitor Survey

## *Permits*

Permits are required for operating a business (guiding, outfitting), filming and commercial photography, research, landing an aircraft, establishing a cache or base camp or transporting a firearm through the park. Permits must be acquired through the Parks Canada office well in advance (some permits may take 90 days or more to be issued). Research permits are only issued in winter or spring.

## ***Registration and De-registration***

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For visitor safety, it is mandatory to register all trips into the park prior to entering and to de-register upon exiting.

During the registration and orientation you will be provided with information on the Auyuittuq National Park and the surrounding region and its special features, the key risks, hazards and mitigations for the activities you plan to undertake, low impact use and regulations. You will also be briefed on current route conditions, weather, water levels, area closures, park regulations, polar bear sightings and more.

**If you plan on travelling on Inuit-owned land, contact the Qikiqtani Inuit Association at 1-800-667-2742 to request permission.**

### **To register your trip:**

- Contact the park by phone or email to schedule your registration session two or more weeks in advance if possible.
- Plan to spend about 3 hours at the Parks Canada office for your orientation, registration and payment of park fees.

### **To de-register your trip:**

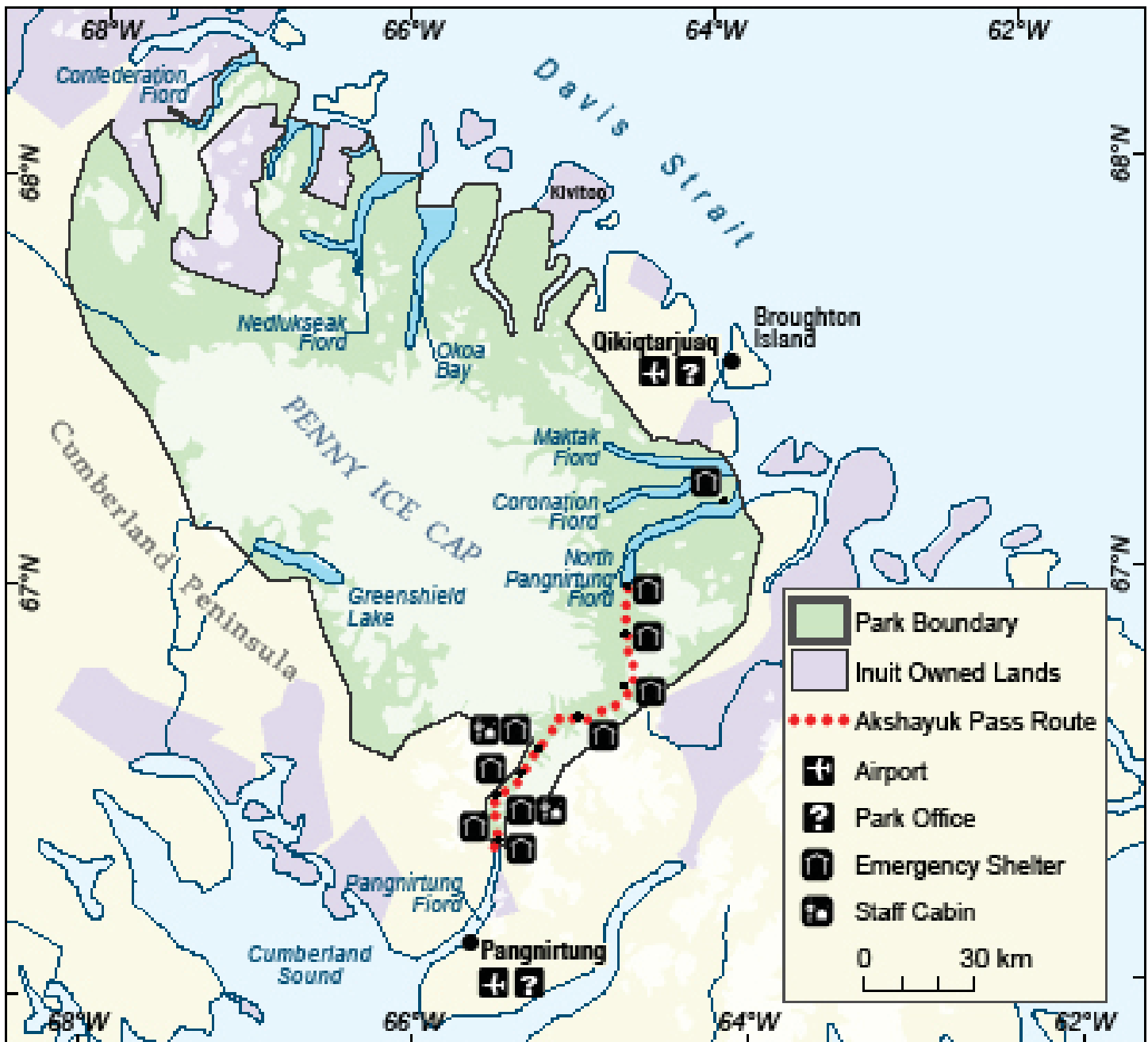
- Within 24 hours of leaving the park, visit the Parks Canada office in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq to complete your de-registration form. If you are unable to visit, please phone the park office.
- Your de-registration date is the day that you anticipate exiting the park. It is essential that your planned de-registration date be as accurate as possible. **Failing to de-register within 48 hours of this date may initiate a search response by park staff.**

### ***What information will you need to provide when you arrive?***

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- The name, address and phone number of each group member and an emergency contact for each member;
- A de-registration date (the day you plan to exit the park);
- The name(s) of the local outfitter(s) that you plan to use;
- Your flight information;
- A list of your equipment (brand, number, colour, etc), your satellite phone number and / or SPOT ESN (if applicable);
- The type of activities you will undertake; and,
- Your detailed in-park trip plans.

# Planning your Trip



## Topographic Maps

Detailed maps of the Akshayuk Pass are available for purchase at the park office and from the manufacturer ([www.chrismar.com](http://www.chrismar.com)). **Please Note:** flooding occurred in 2008 that washed out the Windy Lake Bridge as shown on the Chris-mar map. This only affects which side of the river to hike on and doesn't change the difficulty of your trip.

If you plan to travel in areas other than the Akshayuk Pass, you will need to purchase the appropriate maps before arriving in Nunavut ([www.maps.nrcan.gc.ca/distribution\\_e.php](http://www.maps.nrcan.gc.ca/distribution_e.php)).

The appropriate 1:250,000 maps for the Auyuittuq region are: 26-I, 27-A, 26-O, 26-P, 26-J.



## Route Finding and Orientation

Most of the hikes and ski routes follow unmistakable natural landmarks such as rivers and valleys. In this tree-less landscape you can easily identify these landmarks during your trip as well as find them on your maps. Generally, navigation and route finding is fairly easy. In the summer, the challenge is choosing the best route over the moraines and the best place to cross rivers.

If you are planning an overnight or weekend hike to the Arctic Circle from Pangnirtung you can travel on either side of the Weasel River. For all other plans we recommend that you hike on the west side of the river between Ulu and Glacier Lake, and on the east side between Glacier Lake and North Pangnirtung Fiord.

Auyuittuq lies within the area of compass unreliability. GPS receivers are your best bet for navigation. Keep in mind that you should keep batteries warm and even the best unit can fail. Bring a backup unit, extra batteries and the right maps. Arctic weather is very changeable; you may be required to navigate in white-out conditions at any time of year.



## Emergency Medical Travel & Visitors to Nunavut

From the Nunavut Department of Health website (<http://gov.nu.ca/health/information/medical-travel>):

If you are not a resident of Nunavut and you need medical travel during your stay in the territory, you will be responsible for all medical travel costs.

Visitors needing medevac will be invoiced for the full cost of the flight.

No travel assistance is offered to visitors to return home. You will need to make your own travel arrangements if you wish to return to the community you were visiting.

***The Department of Health suggests that you buy travel insurance before visiting Nunavut.*** Health care in Nunavut can be very expensive. Be prepared for emergencies.

# How to Get Here

## *Air Access to Nunavut*

First Air and Canadian North offer scheduled flights to Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq via Iqaluit from Montreal, Ottawa and Yellowknife.

For information on how to get to the park from Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq, see the local outfitter information on page 7.

**Please Note:** If you are shipping supplies from an international location, please allow at least an additional 4-6 weeks for these items to clear customs on top of the normal shipping time.

**First Air Ltd.**  
1-800-267-1247  
www.firstair.ca

**Canadian North**  
1-800-661-1505  
www.canadiannorth.com

**Weather conditions in the north may dictate your travel schedule  
Flights are often delayed or cancelled  
Be flexible enough to allow for lengthy delays in your plans**



## *Travelling with Dangerous Goods*

Transport Canada has several regulations regarding the transport of used stoves and fuel bottles. For details about how to treat your gear in order to transport it on a plane please go to the following link:  
[www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/commerce/dangerousgoods/news/notices/menu.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/commerce/dangerousgoods/news/notices/menu.htm).

If you have any questions about these regulations please contact the inspector from your region. A list of contacts can be found at: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/regions.htm>

***We recommend bringing new, unused stoves and new, empty fuel canisters with you to avoid difficulties when travelling.***

***Bear deterrents and many noisemaking devices used to scare bears are strictly prohibited from travel on airplanes. These cannot be bought in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq, and must be mailed in advance.***

To make your travel easier, we recommend buying your stove fuel in the community where you begin your trip and leaving any unused fuel behind at the end of your trip. White gas is readily available in the communities. Some compressed tanks may be available - contact stores directly for more information. Outfitters in both communities often accept leftover white gas.

## *Tides & Ice Break-up*

In the summer, outfitters prefer to travel on the incoming or high tide. Check with your outfitter for the best times for travel to / from the park. Due to the large tides experienced in the Pangnirtung region, outfitters are wary of travelling to the park on a falling tide as this can result in the boat becoming grounded. You can also check the timing of tides on your preferred day of travel through the local tide tables at: [www.waterlevels.gc.ca](http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca) (select Index of Sites then Pangnirtung for the southern entrance to Akshayuk Pass or Qikiqtarjuaq for the northern entrance to the pass).

During ice break up in June / July (depending on location), you cannot travel to the park by boat or snowmobile. If your plans include travel to the park around these times, please phone the park office to check ice and route conditions. Or, check the Environment Canada sea ice website at [www.ice.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ice.ec.gc.ca) (go to East Arctic then Davis Strait for the Auyuittuq National Park area).

While it is possible to travel the 31 kilometres from Pangnirtung to the park by foot along the fiord in summer, this has been likened to a 2-3 day slog and is not recommended. It is much easier during the winter, when travelling on the sea ice. At the north end of the park, it is approximately 82 kilometres from the community of Qikiqtarjuaq to the North Pangnirtung Emergency Shelter.



Photo: Claus Vogel

# Community Information

## Local Outfitters

Travel to and from Auyuittuq, from Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq, can be arranged with licensed outfitters. Outfitters, who typically provide transportation only, will take you to and from the park by boat or snowmobile, depending on the season and your request. Contact the Angmarlik Centre (information below) if travelling to or from Pangnirtung, and contact your outfitter directly if travelling to or from Qikiqtarjuaq. They can provide you with availability and current rates.

**Please Note:** Outfitters must have a current National Parks Business Licence to transport visitors within the park. Ensure your outfitter has a current licence before hiring them. This package was produced in advance of the annual licensing and permitting cycle.

### Pangnirtung

#### PEO Services

Pangnirtung  
Phone: (867) 473-4060  
peterkilabuk2005@qiniq.com

#### Alivaktuk Outfitting

Pangnirtung  
Phone: (867) 473-8537  
jalivaktuk@qiniq.com

### Qikiqtarjuaq

#### Nunavut Experience Outfitting

Qikiqtarjuaq  
Phone: (867) 927-8518  
billy\_arnaquq@qiniq.com

## Community Visitor Information

### Pangnirtung

Angmarlik Interpretive Centre  
Phone: (867) 473-8737  
Fax: (867) 473-8685  
angmarlikcentre@qiniq.com  
Hamlet Website: [www.pangnirtung.ca](http://www.pangnirtung.ca)

### Qikiqtarjuaq

Hamlet Office  
Phone: (867) 927-8832  
Fax: (867) 927-8120  
munqik@qiniq.com

Visit [www.nunavuttourism.com](http://www.nunavuttourism.com) for more information about both communities.

## Local Stores

### Pangnirtung

Northern Store: (867) 473-8935  
Arctic Inuit Co-op Store: (867) 473-8936

### Qikiqtarjuaq

Northern Store: (867) 927-8917  
Arctic Inuit Co-op: (867) 927-8061

## Arts and Crafts

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### Pangnirtung

Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts  
Phone: (867) 473-8669 Website: [www.uqqurmiut.com](http://www.uqqurmiut.com)

## Accommodations

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### Pangnirtung

#### Auyuittuq Lodge

Hotel and Restaurant  
Phone: (867) 473-8955  
Fax: (867) 473-8611  
[auyuittuqlodge.innsnorth@arcticco-op.com](mailto:auyuittuqlodge.innsnorth@arcticco-op.com)

#### Pangnirtung Fjordview Bed & Breakfast

Markus Wilcke  
Phone: (867) 473 8039  
Cell: (867) 473 1644  
Email: [beconnected.services@gmail.com](mailto:beconnected.services@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.beconnectedservices.ca](http://www.beconnectedservices.ca)

#### Homestays

Visit [www.pangnirtung.ca/accommodations](http://www.pangnirtung.ca/accommodations) or contact the Angmarlik Interpretive Centre:  
Phone: (867) 473-8737  
Fax: (867) 473-8685  
[angmarlikcentre@qiniq.com](mailto:angmarlikcentre@qiniq.com)

#### Pisuktinu Tungavik Territorial Campground

Minimal services.  
Contact Angmarlik Interpretive Centre for more information.

### Qikiqtarjuaq

#### The Tulugak Hotel

Toll Free: 1-888-866-6784  
Phone: (867) 927-8874  
Fax: (867) 927-8044

#### Siku Hotel

Phone: (867) 927-8111  
Fax: (867) 927-8112

#### Qik Lodge

Geela S. Kooneeliusie  
(867) 927-8693 (home)  
(867) 927-8832 (work)

#### Ragelee's Bed & Breakfast

Ragelee Angnako  
(867) 927-8895 (home)

#### Campground

Minimal services



Qikiqtarjuaq in winter.

# Activities

Akshayuk Pass is the most popular skiing and hiking destination in the park. It is a 97 kilometre natural corridor between mountains and ice that will immerse you in what this landscape has to offer. There are nine emergency shelters spaced about one day's travel apart. You won't find any campgrounds or services in the park except for outhouses located near the shelters. Despite there being no designated trail to follow, the pass follows a glacial valley and significant landmarks. The striking views of Overlord, Odin, Thor and Asgard peaks will guide you through this spectacular landscape.

The hamlet of Qikiqtarjuaq makes a nice jumping off point for a variety of other excursions (starting by boat or by snow machine and depending on the season) - including trips to the Narpaing-Maktak Valley, seeing an iceberg calve into the ocean at Coronation Fjord, fishing, as well as polar bear and iceberg watching.

## ***Backpacking***

Akshayuk Pass is the park's prime summer hiking destination. A traverse through the pass will usually take 8 - 12 days or you can do shorter trips of 2 - 6 day trips. Ask staff for destination recommendations. There are no maintained trails in the park.

Always plan extra time for travel in the park and a couple of extra days in the communities, particularly as weather and river crossings can affect your schedule any time in the season.

## ***Day or Weekend Trips: hikes, snowmobile tours or boat tours***

If you only have a day or two to see Auyuittuq, there are many possibilities. How about a boat tour from Qikiqtarjuaq through towering fiords for a peek at glaciers and mountains? Maybe a snowmobile or hiking trip to the Arctic Circle from Pangnirtung? Hiking, skiing and outfitter-guided boat or snowmobile tours are options from both communities. Contact our office or an outfitter directly to discuss what trip would be best for you.

## ***Bouldering***

There are many great bouldering areas in the park. Contact park staff for more information.

## ***Skiing***



Photo: Markus Siivola

There is nothing like the stillness of Auyuittuq in the spring. Leaving behind the rockfalls and rushing waters of summer, skiing offers unparalleled freedom of movement to explore and experience.

Ski travel in Akshayuk Pass is usually best accomplished along the Weasel River and Owl River valleys. Metal edged skis with skins, snowshoes or boots with attachable crampons are recommended. The Akshayuk Pass traverse can normally be accomplished in 7-10 days, not including transportation to the park. Keep in mind that weather may delay travel for one or more days.

Although your skis can take you to many peaks and glaciers, most actual ascents will require technical climbing skills and equipment. See the Important Safety Information section starting on page 13 for more information about terrain hazards relative to skiing.

## Climbing & Mountaineering

Auyuittuq's glaciers, rock cliffs and mountains provide world-class opportunities for rock climbing, mountaineering and ski mountaineering in an arctic environment. Potentially harsh conditions and a lack of local rescue services make mountaineering in this park inadvisable for all but the most experienced of climbers. Are you prepared for self-rescue? In emergency situations, technical rescue equipment and personnel have to be brought in from outside of Nunavut.

See the Important Safety Information section starting on page 13 for more information about terrain hazards relative to climbing and mountaineering.

Please contact the park office well in advance of your trip to discuss expedition plans and secure approval for caches and base camps.



## Inuit Cultural Activities

For hundreds of years, Inuit led a nomadic life, moving from one location to another following animals along their migration routes. You may encounter Inuit while travelling in Auyuittuq. We would like to remind you to respect Inuit subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping rights and refrain from interfering with these activities. Inuit may travel through the park by motorized vehicle for the purposes of harvesting. Anyone transporting a visitor to the park for commercial gain requires a license.

All visitors must be registered.

## Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited under the Canada National Parks Act Regulations:

- Long-drop rappelling
- Paragliding
- BASE Jumping
- Parachuting
- Parasailing

# Tour Companies

If you prefer to travel in a guided group, please contact one of the tour companies below. **Please check that the company you are planning to travel with is currently licensed to operate in the park before you hire them.**

*This package was produced in advance of the annual licensing and permitting cycle.*

## **Karavaniers du Monde**

Montreal, Quebec  
Toll Free: 1-877-477-0799  
Phone: (514) 281-0799  
Fax: (514) 281-5664  
expeditions@karavaniers.com  
www.karavaniers.com

## **Black Feather Wilderness Adventure Company**

Parry Sound, ON  
Toll Free: 1-888-849-7668  
Phone: (705) 746-1372  
Fax: (705) 746-7048  
info@blackfeather.com  
www.blackfeather.com

## **Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions Inc.**

PO Box 6117 923 Federal Road  
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0  
Toll Free: 1-888-737-6818  
adventures@arctickingdom.com  
www.arctickingdom.com

## **Northwinds Expeditions**

Iqaluit, NU  
Phone : (867) 979-0551  
Fax : (867) 979-0573  
www.northwindsexpeditions.com

## **Quark Expeditions**

Waterbury, Vermont  
Toll Free: 1-888-892-0334  
Fax: (203) 857-0427  
enquiry@quarkexpeditions.com  
www.quarkexpeditions.com

## **INUKPAK Outfitting**

PO Box 11392  
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0  
Phone: (867) 979-7489  
www.inukpakoutfitting.ca





# When to Visit: Arctic Seasons and Your Trip

The following are approximate dates and methods for accessing the park. Please note that area closures are possible any time. You should check in advance with the park office in Pangnirtung for this year's likeliest scenario.

**March/April/early May (spring)** Fjords are frozen; travel by snowmobile, snowshoes or skis.\* Rivers often break up by early to mid-May, making skiing difficult.

**June/July (break up)** Sea-ice breaks up by early June in Pangnirtung and by mid-July in Qikiqtarjuaq. Before and during break-up, travel to the park is not possible with an outfitter – only on foot from Pangnirtung\*.

**Late July/August/September (summer)** The fjords are normally ice-free. Travel with an outfitter by boat. Hiking / Climbing season. River flooding can happen at any time but the peak of summer, the last week of July and the first week of August, is the period when flooding has historically been at its peak. Full closure of the pass has occurred during this period due to flooding. See River Crossings section on page 14 for more information.

**October – February (winter)** Multi-day travel to Auyuittuq National Park is not advisable at this time. Cold temperatures, near-constant darkness and access difficulties in early winter make winter travel and camping unpleasant, dangerous and, often, impossible. Day-trips by snowmobile are an option for fair weather days.

\* It is physically possible to travel between the park and Pangnirtung on foot or by ski at any time of year. However, this will add many kilometres to your trip. We recommend that an outfitter be hired to transport your group between the communities and the park. To **reduce your risk of encountering polar bears**, we particularly recommend the use of an outfitter between Qikiqtarjuaq and the head of North Pangnirtung Fjord.



Photo: Axel Nernheim

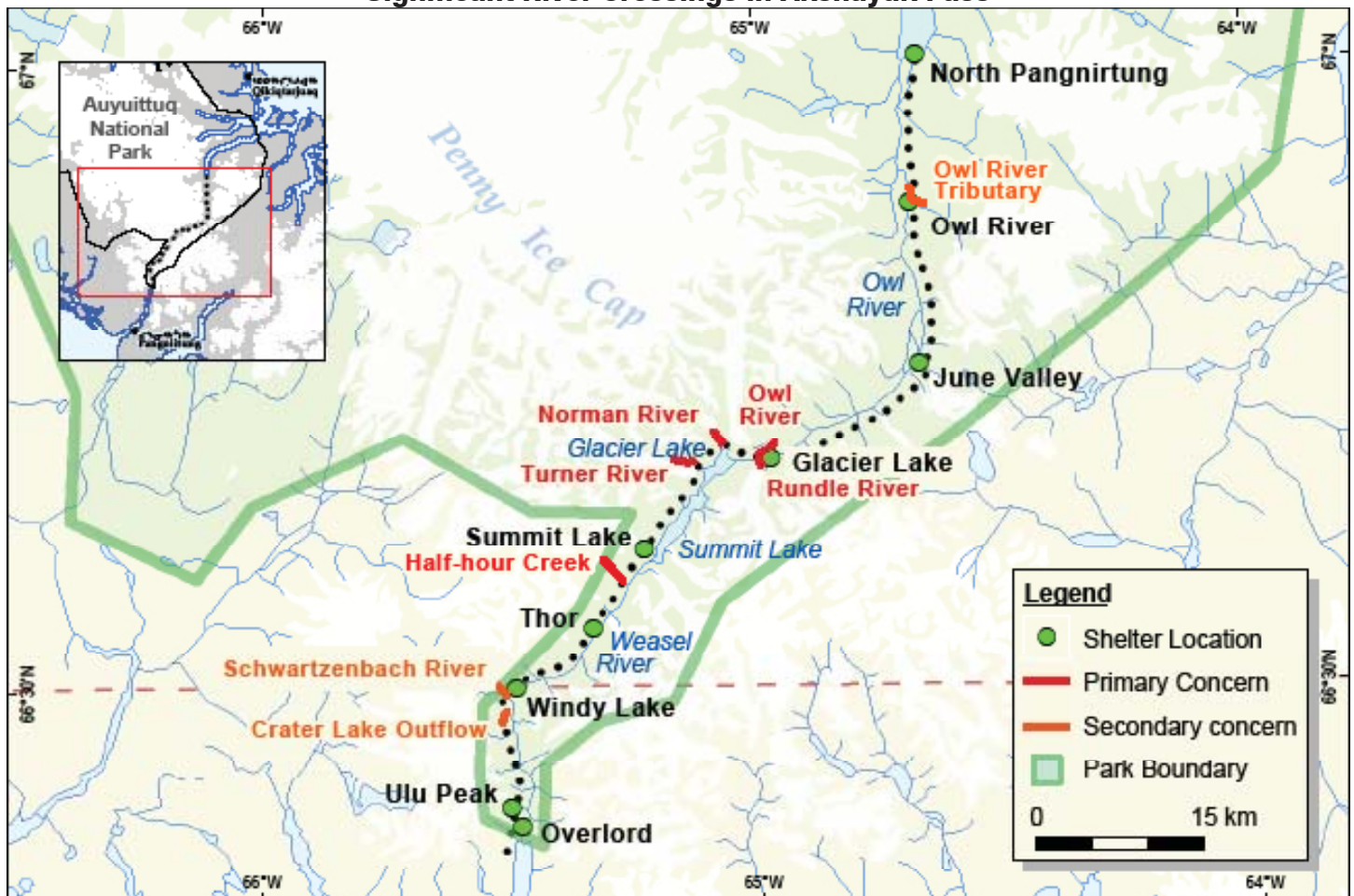
# Important Safety Information

River crossings are the most significant hazard facing summer visitors. Streams and rivers in Auyuittuq are mostly glacial fed, so water volume and velocity changes throughout the day and from day to day. As the day progresses, glacial melt caused by warming temperatures increases the volume of rivers and streams. Rainfall also affects the volume and velocity of rivers and streams at any time of day. These factors make crossings unpredictable and susceptible to rapid change. Be prepared to wait out high water for hours or even days: at certain times of year, water levels are likely to significantly affect your trip route and schedule, so plan accordingly.

## Historic River Flooding: last week of July through the first week of August

During the last decade, there have been visitor safety incidents related to severe flooding in Auyuittuq National Park (ANP). Although area closures are possible at any time, high water levels and the corresponding heightened risk to visitor safety have been most problematic in ANP between the last week of July and the first week of August. Visitors have been injured and have even drowned trying to cross rivers during high water levels. Others have had significant delays in their trips or needed evacuation due to river crossings becoming nearly impassable. Warm weather causing glacial melt and increased rainfall are the main factors affecting water levels. Day trips or short overnight trips may not be as impacted as through hikers when water levels rise, depending on the route. Always plan for delays.

## Significant River Crossings in Akshayuk Pass



## ***River Crossing Tips***

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### **Gear Considerations**

- Footwear: Neoprene boots in combination with a hard gripping soles will protect your feet from the cold water and will allow you to keep your boots and socks dry. Alternatively, hiking boots with gaiters will provide some warmth, ankle support and may protect your feet from tumbling rocks, but you must be prepared to hike in wet boots.
- Hiking poles: hiking poles are essential for balance while crossing and are useful for testing water depth.

### **Deciding to Cross**

- Group abilities: Ensure that all group members are willing to take the risk. Consider the abilities of the weakest group member.
- Timing: Be prepared to wait hours or days until water levels are low enough for your group to make a safe crossing. During warm periods, water levels are generally lowest between 2 am and 7 am. Following heavy rain, water levels may continue to rise for several hours.
- Location: Assess the safest location to cross, remembering that ideal crossing locations change regularly. Consider the following:
  - Water depth
    - Braided areas tend to be shallower than single channels.
  - Water speed
    - Flatter areas tend to have slower-moving water than steeper areas.
  - Hazards
    - Riverbanks: may be unstable and could collapse.
    - Underwater: cloudy water can obscure rolling rocks and unstable footing.
    - Downstream: be aware of waterfalls, deep pools, chutes, etc.

### **Safe crossing techniques**

- Heavy packs make crossings more difficult; you may wish to test cross without a pack or have stronger members shuttle packs.
- When crossing with a pack, unfasten waist and chest straps so you can remove your pack easily if you become pinned underwater.
- Face upstream, move with the current and use hiking poles to maintain balance.
- Consider group crossing techniques, i.e. Leader is upstream with group members in single file behind for support and to take advantage of the group's downstream eddy.

**To learn more about river safety, consider taking a swift water safety course before your trip.**

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***River crossings are the most significant risk visitors face in Auyuittuq National Park***

All rivers and streams are dangerous  
Some streams may remain uncrossable for some members of your group  
Be prepared to change your route or turn back

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## Terrain Hazards

### Rockfall

Bare, freshly broken rock is a sign of active rockfall; these areas may extend well out from the rock walls and cliffs. In or around steep terrain, choose routes carefully, watch and listen for falling rock and avoid stopping for long breaks in potentially active or unprotected areas. Be particularly careful when it is raining and during periods of freeze-melt temperatures as these conditions loosen rock and increase rockfall. Choose campsites in protected areas, away from steep terrain.

### Glacier Travel

Low temperatures combined with low annual snowfall means that glacial movement is very slow. Crevasses and icefalls are reduced compared to glaciers in more southerly regions of North America. However, glaciers must still be treated with respect as they can be dangerous. **Only those experienced in glacier travel and crevasse rescue and with proper equipment should consider travel on glaciers.** All guides operating in glaciated and / or technical mountain terrain require full IFMGA/IVBV/UIAGM/ACMG certification as an Alpine, Mountain, or Ski guide. Contact the park office for more information.

### Avalanches

If there is snow and you will be travelling across or near slopes of more than 25° angle, you need to consider the possibility of avalanches. You should be trained and experienced in assessing avalanche hazards, route-finding skills and self-rescue techniques if you plan to travel in avalanche areas. All members should carry an avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe. The Akshayuk Pass traverse does not pass through any significant avalanche terrain; however care should be taken to observe potential slidepaths above.

### Wind

Wind can be localized. The head of Pangnirtung fiord can be calm while high winds are blowing in Pangnirtung. When this happens, outfitters will not go out in their boats. Winds of 15-20 km/hour are common year-round, they tend to be stronger (30-40km/hour) from late summer to early winter, with extremes to 100 km/hour.

***Winds in Akshayuk Pass have reached 175 km/hour.***



- Wind can blow your tent away or destroy it. We recommend using a 4-season tent and protecting it with a snow or rock wall. Anchor it with rocks, but check that they aren't a part of an archaeological site. Please replace rocks where you found them, when you leave.
- Wind can make travel impossible. Your schedule should be flexible enough to accommodate a few stormy days. Delays of one to five days are typical.
- Ensure your stove works well in high winds. We recommend at least 2 stoves per group.

### Water Quality

Although there have not been any reported cases of giardia, we advise you to fine filter (<0.5microns), treat (iodine or chlorine in warm water), or boil your drinking water. To prevent the spread of diseases, human waste should be disposed of in a responsible manner, at least 100 metres from water sources and 50 metres from trails. More information will be provided during your orientation.

## ***Polar Bears and Other Wildlife***

Polar bears may be encountered at any time of the year and in any area of the park, including glaciers.

The more people in your party, the less likely you will encounter a bear. Groups of up to 12 people are permitted. In Auyuittuq National Park, polar bears are most active in and along the coast of Davis Strait. Be particularly cautious in March/April when females with cubs are emerging from their dens and August to November when the sea ice is gone and bears are forced ashore. When in North Pangnirtung Fiord we recommend travelling at least 3-4 hours inland before camping, if possible.

For more information, please speak with our staff, read the Safety in Polar Bear Country pamphlet carefully and watch the Polar Bears: A Guide to Safety DVD at the park office. For your own copy of this DVD, please visit [www.distributionaccess.com](http://www.distributionaccess.com).

If you are nervous about bears, or uncertain of your ability to deal with them, consider joining a guided group. Guides are knowledgeable and experienced at travelling in bear country. When hiring a guide, ask about their experience, how they will avoid encountering polar bears and their plans of action should you encounter a bear.

### ***Report polar bear encounters***

Report sightings, tracks and signs to Parks Canada staff as soon as possible by radio or satellite phone.

**Foxes and wolves** can carry rabies. Do not allow them to approach you. Be especially suspicious if wildlife appears 'friendly' or 'tame'.

**Birds and other wildlife** are inquisitive and opportunistic. They will scavenge food left out and caches that are not securely stashed. Make sure food and garbage is securely stored.

As **any animal** can be dangerous, keep a safe distance from all wildlife and remember that it is illegal to touch, feed or entice wildlife with food items in a national park.



## *Climate and Extreme Weather*

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The polar marine climate means long, cold winters and short, cool summers, with sub-freezing temperatures year-round at higher elevations.

The Penny Ice Cap, steep mountain slopes and the linear valley of the Akshayuk Pass create conditions for steady winds. You are likely to experience blowing sand in the summer and possible whiteouts in the winter/spring.

The park receives low amounts of precipitation but late summer is the wettest time of year. Weather can change suddenly and without warning. **Be prepared for snow anytime, anywhere in Auyuittuq!** By mid-August new snow is common in the pass and above 2,000 feet it is permanent.

## *Hypothermia and Frostbite*

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Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition and is a year-round risk in Auyuittuq. People with hypothermia can no longer keep themselves warm and cannot re-warm themselves without assistance. Know the signs and symptoms of hypothermia, how to treat it and take precautions to prevent its onset.

Be prepared for extreme weather conditions- there have been many evacuations in recent years due to visitors suffering from severe frostbite or hypothermia. Remember to take the windchill factor into account when evaluating spring and summer temperatures. Cold temperatures become drastically colder with the added effect of wind.

Skiers, mountaineers and other winter and spring travellers must guard against frostbite when travelling in Auyuittuq. Conditions of extreme cold and wind are common, and care should be taken to avoid exposing the skin.



Photo: Karen McColl

# Minimizing Risk

## *Experience Level*

Your group should have advanced skills in wilderness first aid and be prepared to handle any medical, wildlife or weather related emergency. If someone in your group is uncertain about their skill level, consider travelling with an experienced guide. Contact information can be found in this package.

## *Communications*

Please be aware that all of these recommended modes of communication can be unreliable and at times you will be unable to make contact with anyone. If you are having difficulty receiving a signal it may be possible to get to higher ground to improve signal strength. This can be very time consuming and in some cases dangerous, please use caution. As always with technology, be aware of the weaknesses of your system.

**Satellite phones** are the preferred means of making contact. Your phone can put you in touch with emergency assistance 24 hours a day. We recommend obtaining a satellite phone prior to your trip.

*The Iridium system currently provides the most reliable coverage over Auyuittuq but other options are available. Make sure to bring extra batteries and keep your device dry. Portable solar chargers for batteries are also recommended. Be sure to write down emergency phone numbers and program them into the phone.*

**Please Note:** *there are areas of the park, especially in the Owl River valley, where satellite phone coverage is unreliable.*

**Emergency radios** are provided in all emergency shelters and staff cabins. Instructions for use, communication schedules and call signs are provided at these locations. Radios are monitored during regular office hours. You will be provided with details during your orientation and registration session.

**SPOT devices** can be used to allow family and friends to track your progress on your trip as well as to initiate a distress signal. This signal is non-reversible and is to be used in a life-threatening situation only. **Visitors should be aware that the SPOT satellite network has poor coverage at high latitudes and that signals can be obstructed in valleys such as Akshayuk pass. They are NOT considered a reliable method of communication.** Make sure that you have advised your family and friends who may be tracking your “okay” messages that the absence of a message does not necessarily mean you are having problems. It most likely means you are temporarily not transmitting. During your registration we will collect information about your unit in the event that there is a need to check the activity from it.

**Personal Locator Beacons (PLB)** can also be carried into remote areas. When activated, they send a distress signal to the Canadian Forces in Trenton, Ontario who will initiate a rescue from there. Once activated, the signal is non-reversible; these are to be used in a life-threatening situation only. Make sure your PLB is properly registered by calling the Canadian Personal Emergency Beacon Registry in Ottawa at (613) 992-0079 or online at [www.canadianbeaconregistry.forces.gc.ca](http://www.canadianbeaconregistry.forces.gc.ca). Only PLB's that transmit a distress signal at 406 MHz are permitted in Canada.

# Search and Rescue

Auyuittuq is one of the most remote parks in North America, and rescue services and facilities are very limited. Our public safety staff are trained in swift water recovery, first aid, patient stabilization and evacuation in non-technical terrain. Park search and rescue operations may be delayed by poor weather conditions, geography, aircraft or staff availability. For high-angle technical evacuations, assistance from outside of Nunavut is required.

## TO HELP US AND YOURSELF, PLEASE:

- Be self-reliant and responsible for your own safety;
- Have the required equipment, knowledge, skills and physical fitness;
- Consider the public safety information and advice provided by Parks Canada;
- Seek out additional advice from our staff if you are uncertain about what you may encounter;
- Follow the public safety registration and de-registration program;
- Be prepared for emergencies (medical, wildlife or weather related).

## *When will a search be initiated?*

A search and rescue response will be initiated when a distress signal is reported or when a group has failed to de-register and an initial investigation suggests a group is overdue. In the case of an overdue group, a physical search may not occur until at least 48 hours after the de-registration date has passed.

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

**USE EMERGENCY SHELTER RADIOS TO CONTACT THE PARK OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS  
OR**

**CALL THE EMERGENCY DISPATCH LINE  
(780) 852 3100**

**THIS NUMBER IS MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY**

### ***Do not forget to de-register!***

Visitors who fail to de-register place an unnecessary burden on our limited search and rescue capabilities. You can place rescue staff in danger and make the rescue team unavailable for a real emergency. Please remember to visit or call our Parks Canada office upon your safe return from the park.



Photo: Eena Kooneeliusie



# Park Facilities / Infrastructure

## *Emergency Shelters*

There are 9 emergency shelters (and outhouses) located along the Akshayuk Pass. We maintain the shelters for your safety in case of extreme weather or polar bear threats and they are to be used in emergency situations only.

The emergency shelters are never locked and are all equipped with a single side band 2-way radio that is monitored **during regular business hours** by our staff. A general radio broadcast is given twice a day from the park office at 8:45am and 4:45pm during peak season. Please use the radios at this time to check for current weather, trail conditions, polar bear updates or to contact an outfitter. **Use the radios during office hours in case of an emergency. It should be noted that radios are unreliable at times.**

If an emergency requires you to use a shelter, please keep the emergency shelters tidy and bar the door when you leave. Food and trash are animal attractants and odours will linger.

### *Emergency Shelter Regulations*

- Do not sleep in the shelters
- Do not cook in the shelters
- Do not store food, fuel or equipment
- Do not leave garbage behind



## *Outhouses*

Human waste decomposes slowly in arctic environments. Men are encouraged to urinate outside however for privacy reasons women may use the outhouses. Everyone may use the outhouses to defecate. If you are unable to use an outhouse, go at least 100 metres from lakes and streams and 50 metres from trails. Leave feces exposed to air to decompose faster. Toilet paper can be burned, packed out or disposed of in the next outhouse.

**DO NOT DISPOSE OF ANY GARBAGE IN OUTHOUSES- PACK IT OUT!**

### *Emergency Cache Barrels- summer only*

**Emergency cache barrels** are found near major river crossings in case you lose essential gear while crossing rivers and need this assistance to exit the park. Locations and contents of cache barrels will be covered in your orientation.

# Environmental Conservation Practices

- Choose routes on durable terrain.
- When travelling across steep terrain use rock outcrops or snow.
- Select campsites in durable locations where signs of your occupation will be minimal, especially for base camps or if you are travelling in a large group.
- Minimize the use of soaps and, when necessary, use biodegradable soap.
- Dish and excess cooking water should be poured into a shallow sump hole away from campsite and 50 meters away from water sources.
- Pack out everything that you packed in. Do not leave garbage in the outhouses. This includes your toilet paper!
- Do not build cairns (rock pile or Inuksuk), markers, or leave messages in the dirt.
- If you cannot use an outhouse, do not cover human waste as it will degrade quicker in the sun and air. Please use an area away from main routes and water sources.

## Park Fees

Entry and camping fees are charged at most national parks. Most of the money raised through admission fees remains in the particular park where it is collected. This means that every time you visit a park you are investing in its future – and in a legacy for future generations.

Nunavut's national parks are backcountry parks and the following fees are in effect. Fees will be charged as part of your orientation and registration process:

- A Northern Park Backcountry Daily Excursion Permit is \$12.00 per person.
- The Northern Park Backcountry Excursion/ Camping Permit is \$24.50 per person per night.
- An Annual Northern Park Backcountry Excursion /Camping Permit is \$147.20 per person. It is valid in any national park or reserve in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon except for Kluane and Wood Buffalo National Parks. It is your best option if your trip is greater than 6 days, or if you plan to visit other northern national parks this year.

The Parks Canada Discovery Passes are not valid in the national parks in Nunavut. Park use fees are subject to change. Current fees are posted on the Parks Canada website.



# Park Regulations

## ***Working Together to Preserve our Natural and Cultural Areas***

The Canada National Parks Act and Regulations, as well as other federal legislation, are in place to preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources. The following is a guide to ensure you have a safe and memorable wilderness experience while visiting Auyuittuq National Park and are provided as brief information statements for convenience only. For a complete listing of park regulations please contact the park office.

- **Registration and De-registration:** You must register and attend the mandatory orientation before entering the park and de-register upon exiting.
- **Firearms:** No person shall be in possession of a firearm in the park (does not apply to Inuit beneficiaries carrying out traditional harvesting activities or persons authorized by the Superintendent).
- **Pets:** Must be kept under physical control at all times.
- **Fishing:** Anglers require a National Park Fishing Permit to fish in the national park (not applicable to Inuit).

## **Preserving Auyuittuq's Natural and Cultural Integrity**

- All garbage must be packed out.
- Campfires are not permitted in the park.
- No person shall remove, deface, damage or destroy any flora or natural objects in the park.
- No person shall wilfully remove, deface, damage or destroy any prehistoric or historic artefacts or structures in the park.
- No person shall hunt, disturb, hold in captivity or destroy any wildlife within the park.
- No person shall disturb or destroy a nest, lair or den in the park.
- No person shall touch, feed or entice wildlife in the park.

## **Areas of Restricted Access**

- **North shore of Maktak Fiord:** The north shore of Maktak Fiord from the park boundary to the head of the fiord is closed seasonally for persons who are not Inuit when berry picking is occurring in the area each fall, generally from mid-August until mid-October. Check with the park office for exact closure dates.
- **Maktak and Coronation Fiords:** All marine areas of Maktak and Coronation Fiords that fall within ANP are closed seasonally for persons who are not Inuit from the time when the first narwhals are observed in the fiords until freeze-up each year. Generally, access to these fiords will be prohibited starting late-August or early September for the remainder of the calendar year. Check with the park office for exact closure dates.

(Continued on next page)

- **Narpaing Fiord marine areas:** All marine areas, including sea ice, of the fiords north of Narpaing Fiord that fall within Auyuittuq National Park are closed seasonally for persons who are not Inuit from March 1 to May 31 annually. Polar bear activity in this area is high during the spring period when females and cubs are leaving denning sites adjacent to these fiords. This restriction has been put in place to increase visitor safety and to reduce disturbances of bears during this important period. Check with the park office for exact closure dates.
- **Motorized access restrictions:** Motorized access in the park is only permitted in Zone III areas, including Akshayuk Pass, North Pangnirtung Fiord and Coronation and Maktak Fiords (the latter two are areas of special importance to Inuit and may be closed at certain times for cultural activities).
- **Cruise Ships requirements:** Like other park visitors, cruiseship passengers must participate in a park orientation prior to entering the park and the cruise ship operator must have a valid business licence to operate in the park. Cruise ship visitors can also experience the park through the visitor centres in Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq.





**Auyuittuq. *Real. Inspiring.***