



Ayuittuq  
National Park

# 2025 Visitor Information Package



Photo: J. Delgrosse



Parks  
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Canada

# Table of Contents



Photo: M. Siivola

<b>Contact Information</b> .....	1	<b>River Safety</b> .....	12
<b>Welcome</b> .....	2	<b>River Crossing Tips</b> .....	13
<b>Inuit Cultural Activities</b> .....	2	<b>Wildlife Safety</b> .....	14
<b>Activities</b> .....	3	<b>Climate &amp; Weather Safety</b> .....	15
<b>Prohibited Activities</b> .....	3	<b>Terrain Safety</b> .....	16
<b>When to Visit</b> .....	5	<b>Drinking Water &amp; Human Waste Safety</b> .....	16
<b>Travel to Auyuittuq National Park</b> .....	6	<b>Communications</b> .....	17
<b>Local Outfitters &amp; Tour Companies</b> .....	7	<b>Search and Rescue</b> .....	18
<b>Community Information</b> .....	8	<b>Park Facilities &amp; Infrastructure</b> .....	19
<b>Topographic Maps</b> .....	9	<b>Park Regulations</b> .....	20
<b>Route Finding &amp; Orientation</b> .....	9	<b>Environmental Conservation Practices</b> .....	20
<b>Permits &amp; Fees</b> .....	10	<b>Access Restrictions</b> .....	21
<b>Registration &amp; De-registration</b> .....	11	<b>Trip Checklist</b> .....	22



Photo: Michael H. Davies

## Contact Information

Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff by email or phone, or visit our website: [parks.canada.ca/auyuittuq](https://parks.canada.ca/auyuittuq)

### Pangnirtung Office

**Phone:** (867) 473-2500  
**Fax:** (867) 473-8612  
**Email:** [nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca)

### Qikiqtarjuaq Office

**Phone:** (867) 927-8834  
**Email:** [nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca)

### Hours of Operation

#### September through June

Monday to Friday  
 8:30 am – 12:00 pm  
 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
 Closed on weekends

#### April, July and August

Open 7 days a week  
 8:30 am – 12:00 pm  
 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

### Hours of Operation

#### Mid-March through Mid-September

Hours are variable. Call in advance to arrange orientation times.

#### Late September through Early March

Closed

### Follow us on social media:

@ParksCanadaNunavut  
 @ParksCanNunavut

## National Parks in Nunavut

There are four other national parks in Nunavut representing various examples of Canada's thirty-nine natural regions – Quttinirpaaq National Park (Eastern High Arctic), Sirmilik National Park (Eastern Arctic Lowlands), Ukkusiksalik National Park (Central Tundra) and Qausuittuq National Park (Western High Arctic).

### Quttinirpaaq National Park

[parks.canada.ca/quttinirpaaq](https://parks.canada.ca/quttinirpaaq)

### Sirmilik National Park

[parks.canada.ca/sirmilik](https://parks.canada.ca/sirmilik)

### Ukkusiksalik National Park

[parks.canada.ca/ukkusiksalik](https://parks.canada.ca/ukkusiksalik)

### Qausuittuq National Park

[parks.canada.ca/qausuittuq](https://parks.canada.ca/qausuittuq)



# Welcome



Photo: Michael H. Davies

Auyuittuq National Park, Inuktitut for “Land that Never Melts”, is a dynamic landscape of craggy mountain peaks, towering granite cliffs, massive grinding glaciers and winding river valleys. In the summer, dramatic melt water streams and rivers thunder toward the fiords as travellers make their way through the pass.

Visitors may expect silence and solitude during their arctic trek, but they may be struck by the sounds of the landscape. Mountains and glaciers along the pass channel the whoosh of the wind. Water gushes against stones, rocks clatter on rocks, gravel crunches under foot and the occasional caw of a raven or yip of a fox add to the percussion of the place.

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: Eric Brown

## 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 National Park. Please respect Inuit subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping rights by giving Inuit their privacy and refrain from approaching unless invited.

Nunavut Inuit may travel throughout the national park by motorized vehicle for the purposes of harvesting, but anyone transporting a visitor in the national park for commercial gain requires a business licence.

## Activities

Photo: Michael H. Davies

Akshayuk Pass is the most popular skiing and hiking destination in the national 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 national park except for outhouses and emergency shelters. Despite there being no designated trail to follow, the pass follows a glacial valley and significant landmarks. The striking views of Overlord (Qinngua), Odin (Ukiurjuaq), Thor (Qaiqsualuk) and Asgard (Qattaujannguaq) peaks will guide you through this spectacular landscape.

## Backpacking

The Akshayuk Pass is the park's prime summer hiking destination. A traverse through the pass will usually take 8 to 12 days or you can do shorter return trips ranging from 2 to 6 days. There are no maintained trails in the national park. Always plan extra time for travel in the national park and a couple of extra days in the communities. Weather and river crossings can affect your schedule any time in the season.

## Day or Weekend Trips: Hikes, Snowmobile Tours & Boat Tours

If you only have a day or two to see Auyuittuq National Park, there are many possibilities. Hiking, skiing and outfitter-guided boat or snowmobile tours are options from both communities.

Qikiqtarjuaq and Pangnirtung can make nice jumping off points for excursions by boat in the summer and by snow machine in the spring. From Qikiqtarjuaq, some of the potential trips include visiting Coronation Fiord to see an iceberg calve into the ocean, sight seeing in the scenic Narpaing-Maktak Valley, fishing, bird and iceberg watching. From Pangnirtung, a combined snowmobile and hiking day trip can take visitors to the Arctic Circle in the spring, and in the summer visitors can combine a boat and short day hike to reach the base of Ulu Peak and the Weasel River valley. Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff or an outfitter directly to discuss what trip would be best for you.

**i** Please note that the maximum group size for any trip into Auyuittuq National Park is 12 people.



Photo: Barb Brittain

**!** The following activities are prohibited under the Canada National Parks Act Regulations: long-drop rappelling, paragliding, BASE jumping, parachuting, and parasailing.

## Activities



Photo: Jim Baird

**Please contact Auyuittuq National Park staff well in advance of your trip to discuss expedition plans and submit applications for any caches or base camps.**

### Climbing & Mountaineering

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

### Skiing

There is nothing like the stillness of Auyuittuq National Park 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 to 10 days, not including transportation to the national 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.

### Bouldering

There are many great bouldering areas in the national park. Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff for more information.



Photo: Thor Stewart



**See page 16 for more information about terrain hazards relative to skiing, climbing and mountaineering.**

## When To Visit

Photo: Parks Canada

### Arctic Seasons and Your Trip

The following are approximate seasons and methods for accessing the national park. Please note that area closures are possible any time.



#### Spring

March through  
Early May

Fjords are frozen; travel by snowshoes, skis, or guided snowmobile. \*Rivers often break up by early to mid-May, making travel difficult.



#### Break Up

June and July

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



#### Summer

Late July through  
Mid-September

The fjords are normally ice-free. Travel with an outfitter by boat is possible. Hiking/climbing season. River flooding can happen at any time, but 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 Akshayuk Pass has occurred during this period due to flooding. See the River Safety section on page 12 for more information.



#### Winter

October through  
February

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. After freeze up, snowmobile day-trips to the national park are possible.



**\*It is physically possible to travel between the national park and Pangnirtung on foot or by ski at any time of year. However, this will add a minimum of 32 kilometres to your trip. We recommend that an outfitter be hired to transport your group between the communities and the national park.**



Photo: Pete Smilie



Photo: Parks Canada

# Travel to Auyuittuq National Park

Photo: Parks Canada



If you are shipping supplies from an international location, please add an additional six weeks for items to clear customs in addition to shipping time.

## Air Access to Nunavut

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

### Canadian North

**Phone:** 1-800-267-1247

**Email:** [contact@canadiannorth.com](mailto:contact@canadiannorth.com)

**Website:** [www.canadiannorth.com](http://www.canadiannorth.com)



Weather conditions in the North may dictate your travel schedule. Allow for lengthy delays up to 3–5 days or cancellations 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: [tc.canada.ca/en/aviation/transportation-dangerous-goods-aircraft](http://tc.canada.ca/en/aviation/transportation-dangerous-goods-aircraft). If you have any questions about these regulations please contact the inspector from your region. A list of contacts can be found at: [tc.canada.ca/en/dangerous-goods/transportation-dangerous-goods-canada](http://tc.canada.ca/en/dangerous-goods/transportation-dangerous-goods-canada).

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

Bear deterrents including bear spray and many noisemaking devices are strictly prohibited from travel on scheduled airplanes. Parks Canada has a limited number of bear deterrents that visitors can borrow; check with staff for availability. These cannot be bought at local stores in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq, and must be shipped in advance if there are no deterrents available through Parks Canada.

## Emergency Medical Travel & Nunavut Visitors

### From the Government of Nunavut Department of Health:

If you are not a resident of Nunavut and you need medical travel during your time 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 Government of Nunavut Department of Health suggests that you buy travel insurance before visiting Nunavut. Health-care in Nunavut can be very expensive. Be prepared for emergencies.



Photo: Michael H. Davies





## Local Outfitters

Visitors are responsible for coordinating their transportation to and from Auyuittuq with a valid business license holder. Transportation from Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq can be arranged with licensed local outfitters. Outfitters, who typically provide transportation only, will take you to and from the national park by boat or snowmobile, depending on the season and your request.

**Please note:** Outfitters must have a valid national park business license to transport visitors in the national park. The list of licensed businesses can change at any time and without notice. Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff for the current list of business license holders.

### Pangnirtung

#### PEO Services

Phone: (867) 473-4060  
Email: peterkilabuk2005@qiniq.com  
www.kilabukoutfitting.com

### Qikiqtarjuaq

#### Nunavut Experience Outfitting

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

Photo: Parks Canada



Photo: Munju Ravindra

## Tour Companies

If you prefer to travel in a guided group, contact one of the tour companies below. The list of operators provided here may not be the most current list of tour companies. Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff for the current list of business licence holders.

#### Northwinds Arctic Adventures

P.O. Box 820  
728 Iglulik Drive, Iqaluit, NU X0A 3H0  
Phone: (867) 223-0551  
Email: northwindsexpeditions@gmail.com  
www.northwindsexpeditions.com

#### Quark Expeditions

Toronto, ON  
Phone: (802) 490-7533  
Toll Free: 1-866-252-6668  
Email: explore@quarkexpeditions.com  
www.quarkexpeditions.com

#### Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions

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

#### Inukpak Outfitting

P.O. Box 11392  
3310 Niaqunngusiaruaq Street  
Iqaluit, NU X0A 2H0  
Phone: (867) 222-6489  
Email: info@inukpakoutfitting.ca  
www.inukpakoutfitting.ca

#### Black Feather Wilderness Adventure Company

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

#### A Wilder Experience

P.O. Box 26142  
St. John's, NL A1E 1P7  
Phone: (709) 325-3616  
Email: info@awilderexperience.com  
Website: www.awilderexperience.com



Photo: Munju Ravindra

# Community Information

Photo: Barb Brittain

## Pangnirtung

### Local Stores

#### Northern Store

Phone: (867) 473-8935

#### Arctic Inuit Co-op

Phone: (867) 473-8936

### Visitor Information

#### Angmarlik Interpretive Centre

Phone: (867) 473-8737

Email: lqaqqasiq1@gov.nu.ca

#### Pangnirtung Hamlet Office

Phone: (867) 473-8953

[www.pangnirtung.ca](http://www.pangnirtung.ca)

### Accommodations

#### Auyiittuq Lodge

Hotel and Restaurant

Phone: (867) 473-8955

Fax: (867) 473-8611

Email: [auyiittuqlodge@innsnorth.coop](mailto:auyiittuqlodge@innsnorth.coop)

#### Pangnirtung Fjordview B&B

Phone: (867) 473-1644

[beconnected.services@gmail.com](mailto:beconnected.services@gmail.com)

[www.beconnectedservices.ca](http://www.beconnectedservices.ca)

#### Pisuktinu Tungavik Territorial Campground

Minimal services.

### Arts & Crafts

#### Uqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts

Phone: (867) 473-8669

[www.uqurmiut.ca](http://www.uqurmiut.ca)

## Qikiqtarjuaq

### Local Stores

#### Northern Store

Phone: (867) 927-8917

#### Tulugak Co-op

Phone: (867) 927-8031

### Visitor Information

#### Piqalujaujaq Gathering House

Phone: (867) 927-8616

Email: [qik\\_tourismcoordinator@hotmail.com](mailto:qik_tourismcoordinator@hotmail.com)

#### Qikiqtarjuaq Hamlet Office

Phone: (867) 927-8832

Fax: (867) 927-8120

Email: [qikrecp@qiniq.com](mailto:qikrecp@qiniq.com)

### Accommodations

#### Inns North

Phone: (867) 927-8874

Fax: (867) 927-8044

[tulugak@innsnorth.coop](mailto:tulugak@innsnorth.coop)

#### Siku Hotel

Phone: (867) 927-8111 (hotel)

Phone: (867) 225-1150 (cell)

Phone: (867) 528-0106 (cell)

#### Qik Lodge

Geela S. Kooneeliusie

Phone: (867) 927-8693 (home)

Phone: (867) 927-8832 (work)

Phone: (867) 222-4401 (cell)

Email: [qiklodge@gmail.com](mailto:qiklodge@gmail.com)

## Additional Resources

### Mirnguiqsirviit – Nunavut

#### Territorial Parks

[www.nunavutparks.com](http://www.nunavutparks.com)

#### Destination Nunavut

[www.destinationnunavut.ca](http://www.destinationnunavut.ca)

#### Travel Nunavut

[www.travelnunavut.ca](http://www.travelnunavut.ca)

#### Transport Canada

[www.tc.canada.ca](http://www.tc.canada.ca)

#### Pangnirtung Tide Charts

[waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/station?sid=4029](http://waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/station?sid=4029)

#### Qikiqtarjuaq Tide Charts

[waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/station?sid=3980](http://waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/station?sid=3980)

#### Pangnirtung Weather Conditions

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

#### Qikiqtarjuaq Weather Conditions

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

#### Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Phone: 1-800-667-2742

Email: [info@qia.ca](mailto:info@qia.ca)

Website: [www.qia.ca](http://www.qia.ca)



Photo: Barb Brittain



## Topographic Maps

Photo: Thor Stewart

Detailed maps of the Akshayuk Pass are available for purchase at the Parks Canada office and from the manufacturer ([www.chrismar.com](http://www.chrismar.com)).

If you plan to travel in areas other than the Akshayuk Pass, you will need to purchase the appropriate maps before arriving in Nunavut. Information on where to purchase maps can be found on the Natural Resources Canada website: [www.nrcan.gc.ca/maps-tools-and-publications/maps/topographic-maps/10995](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/maps-tools-and-publications/maps/topographic-maps/10995).

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

**Maps that you receive are up-to-date only to the year indicated on the map.**



## Route Finding & Orientation

The Akshayuk Pass is a deep, U-shaped valley. 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 Fjord (Panniqtuuruluk).

Auyuittuq National Park 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.



Photo: Michael H. Davies

# Permits & Fees

Photo: Marie-Andrée Vaillancourt

**i** If you plan to travel on Inuit-owned land, contact the Qikiqtani Inuit Association at 1-800-667-2742 or email [info@qia.ca](mailto:info@qia.ca) for permission.

## Permits

Permits for operating a business (guiding, outfitting), filming and commercial photography, research, landing an aircraft, establishing a cache or base camp, and for transporting a firearm through the national park must be acquired well in advance of your trip (some permits may take ninety days or more to be issued). Research permits are only issued in winter and spring. For information and applications, contact Auyuittuq National Park staff.

## Fees

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



Photo: Michael H. Davies

**Northern Backcountry Camping and Excursion Fees apply at national parks in Nunavut. Fees are paid during the mandatory registration and orientation session:**

<b>\$16.00</b>	for day use/person (no overnight)
<b>\$33.25</b>	per night/person
<b>\$231.50</b>	for an annual backcountry pass/person (expires on March 31st)
<b>FREE</b>	Admission for youth 17 and under

The annual pass is a great option if you plan to stay a total of 6 or more nights in any combination of the following national parks prior to March 31<sup>st</sup>: Aulavik, Auyuittuq, Ivavik, Nahanni, Quttinirpaq, Sirmilik, Tukturnogait, Vuntut, Qausuittuq and Ukkusiksalik National Parks.

**The Parks Canada Discovery Pass is not applicable in any of the national parks in Nunavut.**

## Registration & De-registration

Photo: Marie-Andrée Vaillancourt

All national park visitors in Nunavut must participate in a mandatory orientation and registration session and pay their park use fees prior to entering the national park and de-register upon exiting the national park.

During the registration and orientation session you will be briefed on current route conditions, safety considerations, weather, water levels, area closures, park regulations, polar bear sightings, areas of interest, recommended routes and more.

### Be prepared to provide the following information during registration:

- The name, address and phone number of each group member;
- Two emergency contacts for each group member;
- Your de-registration date (the date you plan to exit the national park);
- The name(s) of the outfitter(s) you plan to use;
- Your flight information;
- A list of your large identifiable equipment (e.g. 1 green two-person tent, 2 orange pulks, 1 blue and 1 red backpack). Include brand names if possible.
- The contact information for your communication device(s); and
- Your detailed trip plan including activities and routes.

### Registration

- Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff to schedule your registration and orientation session two or more weeks in advance of arrival if possible.
- Plan to spend about two hours at the Parks Canada office for your orientation, registration and payment of park use fees.

### De-registration

- Within 24 hours of leaving the national park, visit the Parks Canada office in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq to complete de-registration.
- If you are unable to visit, please phone the Parks Canada office to de-register over the phone with Auyuittuq National Park staff.
- Your de-registration date is the day that you anticipate exiting the national 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 Parks Canada staff.**



Photo: Barb Brittain



Photo: Munju Ravindra



Photo: Joshua Erikson



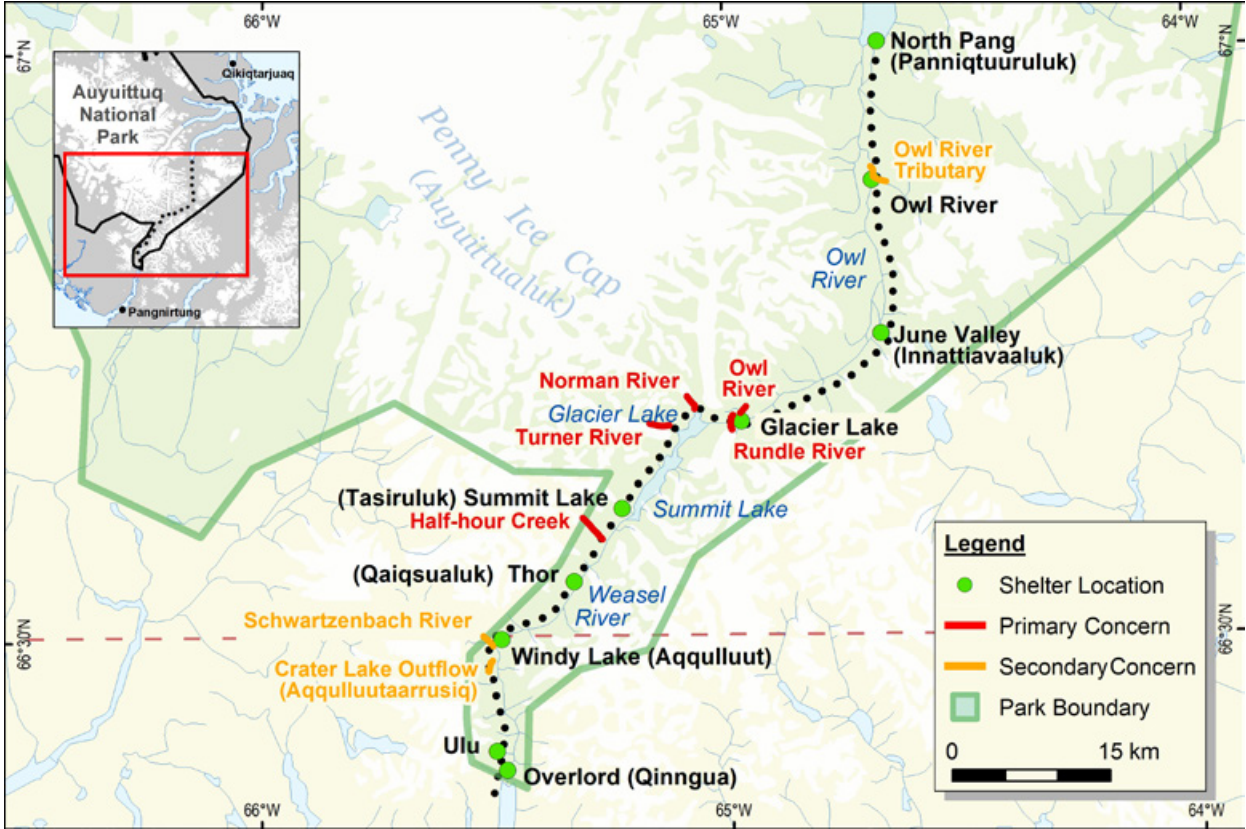
Photo: Michael H. Davies

# River Safety

River crossings are the most significant hazard facing summer visitors. Streams and rivers in Auyuittuq National Park 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 can affect 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 - first week of August

During the last decade, there have been visitor safety incidents related to severe flooding in Auyuittuq National Park. Although area closures are possible at any time, high water levels and the corresponding heightened risk to visitor safety have been most problematic in Auyuittuq National Park 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 due to weather.



Significant River Crossings in Akshayuk Pass



Photo: Michael H. Davies



**All rivers and streams are dangerous. Some streams may be uncrossable for some members of your group. Be prepared to change your route or turn back. To learn more about river safety, consider taking a swift-water safety course before your trip.**

## River Crossing Tips

### Gear Considerations

#### Footwear

Neoprene boots in combination with a gripping sole thick enough to walk over rocks for long distances will protect your feet from the cold water and will allow you to keep your boots and socks dry.

#### Hiking Poles

Hiking poles are useful for testing water depth and supporting balance during river crossings.

### 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 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. 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 deeper spots, rolling rocks and unstable footing.

Downstream: Be aware of waterfalls, deep pools, open sea, 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., the leader is upstream with group members in single file behind to take advantage of the leader's downstream eddy and support.



Photo: © Scott Forsyth/Adventure Canada



**To reduce your risk of encountering polar bears, we recommend the use of an outfitter between Qikiqtarjuaq and the head of North Pangnirtung Fiord (Panniqtuuruluk).**

## Polar Bears

Polar bears may be encountered at any time of the year and in any area of the national park, including glaciers. The more people in your party, the less likely you will be to 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 polar bears are forced ashore. In the North Pangnirtung Fiord (Panniqtuuruluk) we recommend camping at least 3–4 hours inland from the coast if possible.

For more information, you can speak with Auyuittuq National Park staff, read the *Safety in Polar Bear Country* pamphlet carefully and watch the *Polar Bears: A Guide to Safety* DVD at the Parks Canada office or distributed at [www.kodiakcanada.com/collections/bear-safety-videos/products/polar-bears-a-guide-to-safety-dvd](http://www.kodiakcanada.com/collections/bear-safety-videos/products/polar-bears-a-guide-to-safety-dvd).

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

**Report polar bear encounters, sightings, tracks and signs to Auyuittuq National Park staff as soon as possible by radio or satellite phone.**

## Other Wildlife

Foxes and wolves can carry rabies. Do not allow them to approach you. Be especially suspicious if wildlife appears “friendly” or “tame”. Birds and wildlife are inquisitive and opportunistic. They will scavenge food left out and raid caches that are not securely stashed. Make sure wildlife attractants (e.g. food, toiletries, garbage) are 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 in a national park.



Photo: Fred Lemire



## Climate & Weather Safety



Photo: Munju Ravindra

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 (Auyiuttualuk), 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 national 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 Auyiuttuq National Park!** By mid-August new snow is common in the pass and above 2,000 feet it is permanent.

## Hypothermia & Frostbite

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

Be prepared for extreme weather conditions – there have been evacuations in recent years due to visitors suffering from severe frostbite and 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 Auyiuttuq National Park. Extreme winds and cold temperatures are common; care should be taken to avoid exposing the skin.

## Winds

Wind can be localized. The head of Pagnirtung Fiord can be calm while high winds are blowing in Pagnirtung. 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 from late summer to early winter (30-40km/hour), with storms sometimes reaching 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 two stoves per group.



**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.**



Photo: Jim Baird



Photo: Parks Canada



Photo: Michael H. Davies



Photo: Parks Canada

## Terrain Safety

### 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. Avoid camping by the base of Thor Peak (Qaiqsualuk).

### 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, crevasse rescue and who are properly equipped should consider travelling on glaciers.

**All guides operating in glaciated and/or technical mountain terrain will require full IFMGA/IVBV/UIAGM/ACMG certification as an alpine, mountain, or ski guide.** Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff for more information.

### Avalanches

If there is snow and you will be travelling across or near slopes of more than a 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.

## Drinking Water & Human Waste Safety

We advise you to fine filter (<0.5microns), treat (iodine or chlorine), or boil your drinking water.

To prevent the spread of diseases, human waste should be disposed of in a responsible manner. Human waste decomposes slowly in arctic environments. If you are unable to use an outhouse, go at least 100 metres from lakes and streams and 50 metres from travel routes. Leave feces exposed to air to decompose faster. Used toilet paper can be burned, packed out or disposed of in the next outhouse.

# Communications



Photo: Markus Siivola

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, ensure you know how to use your device and be aware of the weaknesses of your system.

## Satellite Phones

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 as they are not available in the North.** Phones that operate on the Iridium system currently provide the most reliable coverage over Auyuittuq National Park but other options are available. Make sure to bring extra batteries and keep your device dry and warm if possible. Portable solar chargers for batteries are also recommended. Be sure to program the emergency phone numbers into the phone and bring a written copy as back up.

## Emergency Radios

Emergency radios are provided in all emergency shelters and staff cabins, but should not be relied on as the only source of communication on your trip. 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.

## Satellite Messenger Devices

Satellite messenger devices (e.g. InReach, SPOT, Zoleo) can be used to allow family and friends to track your trip progress as well as to initiate a distress signal (SOS). The SOS signal is non-reversible and is to be used in a life-threatening situation only. Like satellite phones, the Iridium satellite system provides more reliable coverage in Auyuittuq National Park. For this reason, InReach and Zoleo devices are currently recommended over SPOT devices and the new iPhone satellite messaging functionality. Some models of InReach, SPOT and Zoleo devices allow for two-way text messaging. Ensure you pre-load your contacts before beginning your trip. 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 may indicate poor coverage. SOS signals have inadvertently been sent (pocket dialed) without the user knowing it, resulting in unnecessary search and rescues in Nunavut national parks; please ensure you carefully handle and monitor your device. During your registration we will collect information about your device(s) in the event that there is a need to check the activity from it.

## Personal Locator Beacons

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 Beacon Registry, CFB Trenton at **1-877-406-7671**, online at **[www.cbr-rcb.ca/cbr](http://www.cbr-rcb.ca/cbr)** or by email at **[cbr@sarnet.dnd.ca](mailto:cbr@sarnet.dnd.ca)**. Only PLB's that transmit a distress signal at 406 MHz are permitted in Canada.

## Search and Rescue



Photo: Barb Brittain

Auyuittuq National Park 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 first aid, patient stabilization and evacuation in non-technical terrain. Parks Canada 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.

### When will a search be initiated?

A search and rescue response will be initiated when a distress signal is reported or, if a group fails to de-register, on the date indicated on their registration forms or shortly thereafter. 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.

### Remember to de-register!

If you fail to de-register you 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 Auyuittuq National Park staff upon your safe return from the national park.

### 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 Auyuittuq National Park staff if you are uncertain about what you may encounter;
- Register and de-register; and
- Be prepared for emergencies (medical, wildlife or weather related).



**In case of emergency, call the emergency dispatch line at 780-852-3100.**

**This number is monitored 24 hours a day.**

## Park Facilities & Infrastructure



Photo: Munju Ravindra



Photo: Phil McComiskey



Photo: Parks Canada

### 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. 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 Pangnirtung Parks Canada office at 8:45 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. during peak season. Please use the radios at this time to check for current weather, trail conditions, polar bear updates or to relay a message to an outfitter. Use the radios during office hours in case of an emergency. It should be noted that radios require frequent troubleshooting and are unreliable.

If an emergency requires you to use a shelter, please keep the emergency shelter tidy, pack out everything you brought and bar the door. Food and trash are animal attractants and odours will linger.

**Emergency Shelter Regulations: Do not cook, store food/fuel/equipment or leave garbage in the shelters.**

### Outhouses & Human Waste

Men are encouraged to urinate outside, however for privacy reasons women may use the outhouses. Everyone may use the outhouses to defecate. Used toilet paper can be burned, packed out or disposed of in the outhouse. **Do not dispose of any garbage, food scraps or unused toilet paper in outhouses — pack it out!**

### Emergency Cache Barrels

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



Photo: Josh Erikson



Photo: Jim Baird



Photo: S. Thirkell

## Park Regulations

The *Canada National Parks Act* and associated regulations, as well as other federal legislation, are in place to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of the national park. The following information provides a brief summary of some regulations. For a complete listing of park regulations, please contact Auyuittuq National Park staff.

- Registration and de-registration: You must register and attend the mandatory orientation before entering the national park and de-register upon exiting.
- Firearms: No person shall be in possession of a firearm in the national park (does not apply to Inuit beneficiaries carrying out traditional harvesting activities or persons authorized by the Superintendent).
- Pets and sled dogs: 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).
- Campfires are not permitted in the national park.
- In the national park, no person shall:
  - remove, deface, damage or destroy any flora, fauna or other natural objects;
  - hunt, disturb, hold in captivity or destroy any wildlife;
  - disturb or destroy a nest, lair or den;
  - touch, feed or entice wildlife; or
  - wilfully remove, deface, damage or destroy any cultural objects, features or artifacts.



**All Parks Canada places are 'no drone zones' for recreational use. Please leave your drone at home.**

## Conservation Practices

- Do not move any rocks from features that look even remotely like an archaeological site (e.g. tent rings, fox traps and food caches, Inuksuk or cairns).
- Do not build Inuksuk, cairns etc. Replace all rocks used at your camp to exactly where you found them before leaving the site.
- Where possible, choose routes on durable terrain such as gravel, rock outcrops or snow.
- Select campsites in durable locations where signs of your occupation will be minimized. This is especially important for base camps and large group camps.
- Dish and excess cooking water should be strained for food particles and poured into a shallow sump hole away from your campsite and 50 metres away from water sources.
- All garbage must be packed out. This includes, strained food particles, food waste, packaging, unwanted food, clothing, unused toilet paper etc.
- Use biodegradable soap when needed and minimize the use of soap when possible.

## Access Restrictions



Photo: Michael H. Davies

## Areas of Restricted Access

### North Shore of Maktak Fiord

The north shore of Maktak Fiord from the national park boundary to the head of the fiord is closed seasonally for non-Inuit when berry picking is occurring in the area each fall, generally from mid-August until mid-October.

### Maktak and Coronation Fiords

All marine areas of Maktak and Coronation Fiords that fall within Auyuittuq National Park are closed seasonally for non-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.

### 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 non-Inuit from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> 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 Auyuittuq National Park staff for current closure dates.**

## Motorized Access Restrictions

Motorized access in the national park is only permitted in Akshayuk Pass, North Pangnirtung Fiord (Panniqtuuruluk) 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). Visitors are only authorized to travel by motorized access as passengers of licenced guides.

## Cruise Ship Requirements

Like other park visitors, cruise ship passengers must participate in an orientation prior to entering the national park and the cruise ship operator must have a valid business licence to operate in the national park. Cruise ship visitors can also experience the national park through the visitor centres in Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq.



Photo: Parks Canada



Photo: Barb Brittain

# Trip Checklist



Photo: Michael Martin

## Before Booking Your Travel

- Read the Auyuittuq National Park Visitor Information Package (this publication).
- Read the *Safety in Polar Bear Country* brochure.
- Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff to:
  - Ask trip planning questions that you were not able to answer from your readings;
  - Discuss your planned route and possible side trips if going outside of the Akshayuk Pass; and
  - Schedule your mandatory orientation and registration session in either Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq. This process takes approximately two hours, so allow sufficient time before leaving the community for the national park for your orientation and remember flight and weather delays are common in the Arctic.
- Apply for any additional permits your party may require such as: air craft landing permits, cache or base camp permits, commercial film or photography permits, or for transporting a locked and unloaded fire arm permit.
- Contact local outfitters to ensure transport between the national park and community is available.
- Contact the Qikiqtani Inuit Association for permission if your route takes you on Inuit Owned Land.
- Ensure your skills, experience, knowledge and equipment are equal to the trip.
- Ensure your party follows all **Government of Nunavut Department of Health guidelines** while in the territory.

## Contact Information

Contact Auyuittuq National Park staff or visit our website:  
[www.parks.canada.ca/auyuittuq](http://www.parks.canada.ca/auyuittuq)

### Pangnirtung Office

**Phone:** (867) 473-2500  
**Email:** [nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca)

### Qikiqtarjuaq Office

**Phone:** (867) 927-8834  
**Email:** [nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:nunavut.info@pc.gc.ca)

## The Parks Canada registration and orientation time that I have booked is:

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

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

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



**Remember to de-register! Within 24 hours of leaving the national park, visit or phone the Parks Canada office in Pangnirtung or Qikiqtarjuaq to complete de-registration.**