



Ivvavik
National Park

Arctic Base Camp Trips

Ivvavik National Park



Parks
Canada

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Canada

Canada

You're in for an Arctic adventure of a lifetime. Climb aboard a Twin Otter at the Inuvik airport and buckle up. This venerable workhorse of the Canadian Arctic will take you on a spectacular flight over the Mackenzie River delta and between the ancient peaks of the British Mountains. The exhilarating beauty of the flight will leave you breathless, but when the tundra tires touch down at Sheep Creek Station and you step out onto the taiga, the peaceful feeling of Arctic Time washes over you. Welcome to base camp. Share our Inuvialuit culture in a landscape where connections to the land go back generations.

Explore on your own or let Parks Canada staff show you the way to Inspiration Point, Halfway to Heaven, Wolf Tors, Sheep Slot or Gordon's Food Cache. After the hike, kick back on the deck or head down to the river and toss a line in the water. Perhaps you'll be grilling a Dolly Varden for dinner. Bring and prepare your own food during a seven-day, self-catered trip or treat yourself to northern comfort food prepared by a local camp cook on a five-day catered trip. What is your #ArcticDream?

WHAT ARE THE HIKES LIKE?

Parks Canada staff will lead day hikes of varying lengths and difficulty. There are no marked trails and the terrain varies from fairly flat to hummocky, with some steep sections. Good hiking boots with strong ankle support are recommended for your comfort and safety. Hike an easy 3 km round trip to Sheep Slot. Inspiration Point is a moderate 5 km route while Halfway to Heaven is a strenuous 11 km return trek. Please consult the Sheep Creek Hiking Guide for more details. If you wish to hike on your own, we recommend hiking in groups; carrying satellite communication equipment, map, compass and GPS; and communicating your route plan to Parks Canada staff at the Sheep Creek base camp.

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR A TRIP?

Registration will be confirmed upon full payment of the trip. Bookings are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Parks Canada reserves the right to cancel a trip if minimum participant numbers are not met. The cancellation and refund policy is detailed below. For more information and to register, please e-mail Inuvik.info@pc.gc.ca or call 867-777-8800.

WHAT DOES THE PRICE INCLUDE?

ALL TRIPS INCLUDE:

- Transportation between the Parks Canada office in Inuvik and the airport
- Charter flights from Inuvik, NT to Ivvavik National Park, YT and return
- Use of Sheep Creek base camp facilities including washrooms and bear-safe storage
- Use of camping mattress
- Accommodation in prospector or mountaineering tents
- Guided hikes
- Inuvialuit cultural host
- Northern backcountry use fee

CATERED TRIPS ALSO INCLUDE:

Three meals a day, snacks and beverages prepared by the cook and served buffet style. Food is "Northern Canadian" – a reasonably diverse offer of nourishing and tasty food, intended to fuel your adventures and put a smile on your face. Local specialties and ingredients may be included when feasible. (Be forewarned: "Eskimo donuts" are addictive!) Typical meals include some options from each food group on the Canada Food Guide. Special diets and extreme allergies are difficult to accommodate in this remote setting, so visitors with these requirements are encouraged to book a self-catered trip.

HOW DO I GET TO INUVIK?

Inuvik lies about 200 km north of the Arctic Circle. Canadian North and First Air fly here from Edmonton and Yellowknife. Air North offers departures from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Whitehorse. Or drive the iconic Dempster Highway up to Inuvik, and stop to take your picture as you cross the Arctic Circle.

All visitors to Ivvavik National Park are required to attend a pre-trip safety orientation session the day prior to the flight into the park. This session includes a safety briefing and background information that will enhance your experience in the park. Trips depart from the Parks Canada office in Inuvik, and include shuttle transportation back to the Parks Canada office following the trip. We recommend that you arrive in Inuvik by mid-afternoon the day before your trip into the park.

Due to variable weather, flights in and out of the park can be delayed. Parks Canada recommends that travellers allow for two or more days between the end of your Arctic Base Camp trip and your flight out of Inuvik. If your trip returns as planned, you'll be glad to have some extra time to explore Inuvik.

WHAT DO I BRING?

The allowable payload on the charter aircraft limits the maximum number of participants per trip. Each person can bring a maximum of 35 lbs of luggage for a catered trip or 55 lbs for a self-catered trip. To help participants keep their luggage within the weight limit, accommodations and sleeping pads are provided at the base camp. Self-catered trips include use of cookware, utensils, stoves, fuel and a barbecue. If you wish, Parks Canada can put you in contact with other members of your self-catered trip for coordinating shared meals. Parks Canada provides bear safe storage at the base camp. A gear list is available for your information.

HOW IS THE WEATHER?

Summer temperatures in Ivavik average 14°C and usually range between 5 and 25°C. Extreme weather can bring snowfall and temperatures as low as -15°C even in summer, though this is rare. Bringing layers of clothing will allow you to add or shed layers to adjust for different temperatures. At night, many people prefer a -10 rated sleeping bag with a light sheet liner. In hot weather the liner is pleasant by itself, and if it cools off the bag can be zipped closed. Use your long underwear, sheet liner and sleeping bag together and you'll be comfortable even in extreme weather.

Insects are only active during the brief arctic summer, so they pack a lot of activity into their short lives. The numbers of mosquitos, blackflies and bulldogs (horseflies) seem to increase gradually during June, and decrease sharply with cooler nights in August. July is reliably buggy. Many people use insect repellent, bug jackets, or a combination of both. During bug season, breezes up on the ridges make hiking pleasant, and the base camp includes bug tents for enjoying the view without swatting.

WHAT'S THE BASE CAMP LIKE?

Sheep Creek is located in a valley at the confluence of the Firth River and Sheep Creek. It was established in the 1970s as a gold mining camp. There are several buildings including a cookhouse, a deck equipped with screen tents and picnic tables, bear safe storage, cooking stoves and equipment, two flush toilets and limited shower facilities. A solar panel system provides sufficient power to recharge cameras and run low-wattage devices.

HOW CAN I BUY A FISHING LICENCE?

You will need a Parks Canada fishing licence to fish in the park and they can be purchased from the Parks Canada office. An annual permit costs \$34.30 or a daily permit is \$9.80. Fishers with the appropriate license may fish for Dolly Varden or arctic grayling. Details about fishing regulations are provided with your licence. The conservation limits set for Ivavik allow catch and possession of 3 fish, of which 1 can be a Dolly Varden. We encourage fishers to record their catch of Dolly Varden on our fishery research form. Your catch should then be cleaned on the riverbank and entrails deposited in the Firth River. If you wish to cook your catch on the BBQ grill, please ask Parks Canada staff or the cook on catered trips.

HOW CAN I STAY SAFE IN A BACKCOUNTRY SETTING?

- A bear safety briefing will be provided during your pre-trip orientation and at Sheep Creek.
- Work with Parks Canada staff and other guests to eliminate smells that would attract the interest of bears, and ensure that bears are never able to receive a food reward from the base camp or any visitor activities. Parks Canada staff and visitors may carry bear deterrents including pepper spray and bear bangers. Designated Parks Canada staff are trained to use firearms for wildlife conflict management, should it ever be necessary.
- We strongly recommend hiking and travelling with the group. If you decide to undertake activities outside of the program during your stay, please communicate your plans to a Parks Canada staff on site before leaving the base camp. They are experienced wilderness travellers and can provide advice to help you prepare for your excursion. Make sure you are well prepared to hike and travel in the wilderness; and be self sufficient during any medical or weather emergency.
- Weather conditions can change quickly. Always bring extra warm clothing and food.
- Navigation and route finding is generally easy, but orientation in the vast landscape can be difficult. If you plan to hike on your own, pack a map, compass and GPS unit and make sure you know how to use them. Maps of the Sheep Creek area and GPS waypoints for routes are available from Parks Canada.
- Be bear aware. Consult with Parks Canada staff and refer to the Parks Canada brochure "Safety in Grizzly and Black Bear Country" for minimizing risk while visiting the park. Always travel in groups and follow best practices for staying safe in bear habitat.
- Although there have not been any reported human cases of giardiasis in Ivavik, Giardia microbes are present in the park – visitors are advised to filter, treat or boil all drinking water.
- Small creek crossings are a common part of any hiking trip and should be done with caution and appropriate footwear.
- The Firth River is very cold and has significant rapids. Exercise caution near the riverbank. Do not attempt to cross the Firth River.
- Ivavik NP is a mountain wilderness. Cliffs, slopes, unstable terrain and highly variable weather and surface water conditions can present significant hazards in some areas.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL MY TRIP?

The following cancellation policies apply when booking a backcountry trip. Please ensure that you have read and understand the conditions of these trips. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

TRAVELLER CANCELLATIONS

If a reservation is cancelled by the traveller, the following policy and guidelines apply:

More than 90 days prior to departure date = Full refund

From 90 to 14 days prior to departure date = 50% refund

Fewer than 14 days prior to departure date = No refund

PARKS CANADA CANCELLATIONS

Weather delays and flight cancellations are possible when travelling in the Arctic. Although every effort will be made to reschedule should these situations arise, the following policy applies:

If a flight is delayed due to weather or other circumstances, the trip will be placed on standby, travellers notified, and the next available flight will be used. Trips will not be extended if days are missed, however the backcountry use fee will be reduced accordingly.

Trips will be cancelled and refunds issued if the group has not been able to enter the park by 36 hours prior to noon of the trip's end date.

When a group is prevented from leaving Ivvavik because of flight delays, they will not be charged additional backcountry use fees for additional days in the park. If the Ivvavik-to-Inuvik flight is delayed to within 36 hours of noon on the planned start date of the next scheduled trip, the group in Ivvavik may be required to wait for the flight associated with the next scheduled trip to depart.

This "36 hour policy" is intended to manage some of the difficulty of weather delays by ensuring all participants experience a minimum of one full day in the park between travel days, while avoiding empty charter flight legs that would increase costs to all participants. Multiple-day weather delays are very rare in June and July, but we need to ensure appropriate expectations for all visitors in order to share charter flights and manage trip costs.

When flights are delayed, Parks Canada staff will keep visitors informed about the trip status. When flight delays prevent visitors from leaving the park as planned, Parks Canada staff will provide assistance, including access to communication equipment when possible, to enable visitors to contact airlines and modify their flight bookings as needed. However, Parks Canada assumes no responsibility or liability for any fees or losses associated with flight delays.

I HAVE A QUESTION THAT YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED

We want to make sure we've answered all your questions. Please e-mail us at Inuvik.info@pc.gc.ca or phone 867-777-8800 if there's any other information you need.