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**INUKPAK**  
OUTFITTING

# AKSHAYUK PASS

## HIKING EXPEDITION

NUNAVUT  CANADA

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTIVE & DAY-BY-DAY

#### LEVEL

4

#### DAYS

14

#### NIGHTS

2

HOTEL

11

CAMPING

Majestic towers, carved in bedrock by glaciers, shooting straight for the sun: such scenery is what Auyuittuq National Park has to offer. It is, without a doubt, one of the most awe-inspiring places on Earth. Set in the middle of the Penny Ice Cap, bisected from North to South by the Akshayuk pass, an immense valley opens inland. A trek surrounded by austere looking, barren plateaus, that will take you to two of the park's most spectacular lookouts, Thor Peak and Mount Asgard.

On your way, you will have an opportunity to see impressive rock formations dating back to the last ice age, moraines, boulder fields, and much more. During this hike, you will tread over terrain ranging from arid gravel

to damp, fertile tundra, with sharp peaks and a huge glacier in the backdrop. So many images that will remain with you forever.

Leaving Qikiqtarjuaq, we will wind our way through a maze of islands and icebergs for three hours and get dropped off at the park's northern entrance. Then, 11 days of hiking will take you over 100 km (62 mi) of breathtaking scenery. Throughout the trek, you will be mesmerized by the presence of glaciers, landscapes and mountains each more impressive than the last. Our goal will be to reach the Southern entrance of the Park, where we will be a mere 30 km (19 mi) boat from Pangnirtung, our destination.

### THE HIKING TRIP

To hike the Akshayuk Pass, you will need to be able to hike with a 20-29 kg (45-65 lb) backpack for a distance of 8 km

to 15 km (5 to 9 mi) per day (6 to 8 hours a day). The trail is not technical and does not present an altitude challenge; however, at times you will have to cross glacier-fed rivers, with water up to your knees. Your days will be spent in the great outdoors, while nights will be spent in a tent. You should be prepared to live outside for the entire trip and have camping experience.

### KEKERTEN ISLAND AND PANGNIRTUNG

After leaving Auyuittuq Park, a Panniqturmiutag guide (Pangnirtung resident) will take you on a boat ride to the remarkable Kekerten Island, where you can see the remnants of a whaling station that would have been at its busiest in the 1870s. To this day, the artifacts on Kekerten Island are carefully preserved. This guided tour will take you through a part of history that is kept alive by a few elders in the village. "Pang" for the intimate, is a small northern community with a rich history and a booming art and crafts scene. Pangnirtung, this historic community, which serves as a gateway to the park, will fascinate you.





## DAY-BY-DAY:

### DAY 1



- **Flight from home to Iqaluit, NU** (not included)
- **Transfer from the airport to your accommodation** (by Inukpak Outfitting staff)
- **Group meeting** (preparation of equipment and briefing in the afternoon)
- **Night at your accommodation in Iqaluit**

Day one: the beginning of a great adventure! Upon your arrival in the Arctic Capital, one of your guides will meet you at the Iqaluit airport. From the airport, we will stop at your full-service hotel (B&B option) to check in, drop off your luggage and get a chance to grab a light snack at the coffee shop.

After you settle in, time to attend a group meeting at the Inukpak Outfitting office. You'll meet for the first time your guides! (Inukpak Outfitting has all of their expeditions led by one of the owners: Martine or Louis-Philip and when group size requires it, co-led by a second guide.) All participants will have a chance to exchange about their different experiences, their expectations and motivation for choosing that trip. Plan and itinerary will be discussed, questions about gear answered and all other aspects of the trip overview.

Back at your hotel for a last-minute repacking, we highly suggest that you visit one of our great local restaurants and ask if arctic char or caribou is on the menu.

### DAY 2



- **Transfer from your accommodation to the airport**
- **Flight from Iqaluit, NU. to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU.**
- **Registration at Parks Canada office**
- **Boat charter to the Park**
- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

The Inukpak Outfitting van is waiting for you outside the lobby of your hotel where you are joined by your co-hikers for a quick ride to the airport. A short 60 min flight to Pangnirtung followed by a stunning 30 min flight to Qikiqtarjuaq will give you a glimpse of what the mountain surrounding Auyuittuq National Park has to offer.

As soon as we touch ground, your group will take the direction of the Parks Canada office. Staff from Parks Canada is waiting for us, it is mandatory to go through a safety training given by one of the experience park wardens. As you watch the "Polar bear Safety" video, your guide will cover the last few details of the group registration, gather the last few local items (ex: camping fuel).

Meet Billy, our long-time Qikiqtarjuarmiutaq friend (Qikiqtarjuaq resident)! Feel free to ask him questions, he always has amazing stories. The boat ride (approx. 80km (50 mi) – 3 hours long) will take us to North Pang Emergency Cabin, the Northern entrance of Auyuittuq National Park.

As soon as we touch ground, we'll get into hiking mode, our goal is to cover few kilometers before setting camp.



## DAY 3



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Wake up in the most awe-inspiring place, this is how begins your first real morning of the trip. Your guide is already up, coffee is ready, sit down and enjoy! Mosquitoes might also be up, your guide's back up plan; having breakfast under the rain/bug shelter, rest assured as soon as the wind will pick up, and it will, the bugs will be brushed off. Repacking camps for the first time, your guide will be there to instruct you about the best, most efficient way of doing it.

Today will be our first river crossing; sitting on your backpack, boots off, sandals on will be your new river crossing mode. Remember, your guide has crossed river like these one hundred times (if not more), they will give you a safety briefing, advising you on the best group strategies to cross safely. I agree, the first one is always the coldest!

Your goal for today is to reach the base of "Naujat Glacier". It is located on the opposite side of the river, an immense gravel moraine left by the glacier millions of year ago.

## DAY 4



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Morning rituals...wake up, coffee, breakfast and pack gear.

The widest part of the valley takes us through a wide variety of different terrains, sandy beaches, green open fields with splashes of colorful flowers and the most memorable: the "Soft and Bouncy" tundra. As much as you may like the feeling at first, it will quickly become a challenge over distance.

Slow and steady progression is our motto! Lunch is planned around the Owl River Emergency Cabin. Each cabin has its logbook: take few minutes to read comments on adventure written by previous hikers.

Flat ground, availability of large rocks (to anchor our tent against the strong wind), nearby water source and natural wind shelter are all the essentials your guide is looking for while choosing the perfect spot to camp for the night. Backpacks are dropped on the ground, take a few minutes to resupply your body with snacks and the last step: set camp for the night.

## DAY 5



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

According to your guide, today's morning should be fast moving. The section of trail ahead is known to be a hard-packed beach with only few river crossings. Our group will take advantage of it and try to hike up a good section of the trail. June Valley Emergency Cabin is our goal for lunch.

Just before setting camp, there are two big rivers to cross. The rivers we crossed over the last few days were only training ground. Don't be surprized to see your guide scouting first, a group crossing might be the only option. You'll be surprized about how much stronger we are as a group!



## AKSHAYUK PASS, HIKING EXPEDITION



Once those rivers are behind us, we'll set camp. Take some time to wash and dry some of your gear. As usual, a warm soup will be served first, and will be followed by a great meal to replenish our energy for the next day.

### DAY 6



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

As we progress today, a mythic peak will appear! If the sky is clear, we will start seeing Asgard, a peak made famous by an appearance in a James Bond movie!

Our goal for today is to reach Glacier Lake Emergency Cabin (or get as close as possible). The river has now widened, as water from Glacier Lake adds to the heavy flow from the Rundle Glacier to form the Owl River. Your guide's plan is to set camp early in the afternoon; a little rest will give you the strength for tomorrow.

### DAY 7



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Expect your guide to wake you up early, very early! Our goal is to start hiking before the water flow increase with the melt of the glacier. We aim to finish our river crossing before 8 am.

The crossing of the Owl River is one the most challenging river crossing of the entire park, because of high flow, water temperature, ice chunks racing downstream and the distance between banks. We expect a "all hands-on deck" approach; as a group, we are able to achieve great things. Your guide will most likely your drop his pack and wade in to scout the best location to cross; a small team will be tasked to be his safety net, ready to throw a floating line in case of an unplanned swim. Keep an eye on him at all times and be ready to act fast.

With your backpack belt unbuckled for safety, it's time to get wet: the strongest member of your team gets to the front of the line, everyone else falls in behind, with the smallest in the middle and a guide at the back to spot you. Baby steps into the frigid water; the person in front of you offer acts as a barrier as you act as one for the person behind you, and we each hold each other's balance. This will do the trick!

Once across the river, you will spend most of you day on one of the largest moraines the park. The Highway and Norman glaciers have moved an impressive amount of rock, some of them are the size of a car. With azure blue lakes and ridges with awe-inspiring views, this is in our opinion one of the toughest but most rewarding days of the trip. The camp will be set on the edge of Glacier Lake, an amazing beach with a view on Asgard and Thor Peaks.

### DAY 8



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

The entire day will be spent at the base of three of the largest Glacier: Norman, Quvneq and Turner. As much as glaciers rhyme with spectacular views, they also mean river crossing. Today will be a long day, with boots coming on and off often.

## AKSHAYUK PASS, HIKING EXPEDITION



The last moraine has a surprise of its own: boulders the size of small cars presents a maze of trails and potential ways through it. At its base, a small beach tucked in between giant rocks will offer just enough protection for a well-deserved night.

### DAY 9



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Summit Lake, a 10 km (6.2mi) long lake will offer us mind blowing views over numbers of glaciers; thankfully, half of them are located on the opposite side of the lake and therefore we won't have to cross their run out rivers.

Summit Lake Emergency Cabin is our target for the night's camp. The area is known for its fierce wind, and decades of hikers have been stacking rocks to form impressive wind walls to protect the tents. From now on, and until the end of the park, expect wind that to race up to 100km/h (62 mi/h).

### DAY 10



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Once again, a technical river crossing that will require that we set our departure time early in the morning. Half Hour Creek got its name from a simple fact, you only have a few hours in the day to cross it, when its water level is low enough.

Once this creek behind us we can expect easy downhill hike on stable terrain. Only one other crossing a few km before reaching our camp at Thor Peak. From now on, our path will follow the Weasel River.

### DAY 11



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Take some time this morning to observe Thor Peak, the second tallest rock face on earth – a little over a kilometer and a half of straight rock face. Climbers from around the world travel here to climb it. Once again, photos are a must!

Similarly to the previous day, our group should be able to cover a great distance today. Our biggest challenge will be the Windy Lake moraine, as the inclined sandy trail will be hard on the calves. You'll feel like you're losing ground with every step as the sand runs under your boots. Once at the top of the sandy and rocky dune try to spot the remaining pieces of the suspended bridge that got taken out by erosion and a massive river flood in 2008.

Camp will be set at the base of the moraine; out in the distance you should be able to see Windy Lake Emergency Cabin, on the opposite shore of the Weasel River.



## DAY 12



B L S D

- **Hiking**
- **Night in the wild** (camping)

Soon you will enter the very select group of people that can brag about having crossed the “Arctic Circle” by foot. The Arctic Circle marks the latitude where you have at least one full day of darkness during winter and its sunny counterpart during summer.

Look up the rock wall to your right, “Schwartzbach Fall” and its ledge of granite. The waterfall starts with an impressive, approximately 200m (0.12mi) tall vertical drop followed by a myriad of smaller drops, mostly sliding down along steep cliffs. The horizontal distance of the falls is approximately 700 m (0.43mi).

Our aim for the day is Ulu Peak Emergency Cabin, this is our last camp in Auyuittuq National Park.

## DAY 13



B L S D

- **Boat charter to visit Kekerten Island and Pangnirtung, NU.**
- **Night in accommodation in Pangnirtung**

Meet Peter! Our long-term Panniqturmiutaq friend (Pangnirtung resident) and owner of Peter’s Expediting & Outfitting Services. Peter was a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut from 1999 to 2008, he personally participated to the formation of Nunavut, so much more than just a boat captain!

Make sure to keep your warm clothing handy as the boat ride can sometimes be cold. Peter is taking us to Kekerten Island Territorial Park for a day visit. There, you can see the remaining of an old whaling station that was operational and peaking in the 1870s. Keep an eye on the water, up to this day Bowhead whales are still in the region.

Once back in town, we will take the direction of the Auyuittuq Lodge, our accommodation for the night, en route, we do a quick stop at the Park Canada office for the group de-registration.

Accommodation in the Arctic communities can be different from what we are used to in North America. Most hotels in communities have shared rooms (couples & same gender), since we will be in Pangnirtung during the high season, get your mind set to meet a new sleeping buddy or sharing one more night with your tent partner!

## DAY 14



OR



B

- **Free morning in Pangnirtung**
- **Transfer to the airport**
- **Flight\* Pangnirtung, NU to Iqaluit, NU**  
\*May be possible to connect flight to your home destination
- **Transfer from the airport to your accommodation in Iqaluit if you decide to leave the next day**
- **Night at your accommodation (hotel or B&B option), in Iqaluit if you decide to leave the next day** (not included)

Our last few hours in Pangnirtung will be spent visiting the impressive tapestry and print making shop at the Uqurmiut Centre. Your eyes can feast on internationally recognized local art and, if you were to fall in love with a piece, the centre’s staff will help you pack it to make it travel proof. This is also the place to buy the famous “Pang Hat”.

## AKSHAYUK PASS, HIKING EXPEDITION



You have a few options for your flight back home: the flight from Pangnirtung to Iqaluit may connect with your flight back to your home destination. For those who decide to stay in Iqaluit for an extra night, you will be invited to share dinner with the group. It is a great chance to share photos, remember great stories and exchange contacts.

**\* Please note that this is a suggested itinerary and schedule, depending on good weather and flight availability**

### PROGRAM DETAILS:

Due to potential reasons out of our control, please note that prices, dates and inclusions/exclusions may vary without notice. Website information always prevail.

#### Price:

#### Program - Akshayuk Pass, Hiking Expedition

Please refer to the [Program's section](#) of our website.

#### Dates:

Please refer to the [Program's section](#) of our website.

**Day 1:** Participants need to be in Iqaluit on or before Day One at 1500 to attend the group / pre-expedition mandatory meeting.

**Day 14:** It may be possible to connect flight directly from Pangnirtung (short layover in Iqaluit) to your home destination on the last day.

### PROGRAM INCLUSIONS:

#### Included:

- Mandatory group flights from Iqaluit, NU. to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU – return from Pangnirtung, NU to Iqaluit, NU.
- Full-service hotel accommodation in Iqaluit
  - B&B option
  - double occupancy
  - day #1
- Full-service hotel accommodation in Pangnirtung
  - B&B option
  - double occupancy
  - day #13

- Guided Expedition for the duration of the trip
  - bilingual guide (English / French)
- Meals, trail snacks and hot drinks while in Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq and expedition
- Specialized equipment, safety and communication gear
- Ground transportation to/from Iqaluit airport. Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq are by foot
- Boat charters to/from, Pangnirtung, Auyuittuq National Park and Kekerten
- Admission fees to the parks

#### Not included:

- Airfare from home to Iqaluit, NU (return)
- Accommodation in Iqaluit day #14
- Camping, clothing and personal equipment (hiking gear, tent\*\*, sleeping bag\*\*, mattress\*\*, personal clothing, personal hygiene kit, medication)
- Meals in Iqaluit
- Personal travel insurance (mandatory)
- Bad weather / out of our control, cancellation related fees
- Gratuities

\*\* Can be rented at no additional cost. Please notify 30 days in advance.

#### Payment:

Please refer to the [Terms & Conditions](#) section of our website.

#### Cancellation:

Please refer to the [Terms & Conditions](#) section of our website.

#### Group:

Min. 6 / Max. 8 participants

## AKSHAYUK PASS, HIKING EXPEDITION



### Ratio:

2 guides – 8 participants

### Custom Add-Ons:

Inukpak Outfitting is dedicated to ensuring your Nunavut trip exceeds expectations. Please contact us to inquire about our flights at preferential rates between home and Iqaluit, additional nights, customizations add-ons and/or activities to this program.

### Difficulty level:

To hike the Akshayuk Pass, you will need to be able to hike with a 20-29 kg (45-65 lb) backpack for a distance of 8 to 15 km (5 to 9 mi) per day (6 to 8 hours a day) on an uneven terrain. The trail is not technical and does not present an altitude challenge; however, at times you will have to cross glacier-fed rivers, with water up to your knees.

Your days will be spent in the great outdoors while nights will be spent in a tent. You should be prepared to live outside for the entire expedition and have camping experience.

### Flights:

Mandatory group flights from Iqaluit, NU. to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU – return from Pangnirtung, NU to Iqaluit, NU. are included.

Airfare from home to Iqaluit, NU (return) is NOT included.

\* Inukpak Outfitting has a great working relationship with the airline company that serves the Arctic. If you would like to take advantage of our preferential rates between home and Iqaluit, it will be a pleasure for us to help you book your flights at that reduced rate.

### Accommodation:

Full-service hotel accommodation (or B&B option) in Iqaluit (double occupancy) is included in the price. Convenient in-town restaurant options range from take-out, to pub fare, to fine dining. Hotel accommodation in Pangnirtung (double occupancy) includes meals.

During the expedition part of the trip, nights will be spent in camping. Participants will share tents with the person of their choice when possible or will be partnering with a person of same gender.

### Traveling in Nunavut:

Traveling in Nunavut can be one of your lifetime adventures. Scenery, people and wildlife are only few of a million things giving such a unique taste to the Canadian arctic. But traveling in Nunavut, also mean, traveling following permitting weather, and so, bad weather cancellations are not impossible. Also, "out of our control" situation can happen even with the best preparation. Replacement pieces for aircrafts and specialised workers to fix engines often need to be brought from South and are not always available the next morning.

To enjoy your next experience up North it is important to be ready to face those situations and to be ready to play with your schedule. Following those comments, we highly recommend that everybody traveling to the Arctic take few days off at the end of their trip to accommodate delay, with a smile.

**B** = Breakfast   **L** = Lunch   **S** = Snack   **D** = Dinner   **N/A** = Not Applicable

**FOR MORE DETAILS,  
CONTACT US AT:**



**Inukpak Outfitting**

Louis-Philip Pothier

President / Head Guide / Instructor

Phone: (867) 222-6489

Email: [Info@InukpakOutfitting.ca](mailto:Info@InukpakOutfitting.ca)

Web site: [www.InukpakOutfitting.ca](http://www.InukpakOutfitting.ca)

3310 Niaqunngusariaq Street - P.O. Box 11392 - Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada - X0A 1H0