

- * air -10°C
- * water -3°C
- * adventure 110%



NORTHERN-EXPLORERS.COM
POLAR EXPEDITION

Greenland Winter Adventure



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Not only for divers Greenland always has been a white spot on the map. It is the epitome of the Arctic and has been playground for explorers and pioneers during the last centuries. And diving here actually means to explore new territory, even today, because very few people ever have set eyes on the Arctic underwater world.

For many years we have visited the East Greenlandic village Tasiilaq regularly to start our diving expeditions from here. Most tours we do during the summer months. But when the winter is slowly approaching its end in April and May divers can experience incredible underwater visibilities and explore magical ice worlds.

In April 2015, we were visiting the area with two small groups and did a wide range of very different dives within two weeks, both under ice, as well as in open water on icebergs. Flexibility is important because every day it is needed to adapt to the current weather and ice conditions. And perhaps here climate changes are quite obvious. The icy worlds are changing faster and faster.

With dogsled and snow scooters we move the gear across the ice to reach the dive sites. For making a hole into the ice we use the typical "all tools" of the Inuit hunters - sturdy wooden rods with set steel tips. Quickly the holes are thus made in appropriate size in the sea ice. Secured with lines teams of two divers start now to discover the ice from below. Often it is relatively dark because of the snow cover on the ice.

But it is precisely this light that has its own magic. Icebergs are trapped in the ice and form fascinating structures. Underwater photographers will find countless motifs. However, the water temperature is usually -1 to -3°C and, thus, the dive time is limited. Also, with these extreme water temperatures there is always a certain danger of icing of regulators. The second stage can freeze caused by the moisture in exhaled air. A problem which unfortunately is impossible to avoid completely.



But even the sheer remoteness of the region requires careful planning and execution of dives.

Only a handful of divers visit Greenland every year and of these few trips it is the slightest part of tours which offers divers to visit the Arctic during the winter months. But it is right now that it is the time for extraordinary dives, because the visibility can reach up to 70 meters at this time of year.

Surprisingly, some the ice is broken off the port of Tasiilaq in April, already. The clever Inuit have moved some of their smaller motorboats on the ice a few hundred meters to the edge and anchored them here. We manage to find a hunter who offers us his boat and his services as skipper at a fair price. So we get some unexpected at icebergs in open water. Since the boat is quite small, we use it only for transport and get ourself onto the ice to get on the diving equipment and dive from here.

In the evening, we can feel that the extreme water temperatures are debilitating. But there's no way around to keep a look at the sky to see if there is some Northern Light, maybe. The region is one of the best places in the world to experience the Northern Lights because often it extends just above this latitude. In the vicinity of the accommodation there are excellent places for observing and to photograph the Aurora.

On the next days we take a trip to a fjord. It is approximately three hour by the dog sled to a small hunters hut, where we will stay. On the fjord hundreds or even thousands of icebergs are trapped in the sea ice. It is not only the diving which is physically demanding. When it goes uphill the dogs can not manage to pull all the heavy gear and the sled and everyone must jump off the sled and help. So it is not difficult to find sleep in the spartan accommodation that night.

Under the ice, the divers will explore
a magical icy world. Diving
here is an unforgettable
experience.





The sled dogs stay outside the hut and find them sheltered places for the night. In the morning they are often covered with snow. But tonight the sky is clear and again, we can see the colorful magic in the sky when the aurora starts to dance. But at some point we must force ourselves to go to bed because we know to expect an eventful day tomorrow - with unforgettable dives at the end of the world.



For underwater photographers Greenland is a very worthwhile destination. The photo subjects are varied. Also there are only few photographers who have similar pictures in their portfolio.





The Greenlanders live and survive for thousands of years in the icy wilderness. They are hospitable and open-minded and support us on all expeditions.





The fantastic Arctic scenery continues below the surface. Here under the ice there are structures which are amazing art of nature.



