

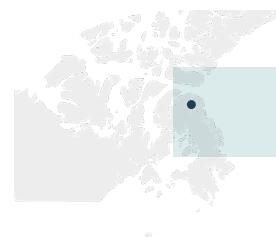


Photo: Scott Forsyth, Adventure Canada

Grise Fiord

The most northern community in mainland North America

76°25'N 82°53'W



The Inuktitut name for our community is Ausuittuq, which means “place that never thaws”.

General Description

In 1953 and 1955 our families were transported by the Canadian Royal Military Police. We came from Inukjuak in northern Quebec and from Pond Inlet on the northern tip of Baffin Island, arriving here long after the Tuniit and Thule peoples, who had camps in the area between five hundred and two thousand years ago.

Grise Fiord is 2000 km north of Inukjuak, where most of our families came from, and the climate is far more severe, with nearly all the flora and fauna being different. Survival was difficult at first, but over the years we have adapted to live and hunt on these rocky shores.

Today we refer to ourselves as Aujuitturmiut and this stark, beautiful land is our home. Life on the southern edge of Ellesmere Island may be otherworldly to some visitors, but for us it is the every-day backdrop to our every-day lives.

Key Items of Interest

- Grise Fiord means ‘Pig Inlet’ in Norwegian, a reference to the walrus that the Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup saw when he sailed here in 1899 on board the Fram.
- The first year-round settlement in the area was established at Craig Harbour where the RCMP detachment was constructed in 1922, 55 km east of present day Grise Fiord.
- In 1961 a school was established in the present-day location of the community because it was the only area with suitable land for further expansion. All of the nearby families moved to the community in order to be close to the school.
- Grise Fiord is the most northern community in North America at 1160 Kilometers north of the Arctic Circle.
- The average yearly temperature is -16.5 °C and we receive 24-hour sunlight from April 22nd to August 20th.
- Our population fluctuates between 115 – 130 people, depending on the season.



Guidelines

1. We are proud of our heritage. Welcome to the most Northern Community in Canada and to our home – please understand that life is very different up here from what you're probably used to. Welcome this wonderful opportunity to learn.
2. If you see the remains of polar bears, walrus, seals, caribou or muskox on our beach or near our homes, please don't be offended. We depend on these animals for our livelihood – just like some of you depend on factory farmed animals for yours.
3. We invite you to capture memories of our community but please ask us before you take photographs and/or videos of us or our children. If you plan to use the footage you take for non-personal reasons, please explain to us what the footage will be used for. Widely distributing such media without our knowledge may make us uncomfortable. Please respect our privacy.
4. We are proud of our community and love to share our experiences living here, but please don't ask sensitive and personal questions. Instead, ask us about our passions and our hobbies and about how we like to spend our time.
5. We live in modern houses and use modern amenities. We watch satellite TV, browse the internet and send messages on our iphones. While we retain aspects of our traditional diet and lifestyle, we're just as modern as you are.
6. We understand that you're excited to share your journey with family members and friends, but please be aware that there is no public wifi in the community.
7. The exchange for USD to CAD at our community store is 1 to 1. Please try to pay in CAD if you can, if not, we'll accept USD at the same rate. This is the rate we use when we exchange USD for CAD. We have an ATM at our general store and at our corner store. These stores are open during limited hours.
8. Inuit sled dogs are working dogs. Please don't pet them, feed them or approach them unless you have permission from the owner. It is okay to observe them at a respectable distance. Please be aware that sled dogs are very vocal – they are not in distress!
9. We live in houses that don't have attics or a basement. We store a lot of our items, including animal bones, skins and other miscellaneous items in and around small sheds on the beach. Please be mindful that this is our personal property and items that seem to be just lying around should not be picked up and taken away.
10. Tusks or other bones are often left around the community and are the property of community members. Please allow us to trust you as we trust each other not to take our personal items.
11. Please remember that everything in our garbage dump came from the south. We don't have a recycling program up here, even though we would like one, and we can't hide our garbage away from our community. We can't cover it up and we can't ship it down south, so there it stays. We jokingly refer to it as our 'Canadian Tire'.
12. If you're part of a group that is arriving in the early morning, please be aware that we are a small community and during August and September many of us are spending our time at our camps on the land. Sometimes we may not have enough tour guides or performers available, but we always do the best we can.
13. The river in the middle of town may look shallow, but please don't try to cross it by hopping over the stones. The water changes elevation quickly and it is extremely cold and fast-flowing.
14. Please don't wander off on your own – wild animals often come close to town, including polar bears and muskox.
15. Please respect our home and our way of life. We're welcoming you as guests into our community just as you would welcome us into yours.



Photo: Xander, Wikimedia Commons

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Photo: Scott Forsyth, Adventure Canada

During August and September many of us are spending our time at our camps on the land, outside the settlement.



Points of Interest

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Hamlet Office | 9. Church |
| 2. Firehall | 10. RCMP |
| 3. Hunters and Trappers Association | 11. Wildlife Office |
| 4. Health Centre | 12. Community Freezer |
| 5. Ummimak School | 13. Grise Fiord Housing Association |
| 6. Community Hall / Gym | 14. Power Plant |
| 7. Grise Fiord Arctic Co-op | 15. Cemetary |
| 8. Co-op Hote | 16. Airport Terminal |



Photo: Roy Wood, NPS Photo

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