



Foto: Holger Bergold

# INUVIK & TUKTOYAKTUK

THREE SPECTACULAR DAYS IN CANADA'S WESTERN ARCTIC

Inuvik - heart of the Mackenzie Delta.

Tuktoyaktuk - the legendary community on the Arctic Ocean.

Together they offer a remarkable taste of life in Canada's far north—a land of pingos, tundra, mighty rivers and midnight sun. The Mackenzie Delta stretches out like a living mosaic of waterways and sky, shaped by the rhythms of nature and the strength of the communities who call it home.

Welcome to a corner of the world unlike any other. If you have only three days to explore this unique region of the Northwest Territories, here is the ultimate plan:

## Day 1 - Discovering Inuvik

Begin your Arctic journey at the **Western Arctic Regional Visitor Centre**. The museum-quality exhibits offer a deep look into local culture, wildlife, and the history of the western Arctic. Friendly staff share maps, stories and insider travel tips to help you make the most of your stay.

Just down Mackenzie Road rises one of the North's most iconic landmarks—the **Igloo Church**. Since 1960, its bright dome has welcomed travellers and photographers alike. Step inside to see artwork by Inuvialuit artist Mona Thrasher and learn how this remarkable building came to be.

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Foto: Bill Braden

Continue along Inuvik's main street, where you'll find small shops selling **Gwich'in and Inuvialuit arts and crafts**, from crescent-shaped ulu knives to hand-beaded mittens and traditional parkas trimmed with fur. Each piece carries a story of the North.

Outside town, local trails invite you to stretch your legs. Wander the paths around **Boot Lake**, or climb the lookout tower in **Jak Territorial Park** for sweeping views across the Mackenzie Delta—one of the largest river deltas in North America.

Golfers can tee off at the **Road's End Golf Course**, where vivid green fairways stand out against the northern landscape—one of the most unexpected places to play a round this far north.



Foto: Colin Field

If your trip falls between mid- and late July, you're in for a treat. The **Great Northern Arts Festival** transforms Inuvik into a vibrant hub of creativity, drawing artists from across the circumpolar world. Exhibits, performances and workshops fill the town with colour and energy.

End your day beneath the glowing light of the **midnight sun**. From late May to late July, the sun simply doesn't set—57 days of endless northern light. There's nothing quite like watching the horizon shimmer under a sun that refuses to go down.



Foto: Colin Field

## Day 2 – Adventure in the Mackenzie Delta Region

Today is all about exploring the land around Inuvik—and the options are spectacular.

**Option 1: Boat Tour Through the Mackenzie Delta**  
Journey by boat through a maze of river channels as your guide shares stories from a time when local families travelled these waters as nomads. Watch for rich birdlife, wildlife along the banks, and traditional hunting and fishing camps. It's a peaceful, powerful way to experience the Delta's immensity.



Foto: Terry Parker

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### Option 2: Drive the Legendary Dempster Hwy

Follow the Dempster Highway north to the Arctic Circle. This remote road winds through Gwich'in communities, crosses the wide Peel and Mackenzie Rivers, and climbs into the rugged Richardson Mountains—home to eagles, wolves, moose and grizzly bears. The scenery changes moment by moment.



Foto: Anne Kokko

### Option 3: Fly to Historic Herschel Island

Take to the air for a flightseeing tour to Herschel Island, off the Arctic coast. Here you may spot seals, whales and rare birds as you explore the island's preserved buildings from the old whaling era. Learn about Inuvialuit culture and, with luck, witness ongoing archaeological work that reveals Arctic history layer by layer.

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Foto: Ole Helmhausen

## Day 3 – Onward to Tuktoyaktuk & the Arctic Ocean

Today, the Arctic Ocean calls. Reach **Tuktoyaktuk** either by air or via the **Inuvik–Tuktoyaktuk Highway**—a 138-kilometre engineering marvel built across permafrost-rich tundra. Opened in 2017, the road winds through rolling tundra, offering chances to pick berries and watch for wildlife along the way.

Keep your eyes open—this region is full of surprises. You may spot eagles riding the thermals, moose grazing along riverbanks, or even a distant bear crossing the tundra. The vastness of the Delta means wildlife can appear at any moment, often when you least expect it.

Tuktoyaktuk—known as “Tuk”—is a close-knit Inuvialuit community of about 900 people on the shores of Kugmallit Bay. A guided tour brings its history to life.

Don’t miss the **Canadian Pingo Landmark**, home to the striking frozen mounds that dot the tundra. The tallest, **Ibyuk Pingo**, rises the height of a 15-storey building—one of the largest pingos in the world. Other highlights include the Cold War-era **DEW Line site**, the historic schooner **Lady of Lourdes**, and a visit to a **traditional sod house**, offering insight into how families lived here generations ago.

Before you leave, take part in a rite of passage: dip a toe—or, for the brave, your whole body—into the Arctic Ocean. Capture a photo for proof. Without it, the North will never believe you.



Foto: Colin Field

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