

# Nunavut

## Fast Facts:

- **Motto:** "Nunavut, our strength"
- **Population:** 39,407
- **Geographic size:** 1,994,000km<sup>2</sup>
- **Capital city:** Iqaluit
- **Largest city:** Iqaluit
- **Territorial animal:** Canadian Inuit dog
- **Territorial flower:** Purple saxifrage
- **Territorial tree:** n/a



## Location:

Nunavut is located in the northernmost part of Canada and takes up most of Canada's Arctic. It includes the islands in Hudson Bay, James Bay and Ungava Bay. Nunavut is the newest territory in Canada. It was recognized as its own separate territory on April 1st, 1999. Before this time, it was part of the Northwest Territories.

## Flag:

Nunavut's flag was proclaimed in 1999 along with the territory. The inukshuk in the middle of the flag is a traditional Inuit land marker. The little star in the top right corner represents the North Star, as well as the leadership of Inuit Elders. The flag's colours, gold and white, symbolize the riches of the land, sea and sky, while the red was chosen as a reference to Canada.



## Geography:

Nunavut covers a large geographical area in Canada's north and includes over 36 000 islands in the Arctic Archipelago. One of the least densely populated areas in the world, the land is both remote and wild. Much of Nunavut is rocky, barren, cold and treeless, which are all characteristic of the tundra. In the summer months when the top layer of permafrost melts, vegetation such as moss, grass, lichens and small shrubs can grow.

Nunavut is in the “land of the midnight sun.” Its arctic location means that during the summer months, the sun shines for nearly all day long. In the winter time, the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights illuminate the night sky.

### Indigenous Peoples:

Nunavut is home to a large Indigenous population, many of whom are Inuit. Nearly 86% of its residents identify as Inuit, First Nations, or Métis. The Inuit have a long, rich history in the area and a deep connection to the land. Nunavut was established in 1999 in part, to preserve the Inuit culture and traditions, as well as, give its people increased autonomy and control of the region.

### Did you know?

- Nunavut translates to “our land” in Inuktitut. Iqaluit, its capital city, is an Inuktitut word meaning “place of many fish”.
- Nunavut has the largest geographic size of all Canadian provinces and/or territories.
- Nunavut is only accessible by air or sea. While there are roads within communities, people must hop on a plane or snowmobile to travel from place to place.
- Reflecting the traditions of the Inuit, Nunavut follows a unique style of governance called consensus government. All Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected as independents, and decisions are made with majority or unanimous votes.
- During the summer months, narwhals can be spotted feeding in the waters near the Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet and Resolute Bay. Scientists estimate that 75% of the world’s narwhal population migrate to the area. In fact, narwhals are so common, they feature prominently on Nunavut’s coat of arms.



# Check for Understanding

1. What is Nunavut's official animal?
2. On what day was Nunavut officially recognized as a territory?
3. What does Nunavut and Iqaluit mean in Inuktitut?
4. What is the predominant Indigenous group in Nunavut?
5. What unique style of government does Nunavut use?