

Nunavut Facts at a Glance

- Nunavut is Canada's largest territory representing 1/5 of the country's land and stretching over 2 million square kilometres. The territory extends north and west of Hudson's Bay, above the tree line to the North Pole. The land and water area of Nunavut is the approximate size of the combined area of Canada's five most eastern provinces – Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec.
- Nunavut is a land of rock, snow, ice, and sea, and Arctic tundra (treeless landscape) covers virtually all of the territory. The land is permanently frozen, and during the short growing season, the top layer of soil thaws. Rare berries, lichens, Arctic willows, moss, tough grass and small willow shrubs make up Nunavut's vegetation.
- Nunavut has the coldest weather in Canada. Winter lasts about 9 months, and the average temperature is -30 degrees C. The average summer temperature is 9 degrees C.
- While parts of Nunavut receive more precipitation, the area north of the Arctic Circle is a desert. The cold Arctic air is unable to hold much moisture, resulting in very little rain or snow. Because it is so cold, the snow that does fall doesn't melt, and deep snow covers the land and ice.
- The population in Nunavut is approximately 26,745 (2001 census), 85% of whom are Inuit. Inuit means "The People" in Inuktitut, one of the official languages in Nunavut. Inuinaqtun, English and French are also spoken. Nunavut means "Our Land" in Inuktitut.
- In May 1993 the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the Nunavut Act were passed by the Canadian Parliament, and Nunavut officially became its own territory on April 1, 1999.



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- Prior to becoming its own territory, Nunavut was part of the Northwest Territories. The creation of Nunavut marked the first major change to Canada’s map since 1949, when the province of Newfoundland (including Labrador) was incorporated.
- Nunavut is the largest of the 3 territories and 10 provinces in Canada. Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon are the 3 territories. The 10 provinces include Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec and Saskatchewan.
- There are 26 communities in Nunavut, ranging in size from Bathurst Inlet (population 250) to Iqaluit, the capital (population almost 6,000). Communities are separated by hundreds of miles of tundra. Because there are no roads or rail services that link Nunavut to southern Canada, all people and products arrive in Nunavut by air or sea, resulting in the highest cost of living in Canada.
- There are no paved roads connecting the communities of Nunavut, with the exception of one paved road between Nanisivik and Arctic Bay. Although approximately 4,000 vehicles are registered in the territory, aircraft, ATVs, snowmobiles and boats are the preferred way to travel. Travel by dogsled still exists as well.
- Within communities, roads are unpaved; however each community has an airstrip.
- The motto of Nunavut is Nunavut Sanginivut, ᓄᓇᖅ ᓴᓂᓂᖅ in Inuktitut syllabics, meaning “Nunavut Our Strength.”
- The official flower of Nunavut is the purple saxifrage, 1 of the 3 wildflowers depicted in Nunavut’s coat of arms.



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- The most common land mammals in this Arctic region are caribou, musk oxen, grizzlies, wolves, wolverines, Arctic and red foxes, weasels, lemmings and Arctic hare. Nunavut is also home to polar bears, ringed, harp and bearded seals, walruses, and several types of Arctic whales: belugas, narwhals, bowheads, and to a lesser degree, killer whales, blue whales and sperm whales. Gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons, ptarmigans, Arctic tern, several species of geese, tundra swans, snowy owls, many species of ducks, terns, murrelets, black guillemots and many other species of birds live in this region as well. Arctic char is probably the most common fish species, but there are also lake trout, northern pike, Arctic grayling, whitefish, burbot, Arctic cod, and turbot in Nunavut waters.

- The colours used in the flag of Nunavut symbolize the abundant land, sea and sky. Red refers to Canada. The inuksuk, a stone monument used by the Inuit for communication and survival, is included because of its importance to the Inuit culture. The star is Niqirtsuituq, the North Star, the traditional guide for navigators.



- The dominant colours used in the Nunavut Coat of Arms, blue and gold, symbolize the riches of the land, sea and sky. The motto at the base is written in Inuktitut and says Nunavut Sanginivut, meaning “Nunavut, Our Strength.”



- Nunavut is known as the “Land of the Midnight Sun.” During the summer months, Arctic Canada tilts toward the sun, resulting in close to 24 hours of sunlight in some areas of Nunavut. The opposite occurs during the winter months, when many areas remain in darkness.

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