

# A Visitor's Guide to



# BARROW ALASKA

## Paġlagivsigin!



# BARROW, ALASKA

## Welcome to Ukpiaġvik!

Welcome to our home, 330 mi (531 km) above the Arctic Circle, where subsistence bowhead whaling and other ancient traditions remain at the center of our culture, shared with Iñupiat achievements in the modern world.

- \* In JANUARY and FEBRUARY experience Kivgiq, the unforgettable mid-winter festival also called Messenger Feast – a three-day celebration of dance, song and bartering that brings Inuit from across the North Slope, Russia, Canada and Greenland together to renew family ties and share age-old traditions. Kivgiq is not an annual event. Contact the North Slope Borough Mayor's Office 907-852-0200 or the Iñupiat Heritage Center 907-852-0422 for more information. You can find information online at [www.northslope.org](http://www.northslope.org) or [www.cityofbarrow.org](http://www.cityofbarrow.org). (See ads on inside page.)
- \* Bundle up for a week-long spring festival in the snow during Piuraaġiaqta [pee'-ur-ahg'-ee-ahk-taa'] in APRIL. Enjoy the parade, maklak [muck-luck] races, igloo building, dog mushing and geese-calling contests; snow machine races, golf on lagoon ice, art shows and other activities. Contact the City of Barrow 907-852-5211 for more information.
- \* Travel to the arctic in MAY, JUNE & JULY when the lush tundra is alive with over 185 species of birds including snowy owls, jaegers, swans & arctic terns. Birds are easy to see on this treeless land, where they nest and hunt on the tundra. Bird watchers flock to Barrow every year. Contact the Iñupiat Heritage Center or local hotels for information about year-round tour opportunities, cultural presentations, summer whaling festivals and, Eskimo games held more than once a year.
- \* Plan your trip to the USA's most northern community in JUNE when villagers celebrate **Nalukataq [nah-loo-kahtahk,]** or *blanket toss* festivals, marking the end of a safe and successful, subsistence whaling season. Contact the City of Barrow or the Iñupiat Heritage Center for more information.
- \* Eskimo Games are a highlight of JULY Independence Day festivities. The games require balance and strength. Events include two-foot high kick, ear pull and one-hand reach. July winners can go on to the World Eskimo Indian Olympics.
- \* During JULY and AUGUST Barrow residents often go with relatives and friends from other villages to hunt and fish, and to areas where wild salmon berries, blue berries, black berries and cranberries are plentiful and grow on the ground. Autumn comes early to the arctic, so prime berry picking is short.
- \* Visit us in NOVEMBER through MAY during the awe-inspiring winter, or enjoy the sun-washed evening hours of spring, and take a dog-sled ride across the sea ice, past icebergs that can be magnificently blue in color.
- \* In DECEMBER spend the holidays watching Qitik [kit-tick], the Christmas Eskimo games. Enjoy watching traditional feats of skill and physical prowess developed long ago. Welcome the New Year at the edge of the Chukchi Sea, near the famous whalebone arch – and wear your warmest clothes to watch the annual fireworks display.
- \* Anytime of year, visit the Iñupiat Heritage Center to discover collections of Iñupiat artifacts, as well as crafts there and at other locations in town. You also can take available tours to learn how things like drinkable water, modern housing and health care are provided in this remote land, where supplies must be flown in or shipped on barges. Learn about the globally important, scientific studies taking place on the North Slope and in Barrow, *Alaska's Arctic Science City*. Enjoy Barrow's restaurants, stores and hotels. See traditional Eskimo Dancing and join in. Catch a glimpse of arctic wildlife and learn about the ways of the subsistence whaling culture. For longer visits, or if you are moving to Barrow, check out the amenities provided by the City of Barrow. (See ad.)



### Helpful Hints

Weather in Barrow can change within minutes, so having a jacket, hat and gloves is a good idea no matter the season. Be prepared for severe winter weather August through May when you should have a heavy coat, hat, gloves, warm boots and face covering. During the muddy breakup in the spring, birders who wish to walk on the tundra should pack rubber boots. Summer temperatures in Barrow vary widely, but average about 40°F (4.4 °C.) Extreme winds can occur any time of year.

The arctic is a wild place. Depending on the season, visitors who venture out on the tundra or along the beach might see seals, gray whales, killer whales, bowhead whales, arctic fox, caribou or polar bears. Do not hike away from town or venture onto the sea ice alone.

Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation 907-852-4450 owns almost all of the land in Barrow and surrounding area, including Point Barrow. You or your tour organizer must arrange for a UIC Land Use Permit to hike or camp. So that someone knows where to find you in case of unexpected bad weather or an emergency, notify Barrow Volunteer Search & Rescue 907-852-2808 of your travel plans before you head away from town. Note: Barrow Volunteer Search & Rescue loans personal locator beacons (PLBs) to people traveling outside Barrow. Be safe.

Parts of the year, shore-fast ice covering the ocean can extend for miles. Contact the Iñupiat Heritage Center, the City of Barrow or your hotel for information about taking thrilling dog-sled rides on the sea ice and across the open landscape — or take summer birding tours in a vehicle with tracked wheels specially designed to move over the land without damaging the fragile tundra. Another option is to take the approximately 9 mi (15 km) tour to Point Barrow, the northern-most spot in the USA! Newcomers should rely on guides with proper equipment and knowledge of the area.

### Interesting Facts...

1. The world Iglu [Igloo] means house or dwelling. An iglu is not only a temporary shelter made of blocks of ice.
2. Because Barrow lies at the meeting point of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas, there is almost always a breeze, which keeps mosquitoes away – but be prepared to deal with mosquitoes if you go out on the tundra.
3. Whaling captains schedule the Nalukataq (*Blanket Toss*) festivals. The whole community is invited to attend and share the bowhead whale meat and delicacies prepared by crew families during the 10 days or so before a Nalukataq.
4. Barrow Utilities and Electric Cooperative Inc, as a multi-utilities provide electrical generation, natural gas distribution, potable water production, and operates and maintains through an agreement with the North Slope Borough, owner of the Barrow Utilidor System, its 3.3 miles of 'walk through buried' water distribution and wastewater collection, adjoined too and in addition to 'direct bury piping' amounting to over 33 miles of piping. Technology abounds, with Micro-filtration, Nano-filtration dual membrane water treatment, Membrane Bio-Reactor waste-water treatment, Lonox Solo-nox power generation, and a fleet of rolling stock utilizing Compressed Natural Gas for over 25 years.
5. April and May is spring subsistence bowhead whaling season. Fall whaling usually takes place early October. Subsistence whaling is governed by traditions thousands of years old, scientific guidelines and international agreements.
6. Because the sun is high in the sky 24-hours a day in the summer, Barrow does not have 4th of July fireworks.
7. Our people have lived on this land for centuries. Please respect the culture, obey the laws and refrain from digging for artifacts in and around Barrow. Instead, we welcome you to see displays around town and learn about efforts to protect our heritage.
8. The sea ice, even if it looks completely frozen, it constantly moving, changing – and is very dangerous.
9. The first church in Barrow was a Presbyterian church built in 1888 when the people began to settle near what was the Barrow whaling station. Today, there are many other places of worship for Catholics, Baptists, Latter Day Saints and members of the Bahai' Faith.
10. Many visitors ask where to see penguins. Sorry, but they live in the Earth's southern hemisphere.

## Paġlagivsigin!

### We Welcome You All!

Photos Courtesy  
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Family of Companies – Building

John Gleason - Polar Bear  
Cindy Shults - Blanket Toss  
Natalie K. Munden - Sign

## The Iñupiat Heritage Center Welcomes You!

Discover the Iñupiat Heritage Center, a community gathering place where the history, language and traditions of the Iñupiat are shared with visitors and North Slope residents. The philosophy behind the Iñupiat Heritage Center is based on the qargi [khaar'-ghee] or community house, where many village activities traditionally took place. Among its amenities, the Iñupiat Heritage Center offers a fine museum, a traditional workshop and a growing collection of artifacts, archives and displays. The Center is used as a venue for scientific studies, academic course work and repatriation of artifacts and photos from museums and collectors around the world. We invite you to come and experience some of the deep history of the arctic.

- Learn about the methods of contemporary subsistence whaling and the scientific contributions of Iñupiat hunters that helped make the bowhead whale the best-studied population of arctic whales.
- Examine the dramatic climate changes that continue to shape life above the Arctic Circle.
- View the North Slope Borough's collection of mounted indigenous birds and watch our craftspeople carve walrus ivory, etch bowhead whale baleen, create beautiful jewelry and other works of art.
- Watch our Iñupiat Dancers perform ancient dances that tell stories, accompanied by the throbbing rhythm of traditional drums.
- Treat your senses to the expression of our language, Iñupiaq.
- Learn about the other North Slope villages and the opportunities they offer.



Photos Courtesy Natalie K. Munden

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This event is partially, or completely funded by ECHO, Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations, CFDS84.215Y. The Purpose of ECHO programs is to amplify educational benefits, foster greater appreciation of local and national history, and assist communities in maximizing the social benefits of new technologies.

For copies of this guide contact  
[www.cityofbarrow.org](http://www.cityofbarrow.org)

**Quyanaqpak!**  
**[Khoo'-yan-ahk-pahk]**  
**Thank you very much!**

Cover Photos Courtesy  
Luciana Whitaker - Umiag (skin whaling boat)  
John Gleason - Polar Bear, White Owl, Bird  
Cindy Shults - Sunset



# Hiking Trips in the Barrow Area

## Fresh Water Lake:

Visitors prepared for any type of weather may enjoy venturing away from town along the roads leading to Fresh Water Lake, (5, other side,) one of the original sources of drinking water for the village. You'll pass by satellite dishes tilted almost parallel to the ground because we are so far north. Next you'll pass Imaiqaun Cemetery (6) where remains of ancestors recovered during excavations at the many archaeological sites around Barrow have been reburied with respect. Here is the final resting place of the famous Frozen Family, recovered from Mound 44 (3) in the early 1980s. Also at rest here are the remains of a prehistoric girl discovered in an eroding bluff in 1994. Since no trees grow in the arctic, the 185 species of birds that migrate to the area in the spring and summer nest on the tundra and can easily be seen and photographed. In the summer, be sure to bring bug spray to ward off mosquitoes! Another popular bird-watching destination is along Cakeater road (41.)

## Will Rogers & Wiley Post Crash Monument and Hollywood:

Along the coast of the Chukchi Sea, trek or take rented ATV's 13mi (21km) to the monument marking the site were America's beloved comedian and social commentator Will Rogers, along with pilot Wiley Post, died when their small aircraft crashed in 1935 (40.) A second monument is located next to the City of Barrow Visitor's Center (1) across from the airport. On the hike to the crash site, you will pass the area where the producers filmed the Walt Disney movie *Track of the Giant Snow Bear*. This area is known to locals as Hollywood. The all-day hike to the Rogers/Post monument is strenuous. Walking on the mushy tundra or on the pebbly beach requires the right kind of footgear. Hikers should carry water, food, extra clothing – and are encouraged to submit excursion plans to Barrow Volunteer Search & Rescue by calling 852-2808. The weather up here can change very quickly. Ask about checking out a personal locator beacon. If traveling on 4-wheelers or on snow machines, be sure to take extra gasoline. Be SAFE.



Photo Courtesy Natalie K. Munden



There are two Iñupiaq spellings for Barrow:

## Ukpiagvik! & Utqiagvik!

The name means  
“Place to hunt snowy owls”

## Iļisaġvik Campus, BASC, and Arctic Science Facilities, Shooting Station & Point Barrow:

Another strenuous, full-day hike is the trek to famous Point Barrow, the most northern point in the United States and the site of the old village of Nuvuk (26.) The old Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL) underwent renovation in 1994 and became the home of Iļisaġvik. The accredited college is the first and only tribally controlled college in Alaska. The cafeteria and bookstore in the main building are open to the public, and the science wing is lined with posters and historic photos. Continuing on the ocean road you will reach the Barrow Arctic Research Center (BARC) and its modern research facilities managed by the Barrow Arctic Science Consortium (BASC) (23.) Next, you will arrive at a favored subsistence hunting area known as Shooting Station or Piġniq (26.) Families have hunted in this area over the centuries, harvesting waterfowl, seals and other natural food resources. Adventurers will continue past the end of the road on the narrowing landscape until it ends at the Point. Please do not disturb archaeological materials. During any season, watch for polar bears. If you see one, leave the area immediately. These wild animals are extremely dangerous. For tours and information about traveling on your own or to learn about tours to or near Pt. Barrow, please first contact Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation 907-852-4450, Iñupiat Heritage Center 852-0422 or your hotel.

## Cakeater Road:

In the spring and into summer, skies increasingly brighten until the sun hovers above the horizon for 84 days in a row. Hikers and birders can see snowy owls, swans, snow buntings, ducks, arctic terns and many other birds nesting on the wide open tundra. Cakeater Road (41) is also known as Gas Well Road because of the natural-gas wells that provide energy to Barrow. Cakeater Road begins just east of the Browerville (east) side of Barrow. Look for the sign for the Barrow Environmental Observatory (BEO,) of native Iñupiat land dedicated to research. Many local residents enjoy riding snow machines or all-terrain vehicles along this road, which is unpaved like most other roads in Barrow. Bring binoculars and look for caribou and arctic fox. In summer, enjoy the beauty of arctic cotton and tiny wildflowers. Mosquitoes are rarely a problem in town because ocean breezes keep them away, but when on the tundra, have plenty of bug spray to protect your self against pesky mosquitoes – jokingly referred to as Alaska's state bird! Discover the wild beauty of the arctic on these hikes, all of which take half a day or longer. Finally, listen to KBRW Radio (AM-680 kHz, FM-91.9 mHz) (8) for weather & community news and entertainment.

## NORTH SLOPE TRIVIA

- Eight villages dot the landscape of Alaska's arctic including Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Barrow, Nuiqsut, Kaktovik, Point Hope, Point Lay and Wainwright.
- Barrow is the seat of government for the North Slope Borough, the largest municipality in the world, covering 89,000 square miles of arctic territory.
- The North Slope Borough has a population of just over 7,500. Of that number, approximately 4,700 live in Barrow.
- Residents and non-residents alike also work year-round at Umiat and at the oil industry facilities in Prudhoe Bay and along the James Dalton Highway (formerly called the Haul Road).
- People of all races and backgrounds live in Barrow, but the population is approximately 65% Iñupiat. (as of the 2000 census)
- Barrow is approximately 1200 miles from the North Pole.



## Iñupiaq Vocabulary Lesson

- **Agviq** [ahgh-vickh] – bowhead whale
- **Aiviq** [aye-veeckh] – walrus
- **Nanuq** [nan'-ook] – polar bear
- **Nigliq** [nig' lickh] – goose
- **Siqiniq** [sickh-in-ickh'] – sun

**ATTENTION PILOTS:** For information about Barrow's Wiley Post-Will Rogers Memorial Airport, call the FAA Barrow Flight Service 907-852-2511.



Photos Courtesy  
John Gleason - Flower, both White Owl images  
Cindy Shults - back ground image of Sea Ice, Walrus  
Rebecca O'Hair - Stellar's Eider

Welcome to the Inupiat Heritage Center  
Making Connections to Our Heritage  
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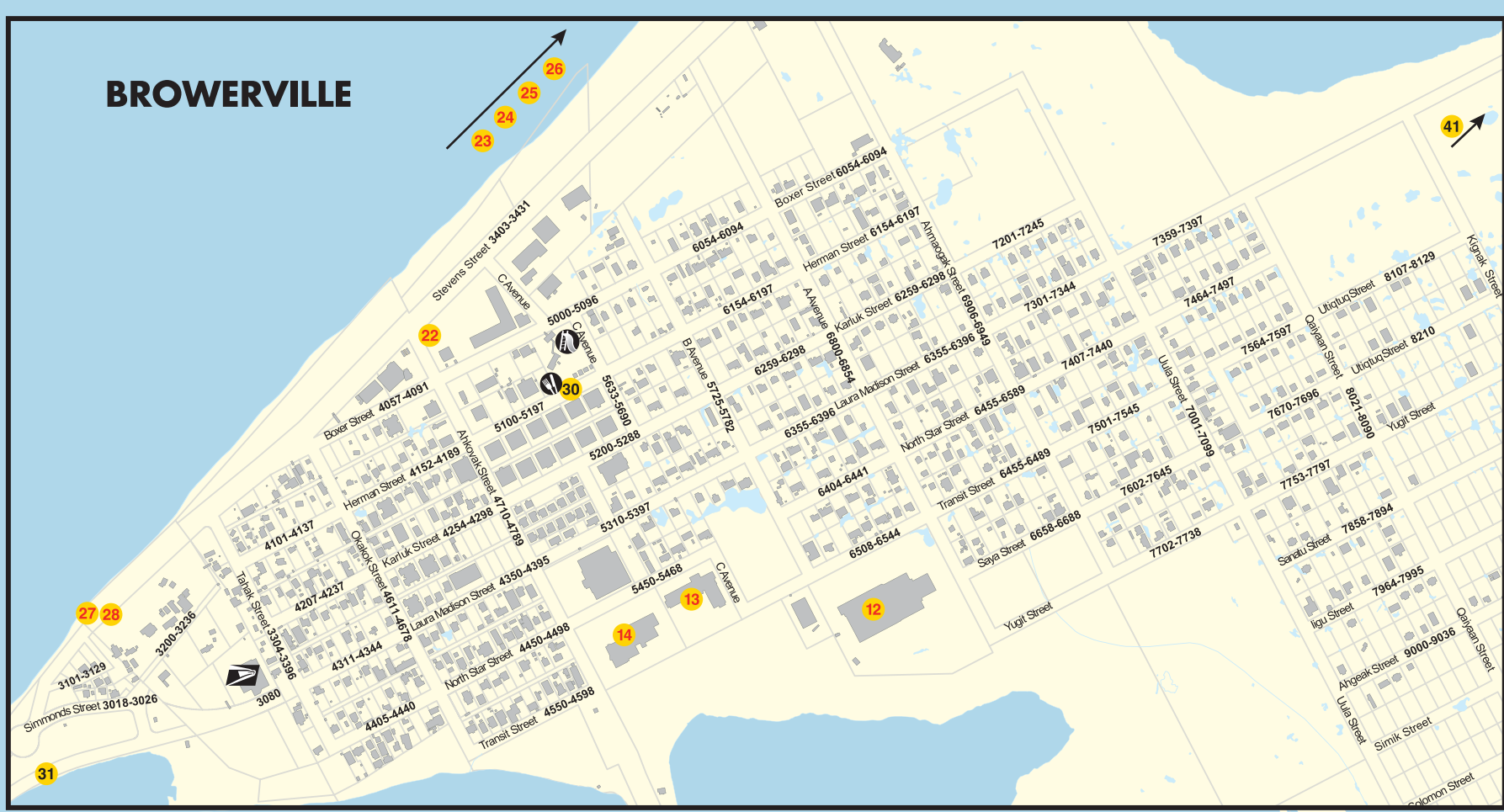
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This fascinating documentary is 60-min with a 5-min bonus feature for kids.  
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- Will Rogers / Wiley Post Monument & Barrow sign post
- Barrow Visitor's Center • Semi-seasonal
- Mound 44 Ukkuaſi • Archaeological site
- Original settlement • house mounds
- Fresh Water Lake • Great place for bird watching
- Barrow Imaisaun Cemetery & Barrow antenna farm
- Barrow High School • Home of the Whalers
- KBRW Radio • 680 AM / 91.9 FM
- Barrow City Hall • Tuptiqpak Big Tent hockey rink
- Piuraagvik Place to Play athletic center
- Ipalook Elementary School
- Hopson Middle School

- Senior Center
- Inupiat Heritage Center
- NSB Administration Building
- Barrow Utilities & Electric Cooperative (BUECI)
- Presbyterian Church • Established 1898
- Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital
- Boynton Office Systems
- Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
- NSB Police Department
- Gas Station
- Ilisagvik College • Barrow Arctic Science Consortium
- Barrow Arctic Research Center

- Dew Line • U.S. advanced radar warning system
- Pigniq Shooting Station Old Village site of Nuvuk & famous Point Barrow • The Point is approximately 9 mi (15 km) west of far west side of town
- Whale Bone Arch
- Historic whaling station • Site of launch of 1st International Polar Year, 1881
- Isatqaq Middle Lagoon • Site of Piuraagiaqta
- NSB Night Restaurant
- Nalukataq site • Blanket Toss whaling festivals
- Top of the World Hotel / Tundra Tours
- Wells Fargo Bank / Shell Exploration

- NSB School District Administrative Building
- East Coast Pizzeria
- National Weather Service Station
- Airport Inn
- King Elder Inn
- NSB Search & Rescue
- Will Rogers / Wiley Post Crash site & Hollywood Environmental Observatory

**1-28 Bus Tour Route**

FOOD PLAYGROUNDS  
MEDICAL CARE POST OFFICE

**A Note about Transportation:**  
When calling one of the many cab companies in Barrow, you don't need to know street names, only house numbers or the name of the business/organization you wish to visit. No tips are expected. Cab fare prices are set by the City of Barrow Taxi Commission. Ask your hotel about car rentals.

**Useful Telephone Numbers:**  
Barrow Volunteer Search & Rescue 907-852-2808  
Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) available for checkout  
North Slope Borough Police Department  
907-852-6111 • Emergency: 911  
National Weather Station at Barrow 907-852-6484