

Icebergs

Piqalujak (singular form) Part One

Icebergs are packed ice that have accumulated over the years. Icebergs are pieces of ice that detach from ice caps and ice pads in the South pole and the North pole area. Icebergs are believed to be thousands of years old. In plain English, icebergs are very “old” water in a frozen state. Ice berg water is one of the best, if not the best drinking water anywhere in the world, and requires no additives!

Icebergs are excellent drinking water. The ice is used all year round by local residents for tea or for drinking. Some people will not drink tea made out of the tap water because there are too many chemicals added to the water before it is delivered to the houses. Only Grise Fiord has the luxury of having ice berg water delivered to their houses as the town is short of water. Even then, chorine is added.

“Tip of the iceberg”. This phrase is often used to describe that there are other things to consider besides what is visible to the eye. It is believed that 9\10 of an iceberg is below the water line and only 10 percent is visible. It’s the unknown that we never know about.

Algae which grow under the ice bergs are an excellent source of vitamins that sea mammals and birds need for their diet. Algae is very slippery and should be avoided as much as possible as it is impossible to walk on it properly. (Some icebergs tip and the algae is visible.) Algae is the home of small micro sized animals that larger animals feed on. There are also small fish around the algae (cod).

In the olden days, sail boats normally sheltered behind an iceberg for safety. There are numerous stories about ships sheltering behind an iceberg. Benjamin Arreak had many stories to tell about ships sheltering behind an iceberg while waiting for the weather to improve (Northwest passage voyage, R.C.M.P.). He said that it was dangerous being right close to an iceberg but that was better than traveling on rough sea waters. Icebergs were beautiful to be around when the sea was too rough, yet at the same time, it was very dangerous as an iceberg could tip over at any time. Icebergs are a beautiful sight. Everyone feels great being around an iceberg.

End of part one.

By **Elijah Tigullaraq**
May 2008

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Piqalujak (singular form) Part Two

Icebergs also attract tourists. Some people have never been exposed to areas where icebergs are plentiful. Even some people in the north have never seen an iceberg due to the fact that icebergs are not available in their area. Icebergs are not able to travel to places where there is shallow water and no current. Icebergs seem to have a life of their own. They are believed to have spirits in them.

To respect icebergs, people are told that icebergs have a spirit of their own that has feelings similar to humans. People are not to abuse icebergs, by shooting at them, leaving garbage, relieving on them or showing disrespect by wasting ice unnecessarily. Icebergs are known to move when they feel they are not properly respected by humans. I have seen this first hand.

Large icebergs the size of 15 storey buildings are extremely powerful when they are moving. Anything in their way can be destroyed like miniature toys. Icebergs are known to destroy 10 feet of solid ice when they are moved by the currents. Large ice bergs are mostly controlled by the sea current. They are known to travel against the strong winds when controlled by the sea currents. Extremely large icebergs are dangerous as they tend to tip to one side as parts of them become lighter and the heavy section dominates. Algae on the bottom of the iceberg play a big role in causing the ice to tip. Any activity on top the iceberg has great impact. People are encouraged not to relieve themselves on the ice as it will cause a crack and that could trigger a tip over of the ice, or cause it to break up into small pieces. People have been known to die by taking a leak on an iceberg (Greenland story) or by pouring hot water on the iceberg. Even a small drop of hot water will cause a loud cracking sound, which is very dangerous. A small crack can develop into a large crack causing the ice to break.

Icebergs are very useful yet very dangerous. We have to respect them.

By **Elijah Tigullaraq**
May 2008