

## **24 hours of Sunlight**

After 24 hours of darkness in the winter, the Arctic is blessed with 24 hours of sunlight in the spring. Things come to life in the spring... The birds migrate north, the seal pups are born, narwhals arrive, winter cold is gone, flowers are blooming and the people become more active as the weather gets warmer. It's easier to get around without the bulky winter clothing! It's like a butterfly getting out of a cocoon after being cooped up in a closed area all winter. What freedom!

People take this freedom for granted as they take advantage of the short seal hunting season. People may stay up all night hunting while the seals are accessible. Spring time is a good time to hunt as a family because there is better chance of getting more seals by working together. Young seals are tastier and more tender than an adult seal. The skins are used for mittens, kamiik, wind pants or to sell. The older seals shed their fur from basking all day in the sun, making the hair easy to pull out. Older seal skins are not good for clothing when the fur is shedding. The only other time to harvest seal pups is in the summer but most people don't have access to a boat. Spring is the best time to hunt seal pups while they are accessible.

The 24 hour sunlight is great but it also causes confusion at times. It is very difficult to tell whether it's night or day as the sun shines all the time. A hunter may stay up for a long period of time and get disorientated due to lack of sleep and lack of rest. His watch may say 3:00 o'clock but is it night or day? The only way to tell ( especially after waking up ) is to look at the position of the sun. Most locals find it difficult to sleep during the spring due to the light but it is even more difficult for those who are not used to the sun shining at all times. Some find the 24 hours sunshine extremely difficult to handle as there are chemical reactions in the body when the body is not accustomed to it. Some people need professional help as they have a tendency to harm themselves. I have seen a few individuals who needed professional assistance to help them cope with their stress, stress generated by complete darkness or 24 hours of sunlight. Local residents have a good sense of humor about the sun shining 24 hours a day.

People often say..."Let's get going before it gets dark." This phrase is often used to say that they should get going as they have places to go, things to do even though it will not get dark. Another phrase: "I'll arrive in time providing that it does not get too dark." People are quite confident that they will reach their destination without delay.

People of the north enjoy the sun shine around the clock and accept the fact there is nothing a person could do to change it. Instead, we hunt, play and have fun while we can, as winter will be here too soon.

By Elijah Tigullaraq  
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