GREENLAND'S NEW AIRPORT OPENS DOORS TO ARCTIC TOURISM

Greenland is experiencing a change which may alter how this remote and massive island in the Arctic is viewed regarding tourism. The incredible island has now opened its brand new international airport, making one of its highlights more accessible.

Greenland's new airport located in the town of Ilulissat (approximately 5,000 people), located on the west coast of the island, has officially opened its doors on October 29 2026. This town, known better as the 'City of Icebergs', was previously very difficult to get to due to needing several connections and patience.

A Gateway to the Icebergs

Ilulissat is best known for its incredible Ilulissat Icefjord – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **Massive icebergs fall off the Sermeq Kujalleq glacier and gently float out to sea.** There are lots of excursions available such as boat trips, whale watching, dog sledding and seeing the Northern Lights.

Previously, due to there being almost no roads between the main settlements in Greenland, you would need to fly in on a small plane, helicopter or boat. The old runway was only 845m long so the planes would have to be smaller. International tourists usually flew to either Nuuk or Kangerlussuaq before changing planes.

The new airport has a 2200m runway meaning tourists can fly in using bigger commercial planes. Flights can now be taken directly from Copenhagen. Air Greenland is looking to increase the number of flights gradually, hoping to have up to 6 flights per week during the busy summer of 2027. No longer will there be any stops.

Opening Up the Island and Arctic Tourism

This airport is the third major airport to be opened across Greenland. Nuuk (2024) and Qaqortoq (April 2026) were opened recently. This shows that Greenland is looking to increase the amount of tourists coming to visit. In 2025, Greenland welcomed around 180,000 tourists. Considering that Greenland only has around 56,000 people, this is an impressive target.

Some international media have been commenting on the increasing Arctic tourism trend in Greenland, jokingly calling it 'Ibiza on Ice'.

The Delicate Balance Ahead

Local residents and business owners are concerned that the sudden increase in tourists will put pressure on a small community. **Many are worried that the money will not stay in Greenland, as most of the benefits will go to international tour companies.**

Greenlandic officials are looking to improve their economy. Greenland still heavily relies on fishing

and has strong financial relationships with Denmark. Opening these new airports show that they want to improve their economy by opening up to Arctic tourism.

They must ensure that they do not lose what makes Greenland amazing. Officials and communities will need to carefully control the number of tourists coming to ensure the icefjord and surrounding areas remain protected.

Overall, the new airport in Ilulissat marks a turning point for Greenland. Whether they can share their amazing landscapes with the world whilst keeping their peacefulness, culture and environment remains to be seen.

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