



»» just start the trip on our own, we contacted Sisimiut's outdoor guide, Bo. He runs the Hotel Sisimiut and a guiding agency together with his wife Anette.

A few months prior to the trip, Bo advised us on what to pack for our tour: a thick sleeping bag, good gloves, and rum. A lot of rum. Sounds promising, does it not?

When we meet Bo face-to-face for the first time the night before we leave, it becomes clear why he is the best outdoor guide around. The guy is about two meters tall and about the same width, and gives off the impression that adverse

circumstances can do little to him. His bald shaved head is in the hood of a thick goose down jacket, which has probably already survived one or two snowstorms. When he shakes my hand, it completely disappears into his.

He came with his colleague Nils, who physically appears to be the exact opposite of Bo. He's small and thin, but you can also see that nothing can throw him off the track so easily. Therefore, we feel that we are in good hands with them. This should show itself not only during the tour, but even afterwards. On our return journey, we arrived too late at the airport and had to decide within

minutes whether we would continue travelling home only with hand luggage—which we finally did. Taking this option reflects that someone, in this case Bo, is around with whom you can be sure to have your luggage—including all the equipment—back in your hands. Six weeks after our trip, the ship with all our belongings reached Copenhagen.

Set Off to the Arctic Circle Trail

The large amounts of snow that fell overnight are unusual this time of year. Now we have to figure out how we can get through the snow with our bikes. Up until yesterday, the situation would have been ideal, but well, that's the weather in Greenland: simply unpredictable. Furthermore, we could not set out on a busy and thus prepared trail, because the annual musk ox hunt, which normally should have taken place at the time of our trip, was postponed.

So we pack our bags on the snowmobiles, assemble the wheels, and make the first test-drive around the airport. With a little practice and a few incidents of contact with the ground, we slowly get used to cycling in the snow. In addition to the slippery surface, the pockets on the bike are also a problem because they always push the bike in the wrong direction. But after a few extra rounds, we get that under control. Nothing stands in the way of the start of the tour. We go to bed early to start the next day fresh and rested.

Since the length of the different daily stages depends on the distance between the shelters, we have to take the longest section of the route on the first day. The Arctic Circle Trail offers ten huts as accommodations. If you decide to travel in the summer months to go for a hike, you can plan your tour more flexibly as wild camping is allowed in the area. As this is not an option for us, 60 kilometers (37 mi.) lie ahead of us.

First, the trail leads through beautiful landscapes and over small hills. Bo and Nils sometimes have to clear a path through the fresh and deep snow with their snowmobiles so that we can get through with our bikes. Although biking works



Bike clothing for extreme conditions. To prevent frostbite, the skin must be completely covered.

surprisingly well in most areas, we have to fight the resistance of the tires in the snow all the time, which makes riding more exhausting than expected. The trail leads over a frozen lake for the last 20 kilometers (12 mi.). In the distance, on the lake's bank, we can see our accommodation for the night. We finally reach it—completely exhausted.

Since Anja, the excellent cook from Bo's Hotel, is also responsible for the food on the trips, our lunch is not the usual travel meal, i.e. mush that is specially designed for outdoor trips, to which you only have to add hot water. Instead, we are served caribou meatballs in a tomato and gin sauce. What a great way to travel!

In general, we experience a refreshing hands-on mentality with everyone who accompanies us. A broken sled—no problem. Provisionally fixed and move on. A poorly-equipped kitchen in the hut—a challenge to get a great dinner on the table. It looks as if people here are used to getting quick solutions for a problem maybe because this could be lifesaving at the end of the day. »»