

## The North Pole

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It is extremely cold at the North Pole because it does not get any direct sunlight. It has an annual mean temperature of minus 40 degrees (although the South Pole is colder). This polar region is covered in snow and ice and is populated by many types of animals including: reindeer, walrus, snowshoe hare, hooded seal, puffin and polar bears (some of which may be facing extinction if global warming continues to cause the sea ice to dwindle). James Clarke Ross is reported to be the first European to locate the north magnetic pole in 1831 after journeying there by sledge with his uncle, but the first verified expedition to the North Pole was in 1926 when the airship Norge flew over the area.

There is no land there, just floating ice, so it is unsuitable for human habitation although Inuit people live in the nearby Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia. Today sleigh rides are available within the Arctic Circle, led by tour guides. Grey Siberian huskies pull sleighs through the wildlife parks of Finland or Lapland, their paws gripping the frozen tundra, as passengers wrapped in warm blankets comb the sky (on a clear night) searching for the northern lights. Some Arctic resorts have glass igloos where you can lie in bed and gaze through the ceiling at the stars as they sparkle in the night sky and watch amazing spectacles that might have been conjured up by a master magician.

- Which is colder, the North or South Pole?
- What might happen to the animals if the ice continues to melt?
- Why was the North Pole a difficult place to explore?
- Why is the Arctic Circle now a tourist destination?
- How would you feel if you won a trip to Lapland?



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