

# How to Dress for Arctic Weather Conditions

Three Parts: [Thinking of the Basics](#) [Preparing Your Clothing](#) [Footwear](#)

When embarking on a holiday to the northern polar regions, it is important to know what to wear, as the Arctic climate can be bitterly cold. There are many reasons why people choose to enjoy a break in the Arctic, from the attraction of the Northern Lights, to the thrill of winter snow adventures. In winter, temperatures drop dramatically, and clothes must be chosen accordingly. If you are travelling to witness the glorious Aurora Borealis, you will be looking to travel between September and March, when temperatures in the Arctic are on average below  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . It is essential to pack weather-appropriate clothing so that any activity you wish to enjoy during a holiday in the Arctic is not marred by the cold.

Part  
1

## Thinking of the Basics

- 1 Check the weather of the exact part of the Arctic you're headed for.** The Arctic covers a lot of ground, for example upper Finland, Russia and the North Pole. Look for weather forecasts from the internet or TV to see if it's going to be windy, snowy or both. Even if the forecast says it will be one sort of weather though, prepare for the whole range of possibilities, as the weather changes quickly in this region.
- 2 Set aside the fashion statement.** The important thing in dressing warmly is that you are warm and fashion isn't the issue.
- 3 Understand that the best clothes for cold weather in general are wind resistant, warm and won't let snow or anything else inside.**
- 4 Keep an open mind about the appearance of clothing.** Some of the clothing may not be the most fashionable but be the warmest and most comfortable for the climate you are going to. That is the key to being toasty warm when in the Arctic.

Part  
2

## Preparing Your Clothing

- 1 Dress in layers.** When wearing multiple layers of clothing, warm air becomes trapped between each separate item. It is imperative to select the layers carefully to fully maximise the heat and to achieve constant comfort.
- 2 Add the first layer.** The first item garment should be fitted as close to the skin as possible for mobility and to take away excess perspiration as required. You can purchase base layer tops and bottoms that are specifically made to capture and release such fluids and are also coated with an anti-bacterial substance that will stop clothes from emitting odours.
  - You may find that a t-shirt plus a long-sleeved t-shirt make the best first layer.
  - Merino wool tops make for a good initial layer, as these are wool and the latest iterations of this fabric are usually non-itchy. The wool is warm and helps prevent sweating.
  - A thermal t-shirt is a good idea under a long-sleeved merino top.
- 3 Add the second layer.** This should consist of a thick jumper or fleece, or an insulated jacket. You will find that zipped or buttoned clothes are excellent for the mid layer as they provide much needed ventilation after exerting activities. Trousers made from breathable materials are best for the second layer of clothing so air can travel around freely.
- 4 Add the final layer.** This layer is the one that is exposed to the elements, so as well as providing warmth, it needs to be made of protective materials. A windproof, all-in-one with a hood is the perfect option, although separates

can be just as effective.

**5 Test the clothes in the shop for comfort and good fit.** Ask questions. For example, if the clothing doesn't explain on the description what level of wind it protects against, for example, then ask the retailer for more information or check the manufacturer's website. If you can't find the needed details, keep looking for those items of clothing that are clearly explained; you don't want any errors when dressing for maximum warmth.

**6 Choose a hat, a scarf, gloves and socks as well.** Each item should be rated for the coldest environment.

- It is often best to wear thinner gloves with thicker mittens over the top, for the greatest warmth.
- A balaclava is ideal for the face, or a ski mask.
- The scarf should stay on without having to tie it, to avoid undoing and blowing away in severe winds; an infinity scarf is a good option.
- For the hat, choose something that covers the ears and forehead and will fit under the jacket's hood.

**7 Check what the locals are wearing, on arrival.** You may find it useful to purchase an item when you arrive in a town if you see many people wearing the same jacket for winter, it's usually the warm one!

### Part 3 Footwear

**1 Choose suitable footwear.** When deciding what to wear in the Arctic, practical shoes are essential. The winter terrains will be covered in snow and ice, so good quality snow-boots will provide both grip and protection. Ordinary walking boots will not suffice, as they are not designed for extreme weather conditions. Look for boots with thick plastic soles and insulated lining. It is advisable to wear two pairs of socks, so that your feet are as warm as possible.

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#### Tips

- Contact your tour operator and hotel before departure to establish what equipment and clothing will be provided or can be rented. This will save time packing and space in your suitcase when deciding what to wear in the Arctic.
- Think about the activities you are going to do and choose accordingly. Choose something that is adequate to that particular activity.

- Do some of your browsing for clothing online, before you go to the stores. That way you'll have a wider range of clothing to consider and you'll learn a lot about each item's benefits through your research readings.

### **Warnings**

- Keep the receipt of each purchase. If the item has something wrong or doesn't fill the requirements, return the item.

### **Things You'll Need**

- Layers of clothing
- Footwear