

Brown fat

During the winter months, the sun is low in the sky. This means we often experience twilight in the towns by the ocean, because the surrounding mountains are shading the sun. Other mountains surrounding the town are still bathed in sunshine. When the mountains are snow-covered, a strong contrast arises between the twilight in the town and the sunny mountains.

This photograph is from a visit to the town Sisimiut in central Greenland on the last day of the month in January 2007. I walked down to the harbour to follow the pace of life here. It is a fishing harbour. The inactive dinghies and the fishing boats are locked in ice. The active boats and trawlers must manoeuvre between large ice floes in dock. Steam comes out of the shrimp factory. The production of shrimps to the world market continues. The sea-going shrimp trawlers are fishing at sea

out in the Davis Strait most of the time.

It is dark and cold here at the harbour. In January, the maximum temperature is ten degrees below the freezing point in Sisimiut. Even with the fluff jacket, overtrousers, a hat and woollen gloves I shake myself in these cold conditions.

Yet, I often watch a local walking in such cold conditions bare-headed, without gloves and only wearing a thin jacket.

The Inuit have adapted themselves to the cold climate. The Inuit have a so-called brown fat, a type of body heater that is activated when it is cold. This means that Inuits much better can tolerate cold temperatures than, for example Europeans. The brown fat frames the kidneys, the adrenal glands, along the aorta, the neck and the central part of the chest.



Sisimiut, January 2007