

Greenland imports water!

The Greenlandic landscape is characterized by the presence of water. Man is forced to live along the coast, so already here we find the neighbourhood to the water in the sea and fjords.

Most settlements along the coast are located less than a hundred kilometres to the edge of the ice sheet. The Greenland Ice Sheet represents the largest reservoir of fresh water in the world. It is estimated that the Greenland Ice Sheet has a volume of ice of 1.7 million cubic kilometres. This corresponds to 1,700,000,000,000,000 litres of ice.

At the edge of the ice sheet, there are a large number of glaciers, where the ice continuously calves the ice into the fjords and the sea. The Ilulissat Glacier is one of the fastest calving glaciers. This glacier is estimated to produce 35 billion tons of ice per year. The ice from the glaciers ends up as icebergs and ice floes out in the seas around Greenland.

The ice-free land is characterized by the countless numbers of rivers of melt water that connect large freshwater lakes in the valleys.

There are natural and human-made pollution of fresh water, but as a general rule, these huge

amounts of ice and water are so clean that is used without being purified for drinking. For me it is an important quality of life that I can drink water directly from rivers and streams on the hikes out in the mountains.

This potential of water resources is also in focus as a commercial resource. Currently there are a number of companies using the Greenland ice and water in products such as bottled water and water for alcoholic beverages such as beer, whiskey, vodka and schnapps. But contrary to expectations, a large export of water from Greenland has not yet been developed.

On the contrary! In Greenland we import water! Not only as a main ingredient in sweet drinks such as juices and soft water, but also as fresh drinking water in bottles. It seems absurd that we in the Greenland shops can buy foreign fresh water from Europe.

The imported water has been transported across the Atlantic from Denmark. The explanation is that the Danish retail chains that own stores in Greenland provide the Greenlandic customers with the same types of goods that the Danish consumers buy.



Valley south of Kangerlussuaq, June 2007

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