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The mummified remains of an infant, around the age of six months at death, were found at Qilakitsoq in 1972. Extremely cold temperatures on the snow-covered Nuussuaq Peninsula - in the northwestern part of Greenland - contributed to the remarkable preservation of this child who likely died sometime between 1425-1525.

A peat bog is not the only place where mummification can naturally occur. As extremely cold conditions in the Southern Hemisphere helped to produce Inca mummies, a similar climate has assisted the process in the Northern Hemisphere. Our earliest example takes us back more than 5,000 years.

Just inside Italy's border with Austria, in an area of the Italian Alps known today as Otztal, a Copper-Age man was fleeing. Shot with an arrow, he was able to break off the shaft but the arrowhead remained in his shoulder. Likely exhausted by the time he reached the top of Schnalstal Glacier, he died there. His body, covered with ice, lay hidden for more than five millennia.

In late summer of 1991, two hikers discovered the mummified body. It was astonishingly well preserved. After a series of tests, scientists could even tell that Oetzi the Iceman (so named for the area where he was found) had ingested hop hornbeam pollen not long before he died. According to forensic reports, the cell contents of the pollen (in his intestines) were still visible.

The find was remarkable, not only for Oetzi himself (his face has been reconstructed based on his remains), but for his artifacts. His are the only intact axe and blade, used in the relevant time frame, ever found anywhere.

Twenty years before, in Western Greenland, the discovery of frozen mummies had also created a worldwide sensation.

The Inuit people (sometimes called Eskimos) have lived in the Uummannaq District of Western Greenland for centuries. It's a frigid place, halfway up the west coast of the world's largest island.

Qilakitsoq, an abandoned settlement in the area, is just north of Ilulissat (site of the world's most active glacier), where the town's harbor is clogged with ice by mid-September. The area, generally speaking, is part of Greenland's "iceberg-making factory." Before it calved, for example, the iceberg which Titanic struck (on April 14, 1912) would have been part of a Western Greenland glacier.

In the year 1475 (plus or minus fifty years), this sub-zero climate, located 280 miles (450 km) north of the Arctic Circle, was home to Inuit families living in Qilakitsoq. They dressed in warm sealskins and included meat in their diets. We know these facts because hunters, in 1972, found some of their bodies. They were the best-preserved human remains ever located in North America.

Six women, a 4-year-old boy and a 6-month-old baby had been mummified by the very dry climate and the ever-frigid temperatures. Their state of preservation was extraordinary.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FROZEN-MUMMIES-Mummies-Bodies-Talk)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FROZEN-MUMMIES-Mummies-Bodies-Talk)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FROZEN-MUMMIES-Mummies-Bodies-Talk>



### Frozen Mummy from Qilakitsoq

Photo by Choffa, in 2006, released to the public domain.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Frozen-Mummy-from-Qilakitsoq>



### Otztal Alps - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Otztal-Alps-Map-Locator>



### Location Where Oetzi the Iceman Was Found

Image online, courtesy Johan Reinhard via Picasa Web.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Location-Where-Oetzi-the-Iceman-Was-Found>



### Oetzi the Iceman before Removal

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oetzi-the-Iceman-before-Removal>



### Oetzi the Iceman - From the Copper Age

Photo of Oetzi, online courtesy South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oetzi-the-Iceman-From-the-Copper-Age>



### Oetzi the Iceman - How He May Have Looked in Life

Photo of Oetzi, online courtesy South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oetzi-the-Iceman-How-He-May-Have-Looked-in-Life>



### Oetzi the Ice Man - His Axe

Image online, courtesy BBC Horizon, [iceman gallery](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oetzi-the-Ice-Man-His-Axe>



### Oetzi the Ice Man - Blade of His Axe

Image online, courtesy BBC Horizon, [iceman gallery](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oetzi-the-Ice-Man-Blade-of-His-Axe>



### Uummannaq Map

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Greenland Map

Map online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Ilulissat - Site of World's Most-Active Glacier

Image online, courtesy UNESCO's World Heritage List.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ilulissat-Site-of-World-s-Most-Active-Glacier>



### Active Glacier - Ilulissat, Greenland

Photo, online courtesy NOAA.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Active-Glacier-Ilulissat-Greenland>



### Ilulissat - Ice-Clogged Harbor, in September

Photo online, courtesy NOAA.

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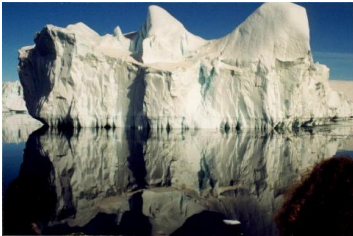
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ilulissat-Ice-Clogged-Harbor-in-September>



### Greenland - Home of Icebergs

Photo online, courtesy NOAA.

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### Greenland Iceberg - Beauty on the Water

Photo online, courtesy NOAA.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Greenland-Iceberg-Beauty-on-the-Water>



### Qilakitsoq Mummy - Remarkably Preserved

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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