

Interesting Facts about Icebergs

Icebergs are some of the most awe-inspiring spectacles in the world. But how much do you know about them? Here are some facts to expand your knowledge of icebergs.

- The term iceberg probably originates from the Dutch term ijsberg, which means ice hill.
- Icebergs are comprised of pure, fresh water.
- Ice harvested from icebergs is often used to make products that boast purity and superior quality, such as vodka.
- Icebergs float because the density of ice is less than sea water.
- Approximately seven-eighths (7/8) of an iceberg's mass is below water.
- Birds taking flight from an iceberg are a good sign that an iceberg is going to roll soon. A possible explanation is that birds' keen sense of balance enables them to detect gradual movements in icebergs long before people can see them.
- It takes an iceberg about two to three years to reach the island of Newfoundland from Greenland a distance of 1,800 nautical miles!
- The terms tabular, blocky, wedge, dome, pinnacle, and drydock are used to describe iceberg shapes.
- The area from the northern tip of Labrador to the southern Grand Banks of Newfoundland is referred to as Iceberg Alley.
- The average iceberg weight for the Grand Banks is one to two hundred thousand tonnes.
- Hibernia, an oil platform off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, is designed to withstand the impact of an iceberg in excess of five million tonnes. The massive reinforced concrete oil drilling structure has vertical wedge-shaped elements on the surface intended to reduce iceberg impact loads.

Information courtesy of Dr. Stephen E. Bruneau, from "Icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador", Flanker Press 2004



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Iceberg Shapes

A fantastic variety of shapes result from the deterioration process of icebergs. Despite the fact that no two icebergs are the same, there are certain categories of shapes that are used for iceberg observation. Often the terms; tabular, blocky, wedge, dome, pinnacle, and drydock are used.

Shape	Description	Sketch
Tabular	A flat-topped iceberg. Most show horizontal banding. Usually width is greater than 5 times height.	
Domed	An iceberg which is smooth and rounded on top.	
Pinnacled	An iceberg with a central spire, or pyramid, may have additional spires.	
Wedged	An iceberg with flat surfaces steep on one side and gradually sloped to the water on the other forming a wedge shape.	
Drydocked	An iceberg which is eroded such that a U-shaped slot is formed near, or at, water level with two or more pinnacles or columns.	
Blocky	A flat-topped iceberg with steep sides.	

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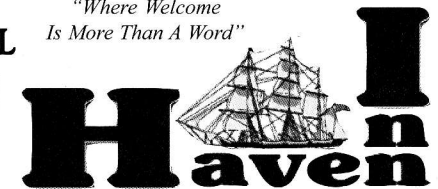
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