

## Kaktovik

Barter Island rests approximately 50 miles north of Alaska's Brooks Range. Kaktovik is the easternmost village in the North Slope Borough, 70 miles west of the Canadian border, 120 miles east of Deadhorse, 310 miles east of Barrow, and 382 miles north of Fairbanks. The 250-plus residents enjoy subsistence lifestyle and most of those employed worked for the North Slope Borough. The church has a parsonage available.



### Community:

**Location** – According to *Explore North*, “Kaktovik lies on the north shore of Barter Island, between the Okpilak and Jago Rivers on the Beaufort Sea coast. It lies in the 19.6-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, home to the Porcupine caribou herd. The community is located in the Barrow Recording District.”

**Travel/Transportation** – The only way to get between Kaktovik and other major cities in Alaska is by airplane. Inter-village travel is available by boat when the ice is gone or snowmachine in the winter.

**History** – Until the late nineteenth century the island was a major trade center for the Inupiat and was especially important as a bartering place for Inupiat from Alaska and Inuit from Canada (*Explore North*).

**Population** – The population in 2021 is 252 people (*World Population Review*).

**Demographics** – The Kaktovik demographics according to the *World Population Review*, the primary racial composition of Kaktovik is Native American (86.52%), two or more races (8.43%), and white (3.93%).

**Jobs** – According to the North Slope Borough information, “Two-thirds of the working residents are employed by the North Slope Borough, and another 25 percent work for the School District. Almost thirty-three percent of the work force is employed in the private sector, primarily by Native corporations and their affiliates. Like other communities in the region, subsistence hunting, fishing, and whaling play a major role in the local economy. Hunting in the nearby area is for Dall sheep, moose, caribou, and fox.”

**School** – There is one school in Kaktovik with 67 students.

### Church History:

City Data reports that over 80% of Kaktovik list, “none” as their religious affiliation. Agnew Rodli established the church in 1960, holding services in a Quonset hut under great difficulty. The first Eskimo to be ordained by the Alaska Assemblies of God, Ned Nusunginya, pastored in Kaktovik from 1966-1970. The church remained closed for a number of years. From

2000-2005 Terry and Juanita Watkins reestablished the work. The pastor of a neighboring church (in Barrow) wrote about the church in 2017, “The church is a nice facility, there is a good parsonage, and everything is ready to go...we just need a pastor.”

**Sources:**

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