

# Community perspectives on Inuit country food insecurity in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut

Jamie Desautels, Jacqueline Chapman, **Stephan Schott** (2023)

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## Gjoa Haven

The community of **Gjoa Haven** is located 250 km above the Arctic circle on the southeast coast of King William Island in Nunavut. The community's Inuktitut name is *Uqsuqtuuk*, which means 'place of plenty of blubber' and signifies its longstanding **connection to country food**.



Country food is linked to Inuit identity and way of life, and is valuable for **mental and physical health**. Unlike accessing store-bought food, accessing country food has **added challenges** that need to be considered when addressing food insecurity.

Researchers conducted **focus groups** in Gjoa Haven over a three-year period including **elders, youth, hunters, food preparers**, and wellness and food programs and services **coordinators**.

## Common barriers to food accessibility include:

- **Cost** of transportation, equipment, and fuel
- **Physical ability** to go out hunting due to work obligations and lack of reliable equipment
- Limited **intergenerational sharing of knowledge and experience** hunting, often due to loss of language, cultural barriers and social shyness between youth and Elders



- Limited **availability of wildlife** due to conservation practices and stationary lifestyle
- Lack of capacity to **process, prepare and store food**



Government policies and programs **need to do more** than just address barriers to country food security and provide subsidies. Initiatives need to **work alongside communities** to **empower** local community members with the mutual objective of building a stronger country food system that **aligns with Inuit preferences and objectives** for food security.