

# Life at the end of the world

The Nenets are the last nomadic people left in Russia, eking out a precarious existence in an inhospitable autonomous district in northwest Siberia

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## BIG SKY COUNTRY

The Yamal-Nenets autonomous district is a frigid place where winter temperatures plunge to  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  or even  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The harshness of the tundra has ensured that they are left to roam in freedom, migrating twice a year, hauling their tents and belongings on wooden sleds for up to 1,000 kilometres in all. Following ancient routes from Arctic tundra pastures in summer, they head south to the more protected sub-Arctic taiga ready for winter.



NEVER AN IDLE MOMENT

There's plenty for everyone to do: the women look after the children, cook, tan skins, make and repair clothes, chop the wood, store up snow for drinking water, and assemble and disassemble the household during migration. Men take care of the reindeer, choose the pasture, build the sledges, hunt and fish.



EATING ON THE HOOF

The reindeer are also essential to the Nenets' diet, along with a little fish. The meat is preserved by smoking, then is eaten raw or boiled. As their diet doesn't include vegetables or fruit, vitamins come from the fresh meat, the uncooked liver, kidneys, heart and the warm blood of the reindeer.



LENDING A HAND  
Olya, six years old, helps her parents do chores by storing up firewood for the hearth.