

Visual compilation of documented beliefs connected to the polar lights.^{5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

Compiled by Carrie C Firman and downloaded from carriecfirman.com/synesthesia/northernlights.html

People	Location (in modern terms)	Name/description for aurora	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Fire	Animal	Spirits/Spiritual	Ancestral	Predictive
Gunditjmara	Western Victoria, Australia	<i>puae buae</i> , ashes		x	x					
Gunai	Eastern Victoria, Australia	bushfires in the spirit world	x		x		x			
Dieri	South Australia	<i>kootchee</i> , an evil spirit creating a large fire	x		x		x			
Ngarrindjeri	South Australia	the campfires of spirits in the 'Land of the Dead'		x	x			x		
Aboriginal People of Queensland	Southwest Queensland, Australia	Fires of the Oola Pikka, ghostly spirits who spoke to the people through auroras. Only male elders were allowed to watch and interpret these messages.	x				x			
Chipewyan Dene*	Western Canada	Spirits of the dead dancing in the sky; brighter lights indicated heightened happiness	x					x		
Mandan Native Americans	North Dakota	Fires in pots for simmering dead enemies, presided over by medicine men and warriors	x			x	x			
Eskimo	Northern Alaska, northern Canada, northeast Siberia, and Greenland	<i>keoeit</i> Torches held by spirit guides to lead the souls of the recently deceased to the afterlife	x				x	x		
Eskimos of the Lower Yukon River	Alaska	Dancing souls of their favorite animals (deer, seals, salmon, and beluga whales)	x			x	x			
Eskimos in the Kodiak Islands	Alaska	Used by healers in the treatment of heart ailments	x							x
Nunamiut	North and northwest interior of Alaska	A good hunt the next day, if the sky is divided in half by the aurora	x							x
Greenlandic Inuit	Greenland	Spirits of stillborn and deceased children dancing/playing	x				x	x		
Inuit of the Central Canadian Arctic	Central Canadian Arctic	Helping spirit harnessed by healing shamans for guidance on treatments or the rescue of souls	x				x			
Finns and Karelians (as recorded in the <i>Kalevala</i> , the national epic poetry piece of the 1800s)	Finland and the Republic of Karelia (an autonomous region that is a federal subject of Russia) bordering the lower half of Finland to the east)	The gates of the north, tied to the literary stories of travel and typical depiction of people in the north as enemies. In some Karelian dialects, the aurora is still called "fiery pillars."		x	x	x				
Northern Sami	Northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland	<i>Guoussahasat</i> , morning/evening glow	x							
Lapland Sami	Northern Finland	<i>revontulet</i> , fire fox Magical animals lit up the sky with the sparks flying off their fur	x			x	x			
Alaskan Eskimo, Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit, Sami, Siberian Natives	Alaska, northern Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia	Represent souls of those died through loss of blood, playing a game of soccer. The ball is in some areas reported to be a human skull, in others the head of a walrus. The "ball" is not always deceased.		x			x	x	x	
Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney Islands	Northern Scotland	"Nimble ones/dancers," a tribe of shining fairies	x				x			
Scots	Scotland	Merry dancers	x							
Swedes	Sweden	Polka/folk dance Prediction of good harvest	x x							x
Vikings	Norway, Denmark	Reflections off the shields of the Valkyries, who choose which warriors will enter Valhalla (honored afterlife); or reflections of deceased maidens		x			x			
Danes	Denmark	Folklore says the lights are reflections caused by swans caught far north in ice, flapping their wings		x			x			
Estonians	Estonia	The glow from a celestial wedding	x				x			
Russians	Russia	Associated with <i>Ognenniy Zmey</i> , the fire dragon, which seduced wives while husbands were away		x		x	x			
Scandinavian Fishermen	Norway, Sweden, Denmark	The sun reflecting off the backs of large schools of herring, indicating a good catch to be had	x							x
French, Italians, and Greeks	Citations as late as the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71	Red aurora illuminating the sky without much specific shape indicated bloodshed to come		x						x
French Canadians	Quebec, Canada	Marionettes	x							
Confederate American Troops	Virginia, during the Battle of Fredericksburg (Dec. 14, 1862)	Reported in many letters and diaries, a rare southern aurora appeared red (see above) and the Confederates took this as an indication that God was on their side. They were victorious the next day.	x				x			x
Native People of Ceylon	Sri Lanka	Buddha lights, interpreted by priests as signifying displeasure at the sinfulness of the people		x			x			

*This belief is often cited as linked to Native American tribes living in northern areas, but the Chipewyan Dene are the one tribe to which it can be specifically attributed. They are also not to be confused with the Chippewa.