

7-DAY ADVENTURE

## FIRE, ICE AND NORTHERN LIGHTS

Iceland

In the cold winter months when the temperature rarely gets above 0° C, Iceland is an adventure seekers playground. On this superb, seven day adventure, experience the unmissable destinations that give Iceland it's magical quality. Swim in natural geothermal pools, discover the Nordic beauty of Iceland's black sand beaches, feel the misty spray emanating from enormous waterfalls and watch the Northern Lights dance across the dark, night skies. This action packed Icelandic adventure showcases all the incredible natural wonders of Southern Iceland.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Get up close to majestic waterfalls, their torrents cascading over cliff faces on Route 1
- Catch a glimpse of the Northern Lights painting the sky electric green
- Swim in geothermal hot springs
- Relax in the knowledge your trip is fully carbon offset



# ITINERARY

## DAY 1

### WELCOME TO ICELAND

Welcome to Iceland! Make your way to your accommodation in the capital city. Then depending on your arrival time, enjoy an evening to explore Reykjavik at your leisure. Why not join a walking tour of the city, visit the iconic Hallgrímskirkja, or perhaps try some authentic Icelandic foods such as fermented shark at Cafe Loki (other food options available!). A pre-trip briefing will be held at your hotel this evening, please aim to arrive before 5pm to attend this briefing.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

## DAY 2

### GOLDEN CIRCLE AND SECRET LAGOON

We depart early this morning, boarding our minibus to embark on the famous Golden Circle. Starting off at Thingvellir, "the valley of the parliament", this deep fault is a cornerstone in Icelandic history. Established in 930BC, the Alþing (ancient parliament of Iceland) ran their summer sessions camped out within the fissure. Taking a short hike between the chasm we then continue with discovering of the site of Geysir. Here, the geyser Strokkur puts on an explosive show every 5 to 10 minutes. A guaranteed spectacle! We round up our Golden Circle tour with a visit to the forging torrents of Gullfoss, "the Golden Fall". After a jam packed morning, we take it down a notch and spend our afternoon bathing in the warm waters of the "Secret Lagoon" before returning to our accommodation in Reykjavik.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Hiking time: **2 hours**

Ascent: **200 m**

Descent: **200 m**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Lunch**

## DAY 3

### LAVA, WATERFALLS AND BLACK SAND BEACHES

This morning, we set out on a scenic hour and a half's drive, reaching our destination of Hvolsvöllur to visit the lava museum. This interactive museum gives an in-depth understanding of the volcanic geography which makes up Iceland. After a couple of hours learning about seismic phenomena, our exploration of the Icelandic south coast continues and we head East, stopping at the majestic curtain of Skogafoss and taking a short, steep hike to reach its summit. Reaching our home for the evening in the village of Vik, we explore it's mythical black sand beaches and other wordly basalt organs. As night falls, we might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the northern lights.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Hiking time: **3 hours**

Ascent: **80 m**

Descent: **80 m**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 4

### SKAFTAFELL AND NORTHERN LIGHTS

This morning we head east to Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe. At Skaftafell, the glacial tongues almost disappear onto the road, offering an astonishing alpine landscape at just a few dozen meters above sea level! The trail winds between the birch trees, rising to different viewpoints over the glaciers. We then board our vehicle again to reach our accommodation, where we will settle in for the next two nights. As on other evenings, if it is clear and solar activity is strong, we can spend some time outside to admire the breathtaking spectacle of the Northern Lights.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Hiking time: **2 hours**

Ascent: **320 m**

Descent: **320 m**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 5

### GLACIERS, ICE CAVES AND DIAMOND BEACH

Today we embark on a thorough exploration of the Vatnajökull ice cap. Donning crampons, we set off across the crunchy formations of the glacier, before dropping deep inside it, to experience the ephemeral blue hues of a naturally formed ice cave. Returning to our accommodation, we warm up over lunch before spending the afternoon adventuring with icebergs. At Jökulsárlón, the icebergs perform a solemn dance, cracking and breaking before our eyes, punctuated by their back up dancers; seals. These translucent icebergs find their resting place on the black sand beach surrounding the lagoon, creating the ultra-photogenic site of Diamond Beach.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Hiking time: **3 hours**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 6

### LAVA TUNNELS AND GEOTHERMAL POOLS

After breakfast, a few hours of driving take us to the geothermal area of Hveragerdi where we can discover Raufarhólshellir, one of the longest lava tunnels in Iceland. We follow the amber walls of the tunnels, marking the route of the lava that flowed here over 5,200 years ago. In Hveragerdi, depending on weather conditions, we put on snowshoes for a walk in the middle of fumaroles and bubbling mud pools. We relax in the hot water river, fed by the Hengill volcano, before heading back to Reykjavik and settling in at our accommodation.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Lunch**

#### DAY 7

### REYKJAVIK AND THE BLUE LAGOON

There are lots of options available for you this morning, wander the streets of Reykjavík, go on a whale watching excursion, tour the museums, take a horse riding trip - its up to you. We all meet up for lunch in the afternoon and head off once again to the Reykjanes peninsula. This time our destination is the most famous spa in Iceland, the Blue Lagoon, located in the middle of a lava field. It is a unique experience, bathing in milky water at 39 °C and certainly has a revitalizing effect! We will return to Reykjavík in the evening where we say goodbye to the group and make our own way on our onwards travels. If you would like us to book an additional night in our hotel for you for this night, please let us know upon booking.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Lunch**

# TRIP INFORMATION

## DIFFICULTY

This winter exploration of southern Iceland is not physically demanding. Hiking for between 2 and 6 hours each day on well trodden trails with little vertical ascent or descent. To get the maximum enjoyment from the trip, you should be in good health and have a reasonable level of fitness. The Icelandic weather can be unpredictable and you should be prepared for very cold and windy conditions that will make the trip feel more difficult.

## FOOD & DRINK

Each day will start with a breakfast of cereals, bread, jam and honey, fresh fruit and plenty of tea and coffee. After breakfast we prepare our own picnic lunches to throw in our daypacks. There will be a range of snacky foods as well as salads, dried fruits and cakes available for lunch.

In Reykjavik your evening meals are free so you can head into the city to sample some of the local restaurants. Reykjavik is a small city so you will find plenty of places to eat within a few minutes walk from your hotel. Icelandic delicacies include Harðfiskur - dried fish, Hákarl - fermented shark, Skyr and local lamb.

In the guesthouses where we will be staying for the rest of the trip, you will help the guide to prepare the evening meal. Your help in the kitchen is expected and much appreciated, particularly in the evenings with food prep and washing up. We like the whole group to work as a team to cook dinner, it creates a pleasant atmosphere as we reflect on the days adventures together.

If you have special dietary requirements please inform us of this when completing your participant forms and include as much detail as possible. For example, if you are vegetarian, please inform us if you eat fish or not. Our guides will do their best to meet your requirements but you may like to bring one or two products with you. For example, gluten free products are not readily available in Iceland so you could **bring a small bag of GF pasta and** maybe a pack of your favourite GF biscuits. Please feel free to contact us and discuss this if you would like more information.

In Iceland, alcoholic drinks are sold only in state stores and alcohol is very expensive due to high levels of taxation. If you would like a drink in the evenings, it is a good idea to purchase something at duty free as you exit the airport.

## ACCOMMODATION

**Hotel:** In Reykjavik we stay in comfortable hotel accommodation in twin rooms with en-suite bathroom facilities.

**Guest house:** This is friendly accommodation in large, typical Icelandic houses, located in towns or along the main road no.1. The guesthouses will normally have 5 to 10 dormitory style rooms accommodating 4 to 6 people in each. Single occupancy isn't available at guesthouses. The guesthouses will have shared bathroom facilities, and a kitchen is regularly available. Wifi is also available and breakfast is provided.

At every location on our Iceland trips there will be access to flushing, western style toilets.

## LUGGAGE

You will need to bring a 70-80 litre duffel bag or backpack for the bulk of your luggage and a smaller 30-40 litre daypack to carry with you each day. Please do not bring a rigid suitcase as this is not as practical to transport during your trip. Your luggage will travel with you in the group vehicle and it is a good idea to pack anything you do not want to get wet into dry bags.

## HOW DO I GET THERE?

You will need to arrive in Reykjavik on day 1 of your itinerary. Reykjavik's international airport is called Keflavic (KEF) and is located 48km outside the city. The journey from the airport into the city will take around 45mins. Reykjavik's city airport is used for domestic flights only.

From the UK, there are direct flights to Keflavic from London Heathrow (LHR) with British Airways and Icelandair. Easy Jet also offer direct flights from London Luton (LTN), Manchester (MAN) and Edinburgh (EDI). The flight time is roughly 3 hours depending on which airport you depart from.

For those traveling from the USA, Icelandair have direct flights from New York (JFK), Boston (BOS), Washington (IAD) and Seattle (SEA). Delta offer convenient flights via New York from San Francisco (SFO), Los Angeles (LAX), Phoenix (PHX) and Atlanta (ATL).

A national shuttle bus called *Flybus* runs from Keflavik airport to Reykjavik. It departs 30-45 minutes after each flight arrival and is located right outside the arrivals terminal. Tickets cost £20 / \$27 and you can either buy a ticket beforehand on the [Flybus website](#) or once you've landed at the Flybus desk in the arrivals terminal. If you choose the Flybus+ option you can also choose to be dropped off at your hotel for an additional fee. On departure, please choose your pick up time for 3-4 hours before your plane departure. This should give you enough time to get through the airport and onto your flight. You can get on at any of the numerous Flybus stops or again choose to be picked up from your hotel with the Flybus+ option. If you choose this option please be ready to depart from your hotel 30 minutes before your chosen time.

## BUDGET & CHANGE

The local currency in Iceland is the **Icelandic Krona** (ISK). For the most up to date exchange rate please visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

Iceland isn't a cheap place to visit. Restaurants often have lunchtime special menus which are great value (around £20-30pp for a soup and fish of the day). A meal out for 2 will cost around £60-100 (fish) or £80-120 (meat). When getting around in Reykjavik an exciting and cheap option is to use the electric scooters parked up around town. Simply download the app and scoot away. If this feels too techy, a taxi starting price will cost roughly £4.30 or going on foot is more than appropriate as Reykjavik has a small city centre. Souvenirs can cost anything from ~£5 to £500. It is also worth knowing that as a tourist, you can claim back the value-added tax (VAT) on certain goods over the value of ISK 6,000 (£36) at Keflavik airport before your flight home. As long as this is all on one tax receipt, you can claim back the tax.

## TIPS

Tipping customs vary all over the world and can be very confusing when travelling to a new country. Tipping is always appreciated - it is not obligatory and should be left to the discretion of each individual in Iceland. Tips are not a substitute for good wages: our guides are all well paid and well looked after. If you are satisfied with your guide's services, we recommend a tip between **£30-40 per person** (equivalent to 5000-6600 ISK) for the entire trip. On the other hand, if you receive bad service or have not been treated well, you would not be expected to tip at all. Tips can be paid in either local currency or Euros.

# FORMALITIES & HEALTH

## PASSPORT

Most travellers will require a passport valid for at least 3 months after your return date. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific requirements and please be aware that proof of onward travel may be required.

## VISA

Travelling to the Iceland is visa free for up to 90 days, for UK and US citizens

## VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required.

## INSURANCE

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses. We ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

## MEDICATION

Your guide carries a first aid kit at all times but we recommend you carry the following items:

- Painkillers
- Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- Sunscreen (high factor) for lips and skin
- Moisturising cream
- Elastic bandage and regular bandages
- Sanitary products
- Mosquito spray
- Blister bandage

# EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

## CLOTHING TO BRING

- Hard shell outer jacket - waterproof and windproof
- Hard shell trousers - waterproof and wind proof
- Insulated jacket (optional)
- Walking boots - waterproof with rigid soles and good ankle support
- Trainers - or any more comfortable shoes for shorter walks and evenings
- Gaiters (optional)
- Warm beanie style hat
- Warm gloves or mittens
- Scarf or snood to protect your neck from cold wind
- Fleece or soft shell jacket
- Warm jumper
- T-shirts (mix of long and short sleeve)
- Trekking trousers
- Comfy trousers for evenings
- Swimming costume
- 3-4 pairs of thick hiking socks
- Thermal base layers (top and leggings)

## EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- Sun glasses - with good UV protection (essential for glacier walking)
- 2 x 1 litre water bottles or hydration pack
- Head torch with spare batteries and bulb
- Toiletries (including wet wipes)
- Dry bags for keep clothes dry in your luggage
- Container for any toxic rubbish (batteries, sanitary items etc)
- Duffel bag (80 to 90 litres), flexible and water resistant
- Daypack (30 to 40 litres) to carry with you each day

# HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

## **1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY**

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

## **2 CONTACT US**

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

## **3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT**

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.

