

8-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 8 day adventure we are going to hike across glaciers, swim in hot volcanic pools, walk through ice caves and along black sand beaches, gaze up at enormous waterfalls and, if we are lucky, watch the northern lights dance across the night skies. This action packed Icelandic adventure showcases all the incredible natural wonders of southern Iceland in one intense week of exploration and discovery.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience all the best bits of south Iceland in winter
- Catch a glimpse of the magical northern lights
- Use crampons to walk on the Vatnajökull Glacier
- Take a swim in geothermal pools



ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVAL

Arrive at Keflavik international airport where a member of our local team will be waiting to greet you. Transfer to the city and settle at your accommodation.

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

DAY 2

THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

On our first full day in Iceland we set off early for the Reykjanes Peninsula and get our first glimpse of the incredible volcanic activity here. We visit the Fagradalsfjall crater, Iceland's newest volcano, where lava can be seen rising and flowing from the earth. We then take the road northwards towards the golden circle and Thingvellir, the valley of the parliament, high place of Icelandic history. This is where the summer sessions of the Alþing were held, the ancient parliament of Iceland established in 930. Our journey continues with a discovery of the Strokkur geyser which explodes every 5 to 10 minutes. After lunch we visit Gullfoss, "the Fall of Gold", a gigantic two-level waterfall flowing into a ravine of basalt rock. To end the day we visit the stunning Secret Lagoon and enjoy a swim in the natural pools of warm water.

Hiking time: **2 - 3 hours**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 3

LAVA TUNNELS, WATERFALLS AND VIK

This morning we leave our guesthouse in Reykjavik and set off for the south Icelandic coast. Our first discovery is Raufarhólshellir, one of the longest lava tunnels in Iceland. We walk through the tunnels, following the route of the lava that flowed here over 5,200 years ago. We continue to the magical waterfalls of Seljalandfoss and Skogafoss before reaching Vik and its black sand beaches. Here we can see the Reynisdranga, 3 basalt rock columns that rise from the ocean, carved by the wind and waves over hundreds of years. Legend says that the columns were once trolls, caught out by the early morning light and frozen where they stood. In the afternoon, if the weather allows it, we have the chance to swim in the oldest natural water pool in Iceland.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

SKAFTAFELL AND JOKULSARLON LAGOON

Today we head east to Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe. We hike to Skaftafell, where the glacial tongues descend to just meters above sea level and the alpine landscape is simply astonishing. Depending on the conditions when we arrive, Snowshoes and poles are provided for the hike. A few kilometers further east, we reach the glacial lagoon of Jokulsarlon, where the Breidamerkur glacier gives rise to icebergs which drift off towards the ocean. In the evening, the seals come to hunt in the lagoon and provide our evening entertainment.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**

Accommodation: **Farm Inn**

Meals included:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

GLACIER WALKING AND ICE CAVES

Today we are off on a hiking trip on the Vatnajökull Glacier! Our crampons on our feet, we set off to explore a glacier roughly the size of the island of Cyprus. We discover an ice cave where the frozen walls in different shades of blue create a magical and ephemeral environment that will disappear at the end of winter. We take time to admire the bluish reflections and the play of light on the ice (awesome for photographers) before heading back down the glacier to our accommodation.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Accommodation: **Farm Inn**

Meals included:

Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 6

LAVA, SNOWSHOEING AND SWIMMING

After breakfast, a few hours of driving take us to the geothermal area of Hveragerdi. On the way there we make a stop at Hvolsvollur to visit the lava museum. This interactive museum provides a brilliant insight into the volcanic nature of Iceland and the forces that have created the island we know today. 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.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

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 Reykjavik, 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 Reykjavik in the evening.

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Lunch**

DAY 8

DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Meals included: **Breakfast**

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 bread to make sandwiches and a range of fillings to choose from (cheese, cold meats, vegetables) as well as salads, dried fruits and cakes.

In the evening, everybody helps out to prepare dinner along with your guide. We are proud of the healthy and delicious meals we provide even out in the Icelandic wilderness! There will always be plenty of fresh vegetables and you will have the opportunity to taste skyr, smoked salmon, leg of lamb and other tasty Icelandic delicacies. Every meal will include some kind of local meat or fish.

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 favorite 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

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 or double rooms can be booked on request and subject to availability. The guesthouses will have shared bathroom facilities, and a kitchen is regularly available. Wifi is available and breakfast is provided.

Farmhouse inn: In the heart of the Icelandic countryside, inns are often located on farms. These are generally small structures with 10 to 20 dormitory rooms. This simple and welcoming type of accommodation is the best way to get to know the locals and their culture. There are shared bathroom facilities but private en-suite rooms can be provided on request and subject to availability. There will be electricity for charging, hot running water and WiFi is available at most locations.

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).

On arrival in Iceland, after clearing immigration and collecting your luggage, please look out for a member of our team in the arrivals area. They will be holding a large "KANDOO" sign.

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

For meals in Reykjavik you should budget 2500 - 5600 Krona

TIPS

Although the custom is not widespread in Iceland, if you are satisfied with the services of your guide, tipping is always appreciated. It is not obligatory and should be left to the discretion of each individual.

FORMALITIES & HEALTH

PASSPORT

Most travellers will require a passport valid for at least 6 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

- Sleeping bag (comfort rating 0 ° C)
- 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.

