

# EXPLORE!

**BEST SELLER**

**Iceland Winter Adventure**

10 days

Iceland - Trip code ICE



## Iceland Winter Adventure

This adventure allows us to explore the stunning natural beauty of Iceland's volcanic landscape in winter with its snow-covered glaciers, steaming geysers and lava fields. We also have the opportunity to travel by boat to Hrisey Island, ride in a snow cat or super jeep, walk on a glacier and hopefully watch wildlife including reindeer and whales in their natural habitat. If we are lucky, we may even experience the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Akureyri** - Take an exhilarating snow cat or super jeep ride and enjoy a traditional fish lunch and beer tasting
- ★ **Lake Myvatn** - Explore this diverse volcanic landscape and warm up in the Nature Baths
- ★ **Golden Circle** - Travel around Iceland's famous loop to see the remarkable natural wonders of Thingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss
- ★ **Reykjavik** - Discover this vibrant and contrasting city that is the world's most northerly capital
- ★ **Northern Lights** - Stay in accommodation providing the best chance of viewing this natural spectacle

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

**Simple**

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

**TRIP PACE:****Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

**GROUP SIZE:****12 - 18**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Join trip in Reykjavik

On this trip our transfers from Keflavik airport to our hotel in Reykjavik will be on the very efficient and easy to use public FlyBus and you'll collect your voucher for this from a representative at the airport. On the drive from the airport to the hotel, which takes around 45 minutes, you'll get your first glimpse of the blackened and rocky volcanic scenery found on this part of the island. After checking-in to our conveniently-located hotel in the city, you may have time to explore a little of the world's most northerly capital. Bustling with cosmopolitan energy and surrounded by pure, unpolluted nature, Reykjavik is a city of striking contrasts. Small colourful corrugated iron houses nestle next to futuristic glass buildings; state-of-the-art facilities lie beside rugged volcanic terrain and international influences mingle with Icelandic national traditions. All this creates a unique culture where old embraces new. On this holiday you'll be accompanied by an Explore Leader from days 2 to 8, so this evening you are free to settle in and enjoy the diverse dining and, maybe even the nightlife, of this charming city.



**Accommodation: Hotel Cabin** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None


## DAY 2 - Travel to Akureyri 'the capital of the north'

This morning after meeting your Explore Leader and the rest of the group, we depart Reykjavik and drive to Iceland's second city of Akureyri, where we will spend the next two nights. The journey will take between five to eight hours, depending on road conditions. However, there will be plenty of opportunities to stop along the way to stretch our legs and take photos of the stunning winter scenery. One of the scenic stops along the way will be in the small fishing town of Akranes, just north-west of Reykjavik. This traditional town is home to two of Iceland's 104 lighthouses and from where they stand on the edge of the peninsula we will be afforded panoramic views over the fjord. If we're lucky enough to have a clear sky we will be able to see over to Reykjavik as the sun rises. Travelling further towards Akureyri, we will take a break for lunch along the way. Standing on the shores of the country's longest fjord, Akureyri is a pretty town, with a thriving arts community. It is seen as the cultural heart of the north of the island and its galleries and Lutheran cathedral are worth a visit.




**Accommodation: Hotel Akureyri** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 3 - Snow tractor or super-jeep excursion; boat to Hrisey Island

On our departure for this trip in January-March we will ride into the mountains on a snow cat vehicle, amidst the scenic snow covered peaks. The journey up the 1173 metre-high Kaldbakur Mountain takes around 45 minutes and is rewarded with spectacular views. After fulfilling the tradition of signing the Kaldbakur guest book that is kept in a cairn on the top of the mountain, we begin our descent back down the mountain. This is a true snowy adventure, so make sure you wrap up warm and get ready for a thrilling ride! If you are travelling in October-December or there hasn't been enough snow to operate the snow cat then we visit another mountain nearby and enjoy an exciting one hour super-jeep excursion. These 10 feet high monsters can cross glacial moraine, lava flows and fast-flowing rivers with relative ease. In fact, you won't believe what the drivers can make them do, but fear not - they do this for a living! This afternoon, a 15-minute ferry ride will take us to Hrisey Island from the small village harbour of Arskogssandur. Here, together with our local Viking guide, we will have the chance to experience the slow pace of life on the island, discover some of its rich Viking history and try a traditional fish lunch. We will then return to the mainland, where we will complete our gastronomic trip with a local beer tasting, before heading back to Akureyri for the evening. Please note: Today's itinerary is subject to weather conditions. We may revise the order of activities for your comfort and safety, the Explore Leader will advise on the day. Make sure you dress warmly today for our excursion in the mountains and boat trip.




**Accommodation: Hotel Akureyri** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

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## DAY 4 - Godafoss waterfall, Lake Myvatn and the Nature Baths

This morning, we leave Akureyri for Lake Myvatn, stopping en route at Godafoss. Known as 'the waterfall of the gods', it is particularly spectacular in winter when the clear blue waters partially freeze. Lake Myvatn is an active volcanic area which was formed 3800 years ago when a lava flow blocked the valley. Here, we will be treated to the surreal sight of steam rising from ground vents through the snow-covered ground. We will also see a variety of fascinating rock formations caused by past lava eruptions. After a day exploring, we take a soothing dip in the Nature Baths, where we will find a man-made lagoon to swim in and natural steam baths to relax in. Your Explore Leader will endeavour to time this with sunset so you can relax below the red and pink skies and watch the sun go down over a beautifully frozen Lake Myvatn. The Nature Baths here are a great quieter alternative to the busier Blue Lagoon in Reykjavik - they offer the same wonderful experience but with less people around you. Tonight, our hotel is superbly-positioned for viewing the Northern Lights. Should conditions allow them to make an appearance, you can choose to receive a wake-up call from the hotel staff.




**Accommodation: Sel Hotel** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 5 - Visit Seydisfjordur en route to Egilsstadir

After some time to explore the scenic surroundings of Lake Myvatn this morning, we begin our journey around the east coast en route to our overnight stop in Egilsstadir, we will visit the charming town of Seydisfjordur. With its many well-preserved historic wooden houses, the town is renowned as a bastion of authentic Icelandic culture. During our visit, we hope to have the opportunity to participate in the local goings-on of this community, perhaps with a visit to the music school or a local concert in the church. Please note: Due to weather conditions and snow this day's activities will be decided on the day and your Explore Leader will brief accordingly. There is only one road to Seydisfjordur that is sometimes closed due to snow conditions.



### Accommodation: Guesthouse Eyvindara (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Coastal road to Hofn; chance to see the Northern Lights

Today, we drive along the eastern coastal road to the fishing town of Hofn, admiring the wind-swept sea views along the way. We also hope to catch our first glimpses of Vatnajokull - the largest ice cap in Europe. On the way we will stop in the small historic town of Faskrudfjordur to visit the old French Hospital Museum. This timeworn building, which now houses both a hotel and a museum, dates back to 1903 and was an active hospital for the French fisherman through to 1939. The interactive museum offers insight into how the French fishing industry played a vital role in the growth of Iceland and the conditions the fisherman had to endure. Sat on the edge of the fjord, the cafe is a great place to get a coffee and enjoy the wild views. Tonight, we will stay on a working farm in tranquil countryside near the town. This isolated location makes it another good spot to see the Northern Lights.



### Accommodation: Guesthouse Smyrlabjorg (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Visit Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon and travel to Vik

Continuing our circumnavigation of the island, we'll see more of the Vatnajokull Glacier before stopping at the Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon. Here, we can marvel at the newly formed icebergs as they make their way out to sea. The ice is breaking off from the Bredamerkurjokull Glacier and the icebergs then slowly float through the lagoon and out to sea under a bridge for the main number one road. You can see the bergs drifting out into the ocean whilst others sit lazily on the black beaches waiting for the current to sweep them away. On one of the bridge's pillars there is painting, supposedly by Banksy, of a headless polar bear pushing a shopping trolley. The lagoon is quite narrow, but the waters are up to 250 meters deep, which makes it the deepest lake found in Iceland. Tonight's hotel is in the remote countryside, providing us with another chance to view the Northern Lights.



### Accommodation: Hotel Drangshlid (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Golden Circle tour of Geysir, Gullfoss and Thingvellir

Today, we take a tour of Iceland's 'Golden Circle', which includes many of the natural wonders which make the country so famous. Thingvellir is a rare site of both historical and geological importance. Meaning 'Parliament Plains', this was the location of Iceland's first National Assembly from 930AD until 1798 and, as such, is hugely significant in the country's cultural heritage. What's more, the impressive landscape sits on a unique spot where the Mid-Atlantic Ridge can be seen on dry land before disappearing to the ocean floor where it spends most of its existence. This provides the quirky opportunity to place one foot on the North American tectonic plate and one foot on the Eurasian plate. We move on to the Gullfoss, known as the 'Golden Waterfall', due to the way it cascades into a deep gorge with tremendous force. Regarded by many as one of the most beautiful falls in the world, it often remains partially frozen during the winter months. Geysir is our next stop, with the claim to fame that, as the first spouting spring known to Europeans, it gave all such springs their name. However, it is the Strokkur, meaning 'The Butter Churn', which is the main attraction these days, due to its impressive 100 feet eruptions every few minutes. We return to Reykjavik this evening, where we will have a short sightseeing tour by bus to help us orientate ourselves before going to our conveniently-located hotel which will be our base for the last two nights of the tour. Your Explore Leader will also be able to arrange any of our optional excursions for you that you might wish to participate in during your free day tomorrow.



**Accommodation: Hotel Cabin** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 9 - Free day in the capital

Today will be free to spend as you wish. You may choose to continue to explore the city centre on foot, visiting its art galleries and museums or soaking up the atmosphere in one of its many cafes. Alternatively, you might prefer to go on an optional whale watching trip, horse riding expedition, super jeep ride to the Reykjanes Peninsula or to visit the Blue Lagoon for a swim.



**Accommodation: Hotel Cabin** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



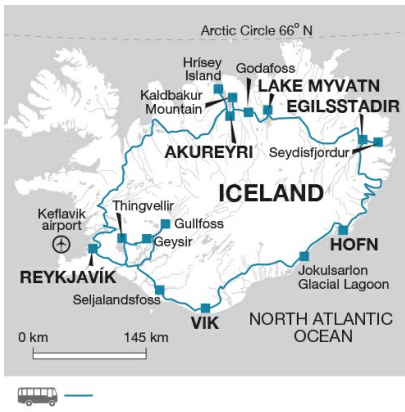
Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Trip ends in Reykjavik

Our trip ends after breakfast this morning. The transfer back to Keflavik airport will be on the public FlyBus and your Explore Leader will provide you with the details of your pick up time and with your voucher for this service on day 8. Please note: The itinerary for this tour is subject to amendment due to weather (snow) or road conditions. Winter is a beautiful time to visit Iceland, but the weather can be unpredictable. Consequently, it may be necessary to alter the order of the itinerary or to change inclusions whilst on tour.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



## Why book this trip

An ideal tour for anyone with a sense of adventure! This tour offers the best of Iceland at a spectacular time of year when the tourists are very few and far between. Although the itinerary is hugely weather dependent, keep an open mind because every day brings a new experience and the local crew work tirelessly to ensure you get the best out of your time in their country. And of course the chance to stand under a clear sky and see the Northern Lights is a tick off your bucket list!

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 9  
Lunch: 2



### Transport

Bus  
Ferry  
Public Bus



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

1 nights simple guesthouse  
1 nights standard guesthouse  
4 nights simple hotel  
3 nights standard hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

### Iceland Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

Iceland has a cool and temperate climate and, despite its location just south of the Arctic Circle, its northerly latitude is counteracted by the warm waters of the North Atlantic Drift which encircles the island. Temperatures in winter can fluctuate between about 10°C and -10°C and precipitation in the form of rain, sleet or snow is to be expected at any time. Days will be short, with daylight often only guaranteed between about 11 am and 4 pm in December. The best time for seeing the Aurora Borealis is October to March. Summer is generally cool with average temperatures for June and July around 12 - 15 degree centigrade in Reykjavik, although is known to be warmer in other parts of the country. In June and July you can enjoy continuous daylight and see the Midnight Sun, whilst late spring and early autumn offer long twilights.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

National Church of Iceland

#### Language

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Reykjavik Horse riding 14,500 ISK including pick-up transfer; Whale watching from Reykjavik harbour 9,900 ISK without a pick-up transfer service or an extra 2,000 ISK to have transfers arranged.

### Clothing

In Iceland weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. In winter temperatures can drop to -20 degrees centigrade. You'll need to take very warm clothing for outdoor activities and cold evenings watching the Aurora Borealis, so pack layers. A good quality heavy duty wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential. We'd also strongly recommend packing thermal underwear, fleece under trousers, a fleece jumper, woolly hat, thick socks, scarf/nood and gloves (and glove liners for when you're taking photos). You may also find ski trousers or salopettes and a ski face/neck mask useful. You'll also need to bring a swimming costume for the Lake Myvatn Nature Baths. If you are planning to join a whale watching excursion then we recommend wrapping up extra warmly as it can be very chilly out at sea.

### Footwear

We recommend taking walking boots with a sturdy tread and also trainers. Soft indoor shoes are recommended as it is normal in Iceland to have special house shoes. You may also find a pair of snow boots useful and for the Nature Baths a pair of flip flops.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a small daypack.

### Equipment

We recommend you bring a small torch and medical kit. The sun can be very strong, so take a sun hat, sunscreen and sun glasses. You may find taking some over shoe ice grips to be of use and/or a walking pole in case of icy conditions. Iceland is one of the most photogenic places on the planet, so we'd suggest taking a camera with a spare memory card and battery. To get the best pictures of the Northern Lights it is advisable to take a tripod and use a camera with a long-exposure setting. You may also find binocular useful for wildlife spotting. A towel will be provided at the Nature Baths for use during your visit.

### Tipping

#### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

#### Local crew

Tipping is not a recognised part of life in Iceland and most bills in restaurants, taxis etc. will already automatically include gratuity.

### Country Information

## Iceland Holidays & Tours

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Dinner price

£18.00 - 24.00

#### Beer price

£4.00 - 6.00

**Water price**  
£2

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**  
Icelandic Krona (ISK).

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**  
Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices.

**Where To Exchange**  
Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices

**ATM Availability**  
Cash can be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in Reykjavik and at the airport.

**Credit Card Acceptance**  
Most shops and restaurants take credit cards.

**Travellers Cheques**  
Can be exchanged at banks and post offices.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Ferry, Public Bus

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On this holiday we mainly use simple accommodation. The majority of hotels in Iceland are decorated in a plain style and many weren't originally built as hotels, but were instead converted from things such as old schools. Rooms can be small and the facilities can be basic. Most accommodation won't have hairdryers or teas and coffee making facilities in the room and some may not have a television, but the scenery outside is so stunning that after a busy day exploring you're unlikely to miss having one. Some of the accommodation used may have shared bathroom facilities. Due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Iceland, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms and there have been some occurrences of overbookings, which are often notified to us at a late stage. For this reason, we would like to emphasise that hotel accommodation is subject to change, which may result in the need to alter your night stops with little or no notice. Explore are working closely with our team on the ground to minimise changes to accommodation, although in the case of unavoidable hotel changes, we will endeavour to always provide accommodation of the same or a higher standard.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)



## Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## Visa Information

Iceland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Included activities

There's no getting away from the fact that Iceland is an expensive destination, eating out can be pricey and the standard of accommodation you can get for your money is probably lower than you'd expect in most other European destinations. But having said this Iceland is one of our favourite places, as it is just so unique and there are so many incredible natural wonders to see, that you come home with amazing memories they tend to eclipse the cost of having gone there in the first place, but it's important to know what to expect and to budget accordingly. Please do take note of the accommodation rating, food and drink sections of our trip notes.

## Non refundable permits

## Iceland Holidays & Tours

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory; tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

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