

EXPLORE!

Family Land of Ice and Fire

6 days

Iceland - Trip code FIC



Family Land of Ice and Fire

Iceland's volcanic landscape offers a dramatic mix of ice and fire. Hike on snow-covered glaciers, witness thundering waterfalls, barren lava fields and steaming geysers. Enjoy the long summer days as we explore the island we try our hand at making a traditional Icelandic dish, visit a Viking heritage centre, go caving and even take a zip-wire over a waterfall. We also find time to unwind in the thermal waters of the Secret Lagoon and explore the bustling capital, Reykjavik.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Seljalandsfoss** - Walk behind the Seljalandsfoss waterfall
- ★ **Reykjafoss Waterfall** - take a zip-wire over a waterfall
- ★ **Reykjavik** - Chance to join a whale-watching excursion and enjoy Iceland's bustling capital
- ★ **The Secret Lagoon** - Relax in the famed thermal waters
- ★ **Snaefellsnes Peninsula** - Walk amidst stunning scenery, optional hike on the Snaefellsjokull Glacier

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable 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 and drive to Gullfoss area. Zip wire over waterfall.

Arrive in Iceland and join the trip at Keflavik airport. On arrival head directly for the Reykjanes peninsula, giving us our first taste of the wild landscapes that Iceland is famed for. Our first stop is the small town of Hveragerdi. A powerful earthquake hit the town on 29th May 2008 measuring 6.3 on the richter scale. The earthquake was so powerful an entire area of hot springs opened up throwing colourful mud and highly charged jets of water into the air. We visit an earthquake stimulator and exhibition before heading to the great outdoors and one of the highlights of the trip, zip-wiring over the Reykjafoss Waterfall, one of Iceland's major natural highlights.

At 90 meters long, this is a great way to enjoy the adrenaline rush of zipping across the waterfall in Hveragerdi with all equipment and instruction included, this activity is sure to put a smile on everyone's faces (the zip-wire is weather dependant based upon wind conditions so could take place on another day during your holiday). We continue to our accommodation in the Flúðir area, close to Gullfoss.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Saga (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Skogafoss waterfall, black sand beach or optional glacier walk, secret lagoon.

This morning we drive to the stunning Seljalandsfoss waterfall. We have the unique opportunity here to actually walk behind the falls for an altogether different perspective. The Skogafoss waterfall is close by and probably rivals Gullfoss as Iceland's most famous waterfall with a height of 60m, it regularly produces a rainbow-yielding mist that makes it a photographer's dream. It is easily accessible with a pathway running alongside the falls and the ability to get close to the base of the waterfall.

We then go to see the Eyjafjallajokull Volcano visitor centre with the volcano itself looming ominously in the background. The centre explains the history and geology of this famous volcano made famous when it erupted in 2010 and caused enormous disruption to air travel across Europe. An interesting video follows the plight of the local community and how they dealt with the ash that covered large areas of the country.

We then walk along the coastal area where the black beach at Vik I Myrdal, with its basalt cliffs and windswept vistas all providing some great photo opportunities. There is the option to hike on the Solheimajokull glacier instead of visiting the black sand beaches (additional cost applies, see optional excursion section for details, minimum age of 10 applies). Rather than view the glacier from the windows of our bus, have the opportunity to get up close and personal. Heading out to the glaciers terminal moraine we put on a set of crampons and are given an ice axe, to allow us to walk on the glaciers surface. After a full safety briefing head onto the glacier with our experienced local guide to wander through a dazzling landscape of ice sculptures, ridges and deep crevasses made by glacial meltwater. Witnessing the power of nature first hand is a magical experience and a great fun educational experience for the whole family.

End the day with a visit to the Secret Lagoon natural hot springs near Fludir. Unlike the Blue Lagoon, this pool has been kept to its natural surroundings. The warm water holds 38-40 Celsius year round and there are several geothermal spots and a little Geysir which erupts every 5 minutes.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Saga (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Visit the Gullfoss waterfall and Geysir, cooking lesson and a Viking Heritage Centre

Today we drive to Gullfoss, the Golden Waterfall, regarded by many as one of the most beautiful falls in the world. It cascades into a deep gorge with tremendous force, its spray forming colourful rainbows in the afternoon sun. En route we will also visit the Geysir Geothermal Area. This is the location of the first spouting hot spring to become known to Europeans and thereby originating the name given to all 'geysers'. There are some very small springs in the area which only reaches about a foot in height, but the main attraction is Strokkur, meaning 'The Butter Churn', which spouts around every 10 minutes up to a height of some 30 metres.

We then drive to Thingvellir, meaning Parliament Plains. This was the site of Iceland's first National Assembly in the year 930 AD. It lies in a rift valley which is about 5 kilometres wide with Lake Thingvallavatn bordering it on the south side and a mountain range to the north. Originating in a nearby volcano, it flows into the rift valley over the edge of a 9,000 year old lava field. The area is of great interest to geologists, as it sits astride the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the great cleft in the Earth's crust that separates the Eurasian tectonic plate from the North American plate. The largest of the ravines bordering the rift valley is called Almannagja Ravine near where the Parliament was held. Having spent some time walking through the area we continue to visit a local family who will teach us how to cook a traditional Icelandic desert of twisted pancakes, which we enjoy with some hot chocolate.

We then drive to the Viking Heritage settlement at Borgarnes. A unique innovative multimedia experience, the centre brings to life the world of the Vikings and allows you to experience first-hand the thrill and excitement of a voyage back in time. We then swim in a local pool that is geothermally heated with accompanying hot tubs before finishing our day at our guesthouse accommodation in the charming village of Borgarnes.



Accommodation: Egils Guesthouse (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Wild Iceland. Full day on the Snaefellsnes peninsula caving and bird watching

Today is spent driving on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, locally known as the peninsula of the snowy mountain. At 1,000 kilometres in length, the peninsula is dominated by the imposing Snaefellsnes Glacier, made famous by Jules Verne in his book: Journey to the Centre of the Earth. It may be possible to snow-mobile (optional) according to snow conditions. We walk along the south coast of the peninsula, visiting Buthir and its light coloured beach - a rarity in this part of the world given that much of Iceland is made up of black basalt lava.

Continuing to Arnastapi, a tiny coastal village with an equally tiny harbour, we can view numerous birds that nest and feed along this coast including kittiwakes and arctic terns. Further along the coast at Djuparlonssandur, we see the bizarre rock formations of the rocks which have been sculpted over time by the sea. The afternoon is spent underground with a cave tour 35 meters below the surface - see amazing colours and lava formations in the 8,000 years old cave. Hiking boots and gloves are recommended although the helmets and flashlights are provided. With the glacier dominating on the landward side we drive back to our accommodation later that day.



Accommodation: Egils Guesthouse (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Boat trip, sea fishing, Borgarfjorour fjord, historic Akranes, Hraunfossar waterfall; drive to Reykjavik

Enjoy a boat trip around the islands of Breithafjordur (the wide fjord) this morning, once home to Eric the Red, a Viking of such dubious moral character who was actually expelled from both Norway and Iceland for dispatching his enemies on a less than fair manner and then went on to discover Greenland! We end our trip with a little fishing as the crew cast their nets overboard to bring in fresh scallops and sea urchins straight from the sea.

En route back to the capital we visit the majestic Borgarfjordur fjord and pass through Akranes where we stop to photograph one of the most picturesque lighthouses in the world, set amongst a stunning backdrop of the Atlantic ocean. We make a number of stops on our way to Reykjavik including the Hraunfossar waterfall and the Icelandic horse center at Sturlu-Reykir. Arriving at the nations capital mid afternoon we check into our hotel. There is the option to visit the Blue Lagoon either this evening or early the next day, details of which can be found in the optional excursions section.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Sunna (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Free morning in Reykjavik with optional self guided city tour. Depart for airport.

You might like to take a self-guided walk around the colourful streets of Reykjavik (a map and general information will be provided locally). The world's most northerly capital was established by the Norse chieftain Ingolfur Amarnson around the year 874AD. The oldest part of the town is near the harbour around the lake known as Tjornin. Ducks, geese, swans and Arctic terns can be observed at close quarters and the harbour is always busy with trawlers and other vessels. The city has numerous options for children to enjoy, including the Volcano Show and Saga Museum. Alternatively you may prefer to try whale watching (optional). There can be few experiences on earth to top the sight of one of these mighty leviathans in their natural habitat and what better way to finish our trip. We transfer back to the airport early afternoon where the trip ends.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Family information

TRIPLE ROOMS

This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Minimum age

7

Why book this trip

This adventure is designed for families who want to see stunning landscapes and natural wonders with the added benefit of long days of sunlight. We have added a few additional activities this year including zip-wiring over a waterfall! There are also opportunities to understand the Viking culture further with visits to a heritage centre and learning how to cook a traditional Viking dish. Iceland really is an unusual volcanic island and this trip includes the country's natural highlights.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 5
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver
Activity Guide(s)
Boat Crew



Accommodation

2 nights standard guesthouse
2 nights simple guesthouse
1 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Iceland

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

Icelandic

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your Family adventure. Whilst the basic tour price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a

carefully selected range of additional excursions and activities or take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for your family.

Day 2: Glacial walk on Sólheimajökull glacier. (1 ½ hours walk) with crampons, ice picks provided, this would take place instead of the visit to the black sand beach. A minimum age of 10 years applies to this activity. ISK 12,500 per person.

Reykjavik

Day 6: Whale watching from Reykjavik harbour - Adults ISK 9,900 per person without a pick-up transfer service or an extra ISK 2,000 to have transfers arranged.

Children 7 to 15 year old ISK 4,950 per person without a pick-up transfer service or an extra ISK 1,000 to have transfers arranged

Day 6: Horse riding including pick up ISK 14,500 per person

Clothing

July-August are the warmest months; but summer tends to be cool, especially inland at higher elevations. Weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. You'll need warmer clothing for outdoors and cool evenings. A wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential.

Footwear

Walking bootshoes and trainers. Soft indoor shoes are recommended as it is normal in Iceland to have special house shoes.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage, a soft grip bag is ideal (not a framed rucksack) and a small daysac.

Equipment

Suncream, sunglasses, a water bottle, torch, warm hat, gloves, warm and waterproof clothing, sturdy shoes, swimming costume, a fleece and/or warm layers.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive. Tipping is not compulsory. Service charges are included in bills and tipping is not expected.

Country Information

Iceland

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, Boat

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.

While in Reykjavik we use a hotel which is located in the outskirts of the city. Set in beautiful surroundings with the Atlantic Ocean on all sides, the hotel is a great introduction to the island. All rooms have private facilities with two outdoor Jacuzzis. There is also a swimming pool within a 10 min walk. In South Iceland, we stay in a renovated country farm lodge (which used to host life stock) with shared toilet facilities. This is a very charming place and great for kids with a variety of animal's ensuite such as dogs, cats, horses, goats and other farm animals. In Snaefellsnes, we stay at a guesthouse with shared facilities located on the southern side of the peninsula. A unique swimming pool is within walking distance with warm geothermal waters of up to 35°C.

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.

Family swimming

There is a public pool in Reykjavik plus floating in the Blue Lagoon

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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 \lang1033. \lang20572

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 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Non refundable permits

Iceland

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory; tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
