

EXPLORE!

Iceland Highlights
5 days

Iceland - Trip code IH



Iceland Highlights

A jam-packed trip to see the best of what Iceland has to offer over a long weekend. Explore rugged, wild and volcanic landscapes and get out on the water in Breidafjörður Bay. Also, take the opportunity to try some tasty Icelandic produce including ice-cream and beer. Tick Iceland's most famous highlights from your bucket list; geysers, Gullfoss Waterfall, Thingvellir National Park and the Blue Lagoon, as well as taking time to discover some more remote areas on the south-west coast.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Reykjavik** - Discover Iceland's capital, famous for its cosmopolitan and friendly culture
- ★ **Natural Phenomena** - Search for the Northern Lights during the winter or experience the Midnight Sun in the summer
- ★ **Blue Lagoon** - Relax in Iceland's bluest waters
- ★ **Wild countryside** - Explore volcanic landscapes, rugged coastline and lava caves
- ★ **Golden Circle** - Take a tour of Iceland's spectacular scenic wonders, including Thingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss

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:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

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 at Keflavik Airport; Immerse in the hot waters of the Blue Lagoon

We meet at Keflavik airport and begin our trip immediately with a dip in the geothermal waters of Iceland's famous Blue Lagoon. After a relaxing visit we will drive through lava fields, along coastline and across fjords to the accommodation in Borgarnes where we stay for the next three nights. This small, sleepy town perched on a peninsular in west Iceland, is a relaxing base for our long weekend. With a variety of different places to eat or try the local beer, it offers both charm and sea views.

Tonight there will be a chance to have a traditional supper at one of the local eateries. Iceland produces fantastic smoked lamb as well as a wide range of freshwater and saltwater fish.

Please Note: You will need easy access to your swimwear for the Blue Lagoon visit and a towel will be provided to you.



Accommodation: Hotel Borgarnes (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore Borgarfjordur region; lava cave and beer tasting

Iceland is famed for The Sagas, a record of true stories from their turbulent Viking past, many of which are set in today's wild region of exploration, Borgarfjordur. This sparsely populated area sits on the south west coast and it is here that we will see how mighty and powerful Mother Nature can be. We'll stand in the swelling clouds of warm steam at Deildartunguhver thermal springs. These springs provide central heating to both Borgarnes and Akranes and pump out an astonishing 180 litres of boiling hot water per second. Hraunfossar lava waterfalls nearby is our next stop and this hidden treasure is a collection of small cascading falls and creeks where the turquoise water appears to be escaping from the lava flows.

We'll also go underground during a guided tour of the mighty lava cave, Vidgemplir. Walking along a boarded walkway we will be able to see an unexpected array of colours and rock formations inside the 1,100 year old lava tube.

Once back up on the surface, it will be time to try some home-brewed beer at a local microbrewery. For reasons related to patriotism and politics, beer was banned in Iceland for a majority of the 20th century, although this didn't stop the northerners drinking spirits - you should try Brennivin a local favourite flavoured with caraway seeds at least once! Since the ban was lifted in 1989 many breweries have opened winning Iceland international awards for their produce.



Accommodation: Hotel Borgarnes (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Snaefellsnes Peninsular and boat trip in Breidafjordur Bay

On today's full day tour we'll discover the Snaefellsnes Peninsular, including Arnarstapi, Stykkisholmur, Djupalonssandur beach and the famous Snaefellsjokull Volcano. This area of Iceland is famous in its own right!

Well known for being the setting the Jules Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth, a novel in which the entrance to the centre of the Earth was found at the volcano. Known to the natives as 'Iceland in Miniature', this region offers coastline, wildlife, glaciers, a volcano and a mountain range. We'll test our strength on the black sands of Djupalonssandur with the lifting stones, traditionally used as the measure of a man's strength to qualify them for a job out on the fishing boats.

In both Arnarstapi and Stykkisholmur we will see local life in action as the fishing industry is still the number one employer, although for Stykkisholmur, tourism is quickly catching up after the rugged setting has appeared in both Hollywood films and TV programmes, including 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty'. This town is also our embarkation point for a boat trip in Breidafjordur Bay where we will spot native birds whilst our boatmen lower the plough to catch the freshest shellfish for us to taste.



Accommodation: Hotel Borgarnes (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Explore the Golden Circle, Geysir, Gullfoss and Thingvellir

This morning we drive back towards Reykjavik for a tour of Iceland's 'Golden Circle' which includes the natural wonders that 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. This provides the quirky opportunity to place one foot on the North American tectonic plate and one foot on the Eurasian plate.

Our next stop is Geysir 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. And, last but certainly not least, we move onto Gullfoss where the river thunders into a deep gorge with tremendous force, as the spray forms colourful rainbows in the sun.

Along the way we will visit a local farm and time will be given to get lunch or refreshments. Before we leave the farm to continue exploring, we will be treated to warm home-made waffles topped with homemade ice-cream produced on site. We'll arrive into Reykjavik in the late afternoon, when we will have the chance to stroll into town. A trip to see Reykjavik's cathedral, Hallgrímskirkja, perched on a small hill and created to look like basalt columns which are common in Iceland's natural geology, is recommended.



Accommodation: Hotel Cabin (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



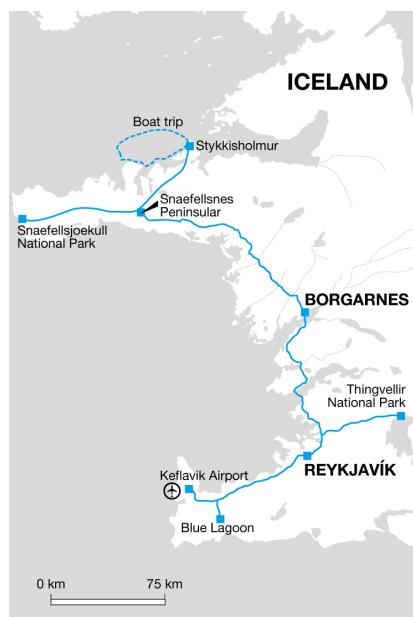
Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - 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 departure time and voucher for this service.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 4



Transport

Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

3 nights simple guesthouse
1 nights simple 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

Clothing

In Iceland weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. A good quality wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential.

In the summer months you may experience warm spring like temperatures but this is never guaranteed and evenings remain cool so pack layers.

In winter we'd suggest packing thermal underwear, fleeces, a heavy duty waterproof and windproof jacket, waterproof trousers, woolly hat, scarf, 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 swimwear if you plan to dip in the Blue Lagoon.

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 if travelling in the winter and for the a pair of flip flops for the Blue Lagoon.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a small daypack.

Equipment

In the summer the sun can be very strong, so take a sun hat, sunscreen and sun glasses. In winter, we recommend waterproof gear, a small torch and glove liners to keep your hands warm whilst using a camera.

There is a chance on this trip to spot the birdlife, so we'd suggest taking binoculars.

A towel is provided for the Blue Lagoon.

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

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

Minibus

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 short break we use simple accommodation. The majority of hotels in Iceland are decorated in a plain style, 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.

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.

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.

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.