

EXPLORE!

Land of the Midnight Sun
10 days

Iceland - Trip code SUN



Land of the Midnight Sun

Visiting Iceland is an other-worldly experience where the sun shines through the summer nights, landscapes are packed with volcanoes, waterfalls, hot springs and glaciers, and Viking culture meets Elvish mythology. This comprehensive journey hits the highlights including Dettifoss Waterfall, Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon and, the lesser-visited, Eastern Fjords. Take a walk between two continents at Thingvellir National Park, see the mighty Gullfoss Waterfall and check out the Great Geysir.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Reykjavik and Akureyri** - Discover Iceland's two cities, both lively, welcoming and surrounded by natural beauty
- ★ **Wilderness Centre** - Sleep in a museum to get a real feel for how traditional life in Iceland once was
- ★ **Golden Circle** - Travel around Iceland's famous loop to see the remarkable natural wonders of Thingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss
- ★ **Discover the forgotten North** - Visit a community at the edge of the Arctic
- ★ **Jokulsarlon Lagoon** - Drift between impressive blue-veined icebergs on a boat trip

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 shuttle bus service. On arrival at Keflavik airport please proceed to the FlyBus desk which is located just outside the arrivals hall. A representative will give you a voucher and direct you to the bus. Buses leave every 35-40 minutes and the drive to your hotel will take approximately 45 minutes. On the drive from the airport to the hotel 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 culture where old embraces new.

On this holiday you'll be accompanied by an Explore Leader from days 2 to 9, so this evening you are free to settle in and enjoy the diverse dining and, maybe even the nightlife, of this tiny and strikingly located capital city.



Accommodation: Hotel Cabin (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore Skogafoss Waterfall and Reynisfjara black beach

This morning after breakfast the adventure begins. Travelling along the south coast we will begin to see how rugged Iceland truly is. Our first stop will be Seljalandsfoss Waterfall, where we will have the chance to walk behind the falling waters and see the waterfall from the inside. The melting glacier atop of infamous Eyjafjallajokull Volcano feeds this cascade and the constant spray from the

falls results in colourful wildflowers in the meadow below and rainbows when the sun shines down. We'll then move on to Skogafoss, which at 60m high and 25m wide is very impressive to get up close to and should you wish to climb the 370 steps to the top you will be rewarded with excellent views over the crest of the waterfall and out towards the sea.

As we travel along the coast we will spend some time at Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach, a bay surrounded by wondrous basalt columns and the dramatic Atlantic sea. From the shore we will see the oddly shaped Reynisdrangar stacks out in the ocean and if we're lucky we'll spot the resident puffins, fulmars and guillemots.

Tonight we stay in small, simple cottages and dinner will be included in this rural and quiet setting.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Arhus (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Get close-up to icebergs by boat on Jokulsarlon Lagoon and search for seals

Today we'll visit Skaftafell, an area of wilderness inside the larger Vatnajokull National Park. Another day, another waterfall and todays will not disappoint. Svartifoss translates to Black Fall and it's easy to see why this waterfall adopted its name being framed perfectly by downwards facing black basalt columns. We will enjoy a half an hour walk along gravel paths to reach this gem that's hidden away from any main roads.

Our final visit of the day will be to Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon known as Iceland's Crown Jewels. Here the lagoon waters are speckled with icebergs and the surrounding black sand beach is littered with large, crystal-like chunks of ice. We'll take an exciting 30 minute boat ride to see the blue-hued icebergs up close and search for seals lounging on the floating ice.

Heading further east to Hofn, tonight we'll have time to relax and enjoy the curious experience of night-time sun. Hofn means harbour and on arrival it will be easy to understand the name as it's surrounded by oceans on three sides sitting on a small peninsular. The langoustine in this area receives rave reviews and is served in most restaurants, so be sure to try some.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Hof (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Explore Iceland's Eastern Fjords; Traditional Icelandic dinner

The lesser-visited East Fjords are a stark contrast to the flat, black sand beaches of the south coast and as we journey along we will see where glaciers carved deep into the mountainous green terrain over thousands of years. We'll leave the Ring Road to follow the natural bends of the fjords. Small fishing villages are dotted along the shorelines at the bottom of the white-capped mountains and

herds of reindeer graze on the hillsides.

Along the way we'll visit some of the villages to experience the slow pace of life in this rural area and enjoy the natural surrounding beauty. Djupivogur is a historic trading village dating back to the 1589 and due to being nestled between two large lagoons is very rich in birdlife including the much loved puffin. In Faskrudsfjordur, also an old trading post, we'll have some free time where an optional visit to an isolated museum surprisingly dedicated to curious involvement of French fishermen in Iceland's past!

We'll continue our journey inland to the Wilderness Centre in time for lunchtime to allow us plenty of time to enjoy this wild surrounding. Here we will experience true Icelandic culture as we enjoy a traditional cooked dinner and sleep in either the 1940's originally-restored farmhouse or in what is by day a museum. The farmhouse features 4 twin rooms which have been decorated in the fashion of times gone by and are true to the taste of the past owners, including original furnishings and objects. Whilst the museum offers a dormitory-style arrangement under a turf roof has been created to show how families would have lived in the not so distant past. Families traditionally slept and lived in close quarters and this main dormitory room would have been the heart of any family home where the fire burned and the sagas were shared from generation to generation.

Please note that the group will be split between the dormitory museum and the old farmhouse and rooming arrangements will be decided by the Explore Leader dependent on the make-up of the group. Facilities are simple and bathrooms are shared.



Accommodation: Wilderness Centre (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Discover rural countryside on the way to Raufarhofn at the edge of the Arctic Circle

Today we head north to the northernmost village on mainland Iceland, Raufarhofn. The scenery along the way changes from the dramatic fjords of the east coast to a wild and desolate terrain in the forgotten region of Melrakkasletta. Taking a break from our Ring Road itinerary, we will leave Route One to discover an area where birds outnumber humans and the striking effects of Mother Nature are visible all around.

On the way we will visit Bustarfell Museum, an old traditional turf house dating back to 1770 and have time to relax in the hot geothermal waters of a pool perched on the edge of the Sela River. We'll also take time to explore the natural beauty of Raudanes Peninsula; abundant in birdlife, scattered with curious rock formations, hidden beaches and caves engraved with messages from shipwrecked sailors over history.

Raufarhofn sits just 40km south of the arctic circle and experiences some of the longest daylight hours in all of Iceland. Dinner will be included at our hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Nordurljos (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Dettifoss Waterfall and the capital of the north, Akureyri

Our first stop of the day is the thundering giant that is Dettifoss Waterfall, Europe's most powerful falls with an amazing 44,000 litres of water tumbling over the crest every second. Dettifoss is Iceland's 'Beast' due to sheer cliffs and clouds of mist that can be seen from several miles away, whilst Godafoss in the south is known as 'Beauty' and here we will need to wear our waterproofs to enjoy the spray and roar up close. Next we will visit Asbyrgi, an enormous rock formation said to be the hoof print of Sleipnir, God Odin's eight legged horse, whilst other legends tell tales of these towering vertical cliffs being home to Iceland's hidden people, the Huldufolk. Our Explore Leader will tell us more!

This afternoon we'll stop at Husavik, a bustling fishing town on our way to Akureyri. Husavik is traditional and quirky, with a boat lined harbour, some great shops and restaurants and the argued crown of being the first settlement in Iceland in 870 AD (Reykjavik vies for this title too!).

Tonight we'll arrive in the 'capital of the north', Akureyri where we will stay for the next two nights. Iceland's second city has a wide array of places to enjoy an Icelandic meal and a great spot to enjoy the long daylight hours as it is surrounded by mountains and sea.



Accommodation: Guesthouse Apotek (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Free day in Iceland's second city; chance to visit Lake Myvatn

This small and extremely picturesque city is famous for being unexpectedly home to the world's northernmost botanical garden which contains a wide array of native and foreign flora, as well as art galleries and a Lutheran Cathedral.

Today is free for you to explore this laid back city or you may choose to join a local food and city walking tour where you can discover the best of the local North Icelandic products such as locally sourced seafood, their famed free-roaming lamb and fresh bread. Alternatively if you'd like to see more of the surrounding countryside then you can join an optional trip to Lake Myvatn, a volcanic lake formed 3,800 years ago when a lava flow blocked the valley and which is now one of the most fertile spots in the world and attracts a wide range of nesting ducks. Or perhaps going in search of Eyjafjord Humpback whales off the coast will be a preferred option today!



Accommodation: Guesthouse Apotek (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Take a dip in Hofsos' infinity pool and stay on working farm

Once again we will leave the beaten track today and head north to Siglufjordur village. Once the herring capital of the world, Siglufjordur is now a quiet and isolated town that boasts small, independent museums (mostly about herring!) and offers a brilliant insight into how little communities live in the far north. We'll then continue to follow the edge of peninsular around until we reach Hofsos, home to Iceland's only 'infinity' pool. Although not officially an infinity pool, Blue Infinity public baths was created by the architect of the famous Blue Lagoon for the local people of this remote town. The pool is perched on the hillside and its precarious position gives the sensation of endless waters that flow into the sea below and has spectacular views across the fjord to the distant mountains.

After a three hour drive we'll arrive at tonight's accommodation on a working farm for a traditional stay alongside the resident cows, pigs, chickens and family dogs. Dinner will be a homemade meal including the farm's own produce where possible.



Accommodation: Hraunsnef Sveitahotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - Golden Circle tour of Geysir, Gullfoss and Thingvellir

Back on the road this morning, we leave our friendly farm location in search of the bright lights of the Capital, Reykjavik, via the highlights of Iceland; Geysir, Thingvellir National Park and Gullfoss Waterfall.

Thingvellir translates to 'the fields of parliament' and was once the meeting place of more than 30 clan leaders in 930 AD who came together to reconcile differences with the aim to finally become a united nation after years of turbulent fighting. For this reason Thingvellir plays a very important role in Iceland's heritage and culture but what's also fascinating is its geology. The west half of Iceland sits on the North American tectonic plate and the east half sits on the Eurasian tectonic plate and here at Thingvellir is the only place in the world where the Mid-Atlantic Rift can be seen above sea level and we can take a walk between two continents.

We move on to the 'Beauty' of Iceland, Gullfoss Waterfall. Arguably Iceland's most beautiful waterfall, here the water plunges into a deep ravine with tremendous force whilst its mists form colourful rainbows in the sun. Finally we'll come to the geysers situated in a highly active geothermal area, here we will be able to see Strokkur which spouts water 100 ft into the air above, as well as The Great Geysir after which all other geysers have been named.

This evening we'll arrive into the capital having completed the full circle of Iceland. We'll be able to celebrate this accomplishment in one of Reykjavik's many eateries or pubs before saying goodbye to our Explore Leader as our trip comes to an end.



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 shuttle service and your Explore Leader will provide you with the details of your departure time and voucher for this service.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Iceland is a destination where you can still get up close to its many and varied natural attractions. You can touch the point where tectonic plates meet, feel the spray of roaring waterfalls against your face and stare in awe as icebergs float pass you. The people are friendly and have a wonderful sense of humour. They'll tell you tales of elves and Norse gods, which have helped to shape this magical island.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 9
Dinner: 4



Transport

Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

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

Akureyri: Trip to Lake Myvatn price ISK 14.900; Akureyri food Walk ISK 13.900; Whale Watching ISK 10.990

Clothing

In Iceland weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. You'll need warmer clothing for outdoor activities and cooler evenings, so pack layers. A good quality wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential. We also recommend that you bring a swimming costume plus a towel with you as there will be plenty of chances to swim on the tour. If you are planning to join a whale watching excursion then we recommend wrapping up warmly as it can be very chilly out at sea, so take a woolly hat, scarf, jumper and gloves with you.

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. For swimming you may also find a pair of flip flops useful.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

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

Tipping

Explore leader

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

Local crew

Tipping is not a recognised part of life in Iceland for meals etc, though if you do wish to tip your local representative (entirely at your discretion) it will no doubt be appreciated.

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.

Throughout this trip we 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. Reykjavik accommodations will have private bathroom facilities but elsewhere bathroom facilities will be shared.

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.

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.
