

# EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



## Iceland Winter Adventure

ICELAND - TRIP CODE ICE

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

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Follow Iceland's famous Ring Road and discover the volcanoes, waterfalls and glaciers that make up the country's dramatic landscape. Walk between two continents at Thingvellir National Park, see the mighty Gullfoss Waterfall and watch Strokkur Geysir erupt.

- **Northern Lights** - Stay up late and watch the Aurora Borealis light up the sky
- **Hrisey Island** - Discover Hrisey's laid back pace of life with a Viking guide
- **Snow cat or super jeep ride** - Take an exhilarating ride up Kaldbakur Mountain

**INCLUDED MEALS**

Breakfast: 8  
Lunch: 2  
Dinner: 1

**TRIP STAFF**

Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)

**TRANSPORT**

Bus  
Ferry

**ACCOMMODATION**

2 nights simple  
guesthouse  
4 nights  
comfortable hotel  
2 nights simple  
hotel

**TRIP PACE:**

Moderate

**GROUP SIZE:**

12 - 18

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Reykjavik

Today the adventure begins with a transfer from Keflavik Airport (KEF) to our hotel on the public FlyBus shuttle bus service. On arrival at Keflavik Airport please proceed to the FlyBus desk which is located in the arrivals hall, a FlyBus representative will give you a voucher and direct you to the bus. Buses leave every 35-40 minutes and the drive to the 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.

There are no activities planned today so you are free to arrive at a time that suits you. After checking-in to the hotel, 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 a local Leader from days 2 to 8, so this evening you are free to settle in and enjoy this charming city.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Klettur (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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

This morning we leave Reykjavik and drive to Iceland's second city, 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 across the fjord to Reykjavik. We'll stop at a local farm in Hraunsnef for a relaxed lunch before continuing north.

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:  
Icelandair Hotel Akureyri (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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## DAY 3 - Explore Hrisey Island and sample the local beer

After yesterday's long drive we have a relaxed start to the morning. After breakfast we'll make our way to the harbour, stopping at viewpoint and an old fish factory along the way. The factory is no longer in use but is a great insight to the regions main industry.

From Arskogstrond we take a 15-minute ferry ride to Hrisey Island. Here, together with a local 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. After exploring the island we return to the mainland, where we will visit a small brewery for the chance to taste the locally produced beers before heading back to Akureyri for the evening.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Icelandair Hotel Akureyri (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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#### **DAY 4 - Experience Iceland's snow tractors and visit Godafoss waterfall, Lake Myvatn and the Nature Baths**

Today we will ride into the mountains on a snow cat vehicle. The journey to the summit of Kaldbakur Mountain takes around 45 minutes, during which we are rewarded with spectacular views of the snow covered peaks. .

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 super-jeep excursion instead. 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!

We leave the mountains behind and spend the afternoon discovering Iceland's waterfalls. Starting with Godafoss, known as 'the waterfall of the gods', it is particularly spectacular in winter when the clear blue waters partially freeze.

In the afternoon we explore Lake Myvatn. This active volcanic area 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 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.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sel Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## **DAY 5 - Visit Egilsstadir en route to the Wilderness Centre**

Today we have a longer drive, through the small village of Egilsstadir to the Wilderness Centre, our home for the night. Depending on the road conditions the drive will take approximately 7-8 hours, there will be plenty of stops along the way to break the journey.

On arrival we will experience true Icelandic culture as we stay in a 1940's originally-restored farmhouse. The farmhouse is a living museum and has been decorated in the fashion of times gone by and are true to the taste of the past owners, including original furnishings and objects. The rooms here are simple and do not have en suite bathrooms, instead there are shared bathrooms for us to use during our stay. We'll have dinner with our hosts tonight, a typical Icelandic family meal which will often be locally reared lamb, lots of vegetables and salads followed by rhubarb pie.

The Wilderness centre is superbly-positioned for viewing the Northern Lights so if the conditions are right it's worth staying up late!



ACCOMMODATION:  
Wilderness Centre (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Guesthouse**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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## 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 small villages and walk along the deserted beaches of the east coast. We arrive in Hofn in the late afternoon and the evening is free to relax.

### Guesthouse Smyrlabjorg

Guesthouse Smyrlabjorg is a family run establishment, located next to Iceland's Ring Road. All rooms are decorated in a country house style & include a TV & ensuite. Most rooms have views of the Atlantic Ocean, while others overlook the mountains. There is also a restaurant on site that serves homemade dishes made from local produce.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Guesthouse Smyrlabjorg (or similar)

Grade: Simple Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## 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 newly formed icebergs as they make their way out to sea. The ice is breaking off from the Breidamerkurjokull Glacier and the icebergs then slowly float through the lagoon and out to sea under a bridge for the main number one road. On one of the bridge's pillars there is painting, supposedly by Banksy, of a headless polar bear pushing a shopping trolley.

You can see the icebergs drifting out into the ocean whilst others sit lazily on the black sand beaches waiting for the current to sweep them away. The sparkling ice gives the beach its name - Diamond Beach.

Tonight's hotel is in the remote countryside, providing us with another chance to look out for the Northern Lights.

### Hotel Katla

Located just a 5-minute drive from Vik's black sand beach, Hotel Katla is a countryside Hotel that offers stunning views of the Mýrdalsjökull Glacier. Rooms are spacious & classically decorated, all including a TV & an ensuite. The hotels offers free Wi-Fi in the lobby, as well as free access to the outdoor geothermal hot tubs & fitness centre. The hotel also has an in-house restaurant that serves a buffet

breakfast & local specialities for dinner.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Icelandair Hotel Vik (or similar)

Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### 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 afternoon, where we will have a short sightseeing tour by bus to help us orientate ourselves before checking in to our hotel. The food scene in Reykjavik is impressive and this evening is free for a final dinner in one of the capitals many restaurants.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Cabin (or similar)

Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 9 - Trip ends in Reykjavik**

Our trip ends after breakfast this morning. The transfer back to Keflavik airport (KEF) will be on the public FlyBus shuttle bus service and your leader will provide you with the details of your pick up time and with your voucher for this service.

Please note: The itinerary for this tour is subject to amendment due to weather or road conditions. Winter is a beautiful time to visit Iceland, but the weather can be unpredictable and snow can have a big impact on travel times. Consequently, it may be necessary to alter the order of the itinerary or to change inclusions whilst on tour.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## **Trip information**

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### **Climate and 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.

<b>Time difference to GMT</b>	<b>Plugs</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Language</b>
0	2 Pin Round	National Church of iceland	Icelandic

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### **Budgeting and packing**



## 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 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.

## 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 binoculars useful for wildlife spotting.

A towel will be provided at the Nature Baths for use during your visit.

We advise taking a water bottle for day to day use.

## 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.

## 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.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£12.00-16.00	£18.00 - 24.00	£4.00 - 6.00	£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.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Ferry

### Accommodation notes

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 old schools. Rooms can be small and the facilities can be basic. Most accommodation won't have hairdryers or kettles 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.

Due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Iceland, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms. 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.

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## Essential Information

## Government Travel Safety 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, Commonwealth & Development 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 be able to apply 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.

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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and

depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

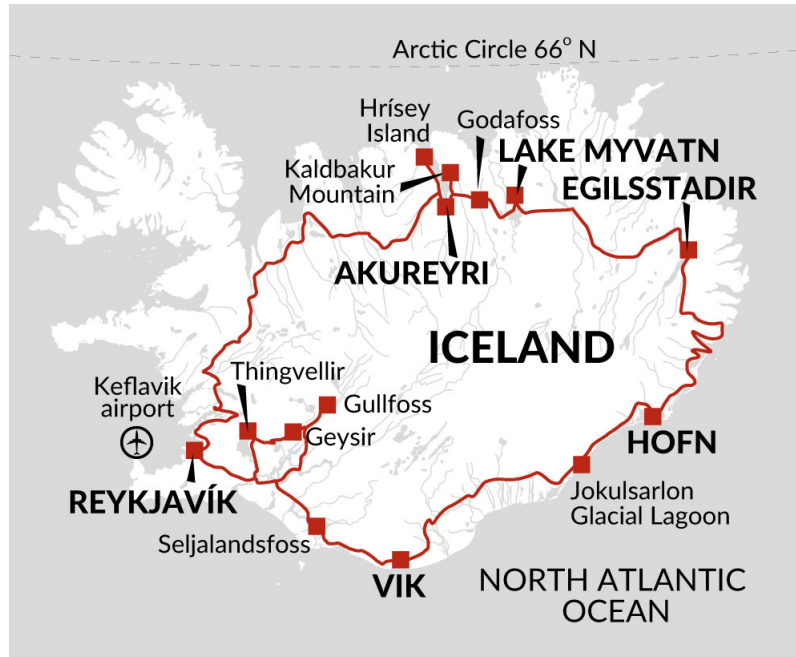
## **Iceland**

### **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.

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### Additional Information



## 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!

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## Reviews

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**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**