

# EXPLORE!



**BEST SELLER**

**Northern Lights with Expert Astronomer**

4 days

Iceland - Trip code SNL

## Northern Lights with Expert Astronomer

Expert astronomer, Andrew Green, accompanies this trip to Iceland in search of the spectacular Northern Lights. By day, we'll explore the famous 'Golden Circle' including Thingvellir National Park, Gullfoss Waterfall and Strokkur Geyser, and see Eyjafjallajokull, the volcano that caused chaos around the world in 2010, as well as unwind in the geothermal waters of the Blue Lagoon.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Understand the Aurora Borealis** - With astronomer Andrew Green
- ★ **Blue Lagoon** - Relax in the famed thermal waters
- ★ **Natural wonders** - Walk up to thundering waterfalls including Gullfoss and see spouting geysers
- ★ **Accommodation** - Stay in hand-picked locations ideal for Northern Lights viewing

#### 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 at Keflavik airport and visit the Blue Lagoon

Meet at Keflavik airport. We start our trip directly from the airport by driving to the famous Blue Lagoon where we get our first glimpse of Iceland's volcanic scenery whilst relaxing in the warm geothermal waters. After a refreshing bath we will drive to the accommodation where we stay for the next two nights. We'll make a stop along the way for you to purchase dinner. Our accommodation has been especially chosen for its location so that we can maximise our chances of seeing the Northern Lights. If the lights make an appearance tonight you'll be woken to witness this amazing sight.

Please Note: On some departures the Blue Lagoon will be visited on day 4 instead of day 1.



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



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Explore the south coast; expert lecture on the Northern Lights

This morning we drive through the Eyjafjallajokull region, where in 2010 a volcanic eruption here caused wide spread travel disruption due to the ash cloud it produced. The volcano is now quiet again and your tour leader will be able to provide information on how this affected the lives of the community here. We'll then visit Vik I Myrdal to marvel at the rocky beach with its incredible basalt cliffs. This is a great stop for photos on the wind swept beach. We'll stop nearby for you to buy lunch before visiting Skogafoss waterfall and the Skogar Folk Museum. This quaint museum is home to 12,000 artefacts as well as life-size examples of traditional Icelandic houses with turf roofs, a church and school. Next we stop at Seljalandsfoss waterfall before heading back to our hotel. This evening Astronomer Andrew Green will give a presentation and explain the Aurora Borealis. If the northern lights are active we will move the timing of this lecture to ensure we don't miss out!



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



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Golden Circle tour before arriving in Reykjavik

Today we go to the famous Golden Circle, which includes three of Iceland's most iconic sights. The order of the day may depend on weather conditions. We will visit the magnificent Gullfoss Waterfall, cascading down in the white-coloured Hvita River that originates at the Langjokull Glacier. We then continue to Haukadalur, home of the Great Geysir and the reliable Strokkur Geysir that erupts with 3 to 7 minute intervals, spouting boiling water to a height of 25 to 35 metres. Passing Laugarvatn Lake we arrive at Thingvellir National Park, home of Iceland's ancient Viking parliament and listed as a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. Here we take a walk to experience first-hand the geological wonder of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. After free time nearby for lunch we will go to our next guesthouse in Kruines, on the outskirts of Reykjavik, chosen because it potentially offers the best view of the Northern Lights. We'll have time to check-in and freshen up before heading into the capital for a short tour of the city.

After the city tour you can either choose to return to the guesthouse with our driver for dinner (wild trout from the Ellidavatn is a very popular choice) or to stay in Reykjavik for your last meal in Iceland and to soak up the city's atmosphere by night. If you choose to stay in Reykjavik you will need to arrange a taxi at your own expense to return to this evening's guesthouse, as it is not walkable to the city centre.

There is also the option to go on a Northern Lights boat trip later this evening. On leaving Reykjavik Harbour, we head into the North Atlantic with views back over the city lights and surrounding mountains as we search for the prime location for viewing for the lights. We will hear about the folklore and superstitions surrounding this stunning magical light show as well as the scientific facts that make it possible. Warm overalls are provided as it does get cold at night and can be windy out at sea, so please wrap up warm with plenty of layers and gloves and a hat are essential. There is a warm and cosy seating area inside the boat where we can warm up with hot drinks that can be purchased on board. This trip is subject to the right weather conditions so if it is too windy out at sea, then we will do a similar trip by bus.



**Accommodation: Guesthouse Kriunes** (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Trip ends at Keflavik airport

Trip ends at Keflavik airport.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



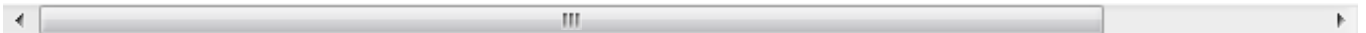
Read astronomer Andrew Green's tips on [how to photograph the Northern Lights](#).

Find out our Discovery Programme Manager Hannah's top tips to seeing the Northern Lights

[Read the blog here](#)

## Why book this trip

Over 90% of our customers have seen the Northern Lights since this tours creation in 2012, thanks to the expert knowledge of our astronomer Andrew Green, hand-picked locations ideal for viewing the Northern Lights and carefully planned dates of travel.



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 3



## Transport

Bus



## Trip staff

Astronomer  
Driver(s)  
Explore Representative



## Accommodation

1 nights simple guesthouse  
2 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

### 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.

Reykjavik: Northern Lights boat trip - 9900ISK without a pick-up transfer or an extra 2000ISK to have transfers arranged.

## Clothing

Weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. Temperatures can drop to -20 degrees centigrade. You'll need warm clothing for outdoors and cold evenings watching the Aurora Borealis. A warm wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential. Thermal layers, jumper, hat, gloves, thick socks and scarf or snood are all important.

## Footwear

Walking boots with sturdy tread 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 daypack.

## Equipment

We recommend you bring a small torch, sunglasses and a medical kit.

We also recommend taking your camera and 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.

A towel will be provided at the Blue Lagoon for use during your visit.

## Tipping

### Local crew

Local Representative - Tipping is not a recognised part of life in Iceland for meals etc. though if you do wish to tip your local representative and/or astronomer (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.

##### Lunch price

£12.00-16.00

##### 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

### 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 tour 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.

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, and we may need to change your night stops with little or no notice. Explore are working hard to grow and develop relationships with the hotels we use, to ensure our bookings are honoured whenever possible. 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 or Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

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

relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

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.



