

ICELAND LAND OF ICE AND FIRE



overview

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP

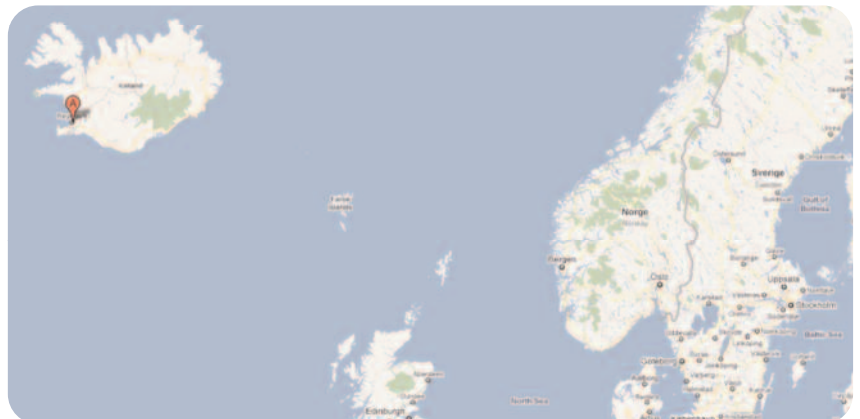
- The chance to see magnificent whales
- Lying in a remote hot spring
- A hike on a glacier
- Riding Icelandic horses
- Rafting through a volcanic canyon
- The city of Reykjavik
- The wonderful phenomenon of the midnight sun



MAP

WHERE YOU ARE GOING

A geological gem and activity heaven, Iceland is an amazing country. You can visit the geysirs, ride Icelandic horses, explore the streets of Reykjavik, go whale watching, rock climbing, glacier walking...the list goes on. Iceland is a fascinating family destination.



AGENDA

SATURDAY: ARRIVAL AND WELCOME

You will be met at the airport by a guide before being transferred to your hotel in central Reykjavik. This evening a welcome meal will be served.

SUNDAY: LAVA CAVING TRIP AND WHALE WATCHING

This morning you will explore the hidden underground world of the Lava Caves in the Blue Mountains near Reykjavik. You will walk and at times crawl through these caves, a fascinating and really unique experience.

After lunch you will transfer to Reykjavik harbour to head out on the boat in search of the whales and dolphins that frequent the waters here.

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers, hat and gloves, walking boots or walking shoes.

MONDAY: HORSE RIDING

Today we leave Reykjavik behind and head out into the countryside. We arrive at Hveragerdi the town of the hot springs and our new base. There is no better way to get acquainted with this area than a hike through the spectacular Reykjadalur Valley where we look for our very own hot spring to bathe in before returning to our new hotel.

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers, gloves.

TUESDAY: HOT SPRING HUNT

After breakfast you will hike up into the stunning valley of Reykjadalur where naturally hot water rushes down the slopes of the mountain range. This valley possesses an amazing abundance of geothermal springs.

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers. Hat, gloves and good hiking boots. Also take bathing suit and towel.

WEDNESDAY: GLACIER HIKING AND ICE CLIMBING

Today you will be driven to the south of Iceland and on arrival at the glacier you will learn how to use an ice axe and crampons. You will explore the crevasse riddled outlet glacier with its amazing ice formations, sink holes and ridges. There will also be the chance to try out some wonderful ice climbing - a fantastic experience.

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers, hat and gloves. Good hiking boots

AGENDA

THURSDAY: SUPER JEEP SAFARI

This tour will take you right up into the remote highlands in super jeeps. You will revisit the active volcano of Hekla from which steam can regularly be seen at the top. Your journey will continue on to Landmannalaugar, a fascinating area with multicoloured rhyolite mountains and natural hot springs. Perfect for a dip!

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers, gloves. Bathing suit, and towel.

FRIDAY: WHITE WATER RAFTING

This morning you will head out on a fantastic white water rafting trip down the glacial valley of Hvítá. This is an ideal area for rafting and as you paddle down river you will see the landscape from a fascinating new perspective. From here you will transfer to base camp to enjoy a sauna and hot tub before a delicious local lunch.

This afternoon the tour will continue to the beautiful geothermal area called Haukadalur, home of the Great Geyser. After a stop here you will continue on to the queen of the Icelandic waterfalls, Gullfoss Waterfall before heading on to the UNESCO world heritage site of Thingvellir National Park. This evening a delicious farewell meal is included in the hotel restaurant before your last night in Iceland.

Suggested Kit: Warm outdoor clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers, gloves. Change of clothing, bathing suit, and towel.

SATURDAY: BLUE LAGOON, TRANSFERS AND FLIGHTS

On this last day you will stop at the Blue Lagoon on your way to the airport. Enjoy bathing in the natural hot springs of this world famous attraction. The dramatic lava formations can be seen from the lagoon. You will then transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

Suggested Kit: Bathing suit and towel

Please Note:

These itineraries are subject to change: please confirm your timetable with the activity providers on arrival at the resort.

GROUP SIZE AND GUIDES

The approximate group size for this programme will range between 8-20 people.

Your guides for the week are all thoroughly qualified, highly experienced outdoor enthusiasts who are all always highly knowledgeable about the area in which they live and the activities they instruct. The feedback from clients is fantastic every year.



TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

IMPORTANT info

HOW TO GET THERE

Our airport transfer time is included in your holiday documents and you must be at the designated meeting point at that time. If you do not arrive on time we cannot guarantee that the transfer can be delayed as this means holding up the entire group. If you do miss your transfer then you will need to make your own arrangements to your accommodation. If your flight is delayed, please telephone either your local representative or our UK emergency number. Emergency numbers are provided in your final travel letter.

BOOKING YOUR OWN FLIGHTS CANCELLATION DISCLAIMER

If you have chosen to book your own flights we will write to you once your trip is 'guaranteed to run'. In other words, once it has reached the minimum number of bookings necessary for us to operate the holiday. When the trip is 'guaranteed to run' you will be free to make your flight arrangements. Before you book your flights you should check whether airport transfers are included in your trip. If they are then please phone our office for airport transfer times.

Once your flights are booked, please send us a copy of your detailed flight itinerary.

Please be aware that most of the cheaper airline tickets available for sale on the internet or from low cost carriers are non-refundable in the case of cancellation. For this reason we strongly advise you check the rules of the ticket when you make a flight booking and check the limitations of any cancellation insurance policy you have. We cannot be held liable, in the unlikely eventuality that we should be forced to cancel your trip, for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made yourself.

Useful info

ATOL PROTECTION

If you book a flight inclusive holiday with us then everything on your invoice from flights to accommodation, activities to meals is fully covered under our ATOL Licence No 6865.

In the highly unlikely event of our financial failure (please be assured that we are very happy with our current position and forward bookings are strong) then all elements of your holiday are covered. If you are abroad, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will arrange for your repatriation and if you are yet to travel you will be fully reimbursed, again by the CAA.

Two of our staff have previously worked for the CAA's ATOL Licencing so are pretty knowledgeable in this area. If you do have any questions then please contact either Alistair McLean or Kate McLean (yes, they met while working for ATOL and subsequently fell in love and married) on 01670 789 991.

TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Useful info

SUGGESTED GENERAL KIT LIST

Your guides will provide you with a suggested kit list per day but you should come prepared for all weather conditions.

The list below is not a comprehensive packing list simply a guide line of suggestions that you might find useful on the trip.

Item check:

Rucksack with plastic bag liner per family, for lunches and spare clothes
Reasonably strong pair of walking boots or trainers
Waterproof jacket and trousers (just in case)
Sweatshirt or fleece top
Comfortable lightweight trousers or shorts for land based activities (not jeans)
Casual clothing for evenings
Swimming gear and beach towels for water based activities
Sunhat, sunglasses with cord attached and sun block
Large water bottle (min. 1 litre) per person
Old clothes and trainers (no open-toed shoes) for getting wet during some of the activities (especially for canoeing and canyoning)
Insect repellent and sting relief cream
Camera – a disposable waterproof type is useful for water based activities
Please note that all safety equipment (helmets, life-jackets, harnesses, wetsuits etc) is provided on this trip.
Small torch for caving trip

SUGGESTED GENERAL PACKING LIST

Item check:

Passport Glasses/Contact Lenses
Air Tickets
Toiletries
Car Hire Voucher and full driving licence (for driver)
Driving Instructions, Map
Small Sewing Kit
Trip Dossier and Itinerary
Sweets & Snacks for the journey
Insurance Documents
Notebook, Diary, Pen
Money, Travellers Cheques, Credit Card, Guide Book
Money Security Belt
Games, Books, toys for your kids



Useful info

SUN PROTECTION

Please be safe in the sun. Wear protective clothing (ideally tops and trousers made of tightly woven fabrics that you can't see through when held up to light) and a hat that shades the face, neck and ears when out in the sun. Use a high factor sunscreen and remember to reapply after swimming. You should also bear in mind that you are just as likely to get burnt up a mountain as on a beach. **Please also ensure that you carry a minimum of 1 litre of water per person per day.**

CLIMATE / TEMPERATURE

Thanks to the Gulf Stream, Iceland isn't as cold as it sounds. Temperatures are moderate year-round. Average July temperatures are around 11°C in Reykjavík - the north and east are often the warmest parts in the summer. Snow is not the norm and only settles intermittently in Reykjavík but tends to stay longer in the north. Fine winter skiing areas are found on higher ground outside many towns, however.

In the summer, light clothing is often all you need - but always be prepared for both cold and wet weather at all times of the year. The weather can be extremely changeable. Icelanders often say, "If you don't like the weather, just wait 15 minutes."

TIPPING GUIDELINES

At your discretion you may wish to tip your guides at the end of your stay as a gesture of appreciation for their efforts during your holiday.

PARENTAL SUPERVISION

Our family holidays are designed to be just that, family holidays. During activities, our guides are there to provide advice, tuition and supervision but we must stress that you are responsible for the child or children in your care. We do not employ qualified child minders and you should not put our guides or other group members in a position where they are responsible for the care of your child or children.

BOOKING ACTIVITIES LOCALLY

In almost all of our destinations you can book and pay for additional activities locally. Our guides will normally discuss the options available at your welcome meeting. Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any injury or loss that occurs through any activities that are booked in your destination. If you intend to go hill walking in any part of Iceland you should ensure that you are well prepared and equipped to cope both with the terrain, high temperatures and a lack of shade in summer.

Useful info

HEALTH CARE INFO

Healthcare facilities in Iceland are of a high western standard. However, the distances between facilities can be great and whilst most towns have a health centre or basic hospital, serious cases generally necessitate ambulance/air transfer to hospital in either Reykjavik or Akureyri.

Under the terms of the EEA Regulation, British nationals are covered for emergency treatment whilst visiting Iceland. The Form E111 is no longer valid. You should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as Icelandic nationals. It also does not cover you for medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or treatment of a non-urgent nature.

Midges can be a problem to summer visitors in countryside areas close to lakes and rivers.

To obtain emergency medical assistance in Iceland, dial 112.

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Iceland and ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up-to-date. For further information on vaccination requirements, health outbreaks and general disease protection and prevention you should visit the websites of the National Travel Health Network and Centre or NHS Scotland's Fit For Travel or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

CARD FRAUD

We recommend that you tell your bank or card issuer where you're going abroad and what dates you will be travelling. This avoids the embarrassment of having your card refused because your bank thinks you could be a fraudster yourself! Give the bank or card issuer your contact details so that they can call you if they spot an unusual transaction.

CURRENCY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Icelandic krona are available through banks and cash machines in Iceland.

Iceland is very expensive – be prepared to spend plenty of money, especially if you intend to eat and drink in restaurants and bars. Credit cards are widely used. Hotel accommodation in Iceland is very limited and is often fully booked for the summer period. If you visit on flight only tickets you should ensure that all your accommodation has been reserved before departure. The British Embassy cannot assist in finding accommodation for those without bookings.

Useful info

TRAVEL SAFETY

The safety of our clients is of paramount importance at all times in terms of activity participation and destination. We always follow the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and should they advise against travel for any reason you will be contacted with a view to making alternative arrangements. We monitor this advice on a daily basis and you can access the up to date advice at www.fco.gov.uk.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling. You should check any exclusions and that your policy covers you for the activities you want to undertake.

For more information on Travel Insurance please see our website – www.activitiesabroad.com under the 'preparing for your trip' section.

MEDICAL HISTORY AND ADVICE

It is vitally important that you advise us prior to departure of any medical or dietary condition relating to any member of your party so that we may notify our local staff before you arrive. We recommend only drinking bottled water from bottles with unbroken seals and be vigilant about the use of ice in drinks and ice cream.

LOCAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Do not become involved with drugs of any kind. Possession of even small quantities or soft drugs can lead to heavy fines and/or imprisonment. The use and/or importation of khat/qat (legal in the UK) is prohibited in Iceland.

Alcohol limits for drivers are far stricter than UK levels. Submission to a breathalyser test is mandatory. Penalties for driving under the influence are severe.

Smoking in restaurants, bars, public transport and public buildings is prohibited. Anyone caught smoking will initially be asked to leave the premises. Failure to do so will result in arrest and a fine.

You are not required to carry your passport with you at all times in Iceland, but it is sensible to keep some form of ID on you and ensure that next of kin details are entered into the back of your passport.

Useful info

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Flights from London to Reykjavík (Keflavik) Airport are included in the cost of this holiday. We will contact you shortly after you have booked your holiday to discuss the different flight options with you prior to booking them. It is also possible for guests to choose to book their own flights however this holiday will no longer be covered under our ATOL protection.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Visas: Holders of valid UK passports endorsed British Citizen, British National Overseas and British Overseas Territory Citizen do not require visas for stays of up to three months.

Passport validity: Three months passport validity is normally required for those intending to visit Iceland.

ROAD TRAVEL

Ensure that you have arranged appropriate vehicle insurance cover prior to travelling. A valid UK or other EU/EEA driving licence is sufficient for driving in Iceland. There is no need for an International Driving Permit.

Distances between towns can be great, roads narrow and winding, and speed limits low. Driving takes longer than you think. Particular care needs to be taken on gravel and loose surfaces. Driving conditions may be hazardous and roads impassable, especially in winter. Winter tyres are mandatory from approximately 1 November to 14 April (exact dates can vary year on year). Keep dipped headlights on at all times and observe speed limits, which are, in general, lower than in the UK. Fines for exceeding the speed limit are high.

Many highland tracks only open for a short part of the summer. If you intend to drive to the highland, or remoter regions of the country, you should always check first with the Icelandic Road Administration (Vegagerdin) before departure: Tel: +354 522 1000. Vegagerdin provides up to date information on all roads in the country and will also advise you on forecasted weather conditions and on off-road driving, which is strictly controlled. Remain alert to the possibility of rapidly changing weather patterns, including river levels, which can change dramatically even within the same day.

Drink/drive laws are strictly enforced.

Take care to read the small print on car rental agreements to ensure that you fully understand which damages are and which damages are not covered by the Excess or Damage Waiver.

Useful info

GENERAL IDEA OF LOCAL COSTS FOR DRINKS ETC

There are several bars, restaurants and cafe's in Reykjavik and Hveragerdi for you to explore and enjoy. Prices can be slightly than those in the UK depending on the type of bar or restaurant chosen.

TOURIST BOARD DETAILS

For further information on Iceland visit www.icetourist.is

LOCAL TIME AND DIFFERENCE

Iceland is in the same time zone as the UK with GMT 0:00.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES IN NATIVE LANGUAGE

English

English
Hello
Goodbye
Good morning
Good evening
Good night
How are you?
Yes
No
Excuse me
Thank you
Do you speak English?
I don't understand
I can't speak Icelandic
What is your name?
Where are you from?
How much does this cost?
Where is the toilet?

Icelandic

Icelandic
Halló
Bless
Góðan daginn
Gott kvöld
Góða nótt
Hvernig hefur þú það?
Ja
Nei
Fyrirgefðu
Takk
Talarðu ensku?
Ég skil ekki
Eg tala ekki íslensku
Hvað heitir þú?
Hvaðan ertu?
Hvað kostar þetta?
Hvar er klósettið?

ACCOMMODATION

OUR OPINION

Hotel Ork

This hotel is situated in the town of Hveragerdi, 45 kilometres from Reykjavik and is the ideal base for many of our activities. The hotel has a restaurant serving locally grown produce (geothermally heated greenhouses come in very handy here). The best feature for families however is the large geothermally heated pool with waterslide as well as the hot tubs and sauna. A fantastic way to wind down after an active day! The en suite rooms are comfortably furnished and feature a television, mini bar and telephone. Hveragerdi is a small town but does offer a choice of restaurants including a pizzeria - a family favourite.



Hotel Reykjavik Centrum

This hotel is ideally situated in central Reykjavik. It is a traditionally designed building but with a modern interior. It is close to the harbour, shops, restaurants and bars but still feels very relaxed. The en suite rooms are very comfortably furnished featuring satellite TV, wireless internet, mini bar, safe, hairdryer and coffee making facilities.



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY IN ICELAND

Iceland is renowned for its incredible geology and landscapes and along with our suppliers we are working to ensure that this is preserved.

Iceland has an incredible resource in the form geothermal power. Both the hotels that we feature during this split centre holiday have water supplies heated by geothermal energy. They are well insulated against the harsh winters and have strict recycling policies.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

The hotel featured in Reykjavik has been built within one of the diminishing number of traditional style Icelandic buildings remaining in Reykjavik. It was built in sympathy with its surroundings at considerably higher cost than the modern structures that many other hotels favour. The hotel is also built next to a Viking archeological site which has now been exposed and preserved beneath the hotel and provides a truly historical insight into the lifestyle of Reykjavik's ancestral inhabitants. The hotel is proud of the local culture and reflects this within the décor of the hotel.

This holiday is split centered and provides an economic benefit to a wide area. The second base is within a predominantly rural area and the hotel provides vital employment and income in the region which is away from the main tourist hubs and is usually only visited on day trips. The hotel takes pride in offering locally produced menus and employs predominantly local people whenever possible. The hotel pool is heated geothermally.

We are working in partnership with one of Iceland's most responsible suppliers who appreciate the natural resources that they have been given.

They have a very strict environmental policy stating that "Nature is the adventure" and their itineraries are tailored in such a way that they do not harm or effect nature.

Their four guidelines are:

- Take nothing but pictures.
- Kill nothing but time.
- Leave nothing but footprints.
- Make nothing but memories.

Environmental Responsibility:

They offset their carbon from any activity transfers through the Icelandic Carbon fund (www.kolvidur.is).

They also take part in the Icelandic Nature Conservation organization (www.natturuverndarsamtok.is) and through them take an active part in supervision over constructions in the highlands of Iceland. The organization is a public forum that issues statements and gives their opinion on all matters concerning construction in Icelandic nature.

As much waste as possible is recycled and religiously removed from the activity sites.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

At the start of every trip participants are provided with information on how best to pass through the environment without leaving their mark, so future generations can visit these special places in their natural state.

Our suppliers run a guide school and train their own guides in Iceland thus stemming the flow of young people to mainland Europe.

Social Responsibility:

All the lost and found items are donated to the Red Cross and they also ensure that they sponsor a child each year. Hot drinks and internet access are given to clients in exchange for small donations to the Red Cross and other good causes.

Economic Responsibility:

Our suppliers only use Icelandic meats and ingredients in their packed lunches and local guides who are passionate about the environment and the conservation of Iceland.



Please Note:

The information given in this trip dossier covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please refer to the foreign office website for more up to date information on your chosen destination. Abnormal conditions or events beyond our control can prevail at any time, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes. In order to enjoy and be safe in all activities you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.