

ICELAND

October 20 - November 3



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DAY 1: Welcome to the Land of Fire and Ice!



An Iceland Travel guide will meet you at the airport and bring you out to where the tour vehicle is waiting. Drive through the lunar landscapes of Reykjanes Peninsula as you head to Reykjavík. Your guide will give you an introduction to the tour as you travel to your hotel.

Please note: guaranteed early check-in is not included in the price. Most hotels begin check-in around 14:00 (2:00pm).

Dinner is on your own tonight. Reykjavík's tempting variety of restaurants and cuisines will make the dining experience a delight. (We can also add in dinner on this night for your group, if requested).

Optional Activity: A possible option might be a relaxing visit to the world-famous Blue Lagoon on your way to Reykjavík.

DAY 2: Reykjavik – Snæfellsjökull Glacier National Park – Stykkishólmur Sea Cliffs with Birdlife – Sand Beaches – Snæfellsjökull Glacier – Quaint Fishing Villages

Enjoy a delicious Icelandic-style breakfast at your hotel. Meet your guide, board the tour vehicle and depart on your adventure! Start your journey into the countryside by exploring the magnificent Snæfellsnes Peninsula and Snæfellsjökull National Park. First, you'll pass through the picturesque farm and lava landscapes of Borgarfjörður fjord.

Visit the vast Eldborg crater at the edge of Snæfellsnes Peninsula. Stop at the tiny harbor village of Arnarstapi with its magnificent columnar basalt rock formations. Continue to the uniquely pebbled Djúpalónssandur beach. Circle around the legendary Snæfellsjökull glacier, mentioned in Jules Verne's famous science fiction novel Journey to the Center of the Earth. Travel along the northern part of the peninsula, passing tranquil and charming fishing villages. Take pictures of Iceland's most photographed mountain, Kirkjufell. Head to the ecofriendly and colorful village of Stykkishólmur.

Dinner and overnight stay in the Stykkishólmur area.



DAY 3: Stykkishólmur – Akureyri

Historical Fjord – Iceland's Capital of the North – Botanical Gardens

Approximate Driving Distance: 355 km (221 miles)

After an early breakfast, depart Stykkishólmur and head to Northeast Iceland. Drive along the Ring Road, passing villages and coastline where seals sometimes sun on the beaches. Drive through the region of Skagafjörður, best known for excellent Icelandic horse breeding and for many interesting historical events. You'll often see herds of colorful Icelandic horses grazing in the fields in this area.



Your destination is Akureyri, the unofficial “capital” of North Iceland. Set in the scenic fjord of Eyjafjörður, Akureyri is rich with a vibrant art and culture scene. After arriving in Akureyri in the late afternoon, your group will take a sightseeing tour of this charming town before checking in at your hotel. A favorite Akureyri highlight for our visitors is the Botanical Gardens. It is amazing to see so many different types of plants growing in a region so close to the Arctic Circle.

Dinner and overnight stay in Akureyri for the next 2 nights.

Optional Activity: A visit to Lýtingsstaðir horse farm, where you'll meet friendly Icelandic horses and enjoy a presentation about how horses were important to Iceland's history.

1238 - The Battle of Iceland experience in Sauðárkrúkur. A unique immersive VR exhibition depicting a 13th century battle that changed Icelandic society forever.

DAY 4: Siglufjörður - The Arctic Coastline

Dramatic Fjords – Picturesque Fishing Villages – Culinary Traditions – Icelandic Schnapps

Breakfast at your hotel. Today your group will head north to enjoy the breathtaking scenery and inspiring history of Tröllaskagi and Siglufjörður town. Drive along winding coastal roads through Eyjafjörður fjord and the “Icelandic Alps” of Tröllaskagi (the Troll Peninsula), enjoying stunning views of steep mountains and vast ocean. Your destination is the historic herring-fishing town of Siglufjörður. This pretty town is nestled in a dramatic fjord on the very edge of Iceland's steep northern mountains.

Upon arrival, visit the award-winning Herring-Era Maritime Museum, where you will be introduced to the story of the 20th century herring migration “boom” that transformed Siglufjörður into a bustling community overnight. Some historians believe this is the event that helped modernize Iceland as a nation. Explore the museum's three buildings before sampling traditional steam-baked rye bread, local pickled herring and Icelandic schnapps. After your visit, there is free time to explore Siglufjörður. Points of interest include the harbor, the church and local art galleries, cafés and shops and even a chocolate shop and a microbrewery.



Head back to Akureyri via the bustling fishing villages of Ólafsfjörður and Dalvík. Arrive back in Akureyri in the late afternoon.

Optional Activity: Visit to Kaldi Microbrewery and have a walk through the brewery, hear the story and get a taste of various beers. Visit Ektafiskur fishing factory, see how the process works, and for the brave ones, taste the fermented shark and wash it down with a special brew.

DAY 5: Akureyri – Lake Mývatn Bizarre Lava Formations – Volcanic Craters – Myvatn Nature Baths

Breakfast at your hotel. Today your group is in for a delightful day of ever-changing natural wonders! You will be visiting the volcanic wonderland of the Lake Mývatn region. Start with a visit to the awe-inspiring Goðafoss waterfall. You'll have some time to walk along the paths near the waterfall and listen to the interesting story of how Goðafoss got its name. Continue to the quirky and enchanting area of Lake Mývatn, a paradise for nature enthusiasts and bird watchers. The area's Krafla volcano has created many of the wonders you'll visit today. Explore pseudo craters at Skútustaðir, peculiar lava formations at , crater, and the colorful solfataras in the Hverarönd geothermal region. You may recognize some of the area from film productions such as, Fast & Game of Thrones Star Wars and Furious 8. Mývatn continues to be a beloved filming location for movie productions, especially in wintertime.

Travel tip: *We suggest that you bring a mosquito head net to use in Mývatn. The lake attracts midges. They are harmless, but our past guests have found it more comfortable to wear head nets.*

Dinner and overnight in the Lake Myvatn area.

Optional Activity: Visit to the Mývatn Nature Baths where you can relax in an azure blue geothermal lagoon and natural steam baths.

DAY 6: Mývatn – Ásbyrgi Canyon – Dettifoss – Egilsstaðir National Park of Canyons – Echoing Rocks – Glacial River – Largest Waterfall in Europe

Breakfast at your hotel. Today you'll be exploring the largest national park in Western Europe: Vatnajökull National Park. This park covers 14% of Iceland and takes its name from Europe's largest glacier. First, pass through the colorful fishing town and whale watching center of Húsavík. Drive along the fossil rich Tjörnes peninsula to the northern part of Vatnajökull National Park. This is the Jökulsárgljúfur region of the park, where glacial floods and volcanic eruptions have created a unique landscape of canyons and bizarre rock formations. One of the most distinct canyons is horseshoe shaped Ásbyrgi, where you can walk on pretty forested trails to a secret canyon lake.



Discover the magnificent basaltic formations of Hljóðaklettur (the Echo Rocks- yes, they do echo-) and the thundering glacial river, Jökulsá á Fjöllum.

The next stop is the powerful Dettifoss waterfall, the largest one in Europe. Standing near the falls and feeling the rumbling power of the water is a special experience. Continue eastward over the vast and now unpopulated Jökuldalsheiði plateau and into the fertile Fljótsdalur district. The districts' excellent farm produce, game and wild berries have made it a great destination for culinary travel. This area is also mentioned in the intriguing Viking tale, Hrafnkell's Saga, as well as legends about a local lake monster. East Iceland is also home to Iceland's only reindeer herd.

Dinner and overnight in the Egilsstaðir area.

Optional Activity: Whale watching in Húsavík. Experience a classic whale watching tour from Husavik and sail in the magnificent nature of Skjálfandi bay.

Visit to the Vök Baths near Egilsstaðir, a collection of serene geothermal floating pools, located on the gorgeous Lake Urriðavatn in East Iceland.



DAY 7: Egilsstaðir – Höfn

Beautiful Fjord Views – Intriguing Stone Collection – Europe's Largest Glacier



Breakfast at your hotel. This morning head along the rugged and varied coastline of the East Fjords, some which are now deserted and some with farms and fishing villages. Each fjord has its own unique landscape and history.

Drive along Fáskrúðsfjörður, a fjord and village that has interesting historical connections with France. The town was a home base for French and Belgian fishermen working off the coast of Iceland and there is still a French influence in the fjord's town. The ancient East fjords have some of Iceland's most ancient volcanoes and a great variety of colorful minerals which you can notice here and there in the landscape. At Álftafjörður you might

see thousands of whooper swans which have given the fjord its name. After winding along the East fjords, your group will head into Southeast Iceland and the town of Höfn, where you will have views of magnificent Vatnajökull glacier.

Dinner and overnight in the Höfn area.

Optional Activity: Visit to the French Museum in Fáskrúðsfjörður or the Petra's Stone collection in Stöðvarfjörður. Visit to Beljandi brewery in Breiðdalssvík and sample local brews at a tiny community microbrewery built in a former warehouse.

Evening SuperJeep tour or Snowmobile ride on Vatnajökull glacier.

DAY 8: Höfn – Glacial Lagoon – Skaftafell – South Shore – Hvalsöllum

Glacial Lagoon with Floating Icebergs – Glacier-Ringed Oasis – Black Sand Beaches

Breakfast at your hotel. Today you will be following along the edge of Vatnajökull glacier as your group drives along the Ring Road, seeing the glacier from many different angles. You will also be visiting Vatnajökull National Park again, but now from southern area. It's a completely different landscape of glaciers and volcanoes. Visit the famous Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon where huge icebergs float and grind together in the still, deep waters of the lagoon. Nearby is the Diamond Beach, recently made famous by social media. Glittering chunks of ice from the glacier lagoon drift to rest on the black beach before they eventually float to sea. Continue on to the Vatnajökull National Park's Skaftafell area, a beautiful green oasis beneath towering Öræfajökull, the highest peak in Iceland.

Your journey then takes you across the vast Skeiðarársandur "desert" with its vast stretches of black sand formed by mighty glacial rivers. You'll also cross the enormous and strange Eldhraun lava field –the largest single lava flow recorded in history (1783 – 1784 AD). Visit a breath-taking black sand beach with thundering waves at Reynisfjara beach. You'll also stop to admire two photogenic waterfalls: Skógafoss with Mýrdalsjökull glacier towering above it, and ribbon-like Seljalandsfoss with its trail leading behind the cascade.

Dinner and overnight stay in Hvalsöllum area.

Optional Activity: Boat tour by amphibian boat or Zodiac boat on the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon.



DAY 9: Hvolsvöllur – Gullfoss – Geysir – Þingvellir – Reykjavík **Beautiful Waterfall - Active geysers – UNESCO National Park**

Breakfast at your hotel. We've reserved today for your group to visit the famous Golden Circle wonders. Your tour bus first heads to the famous Gullfoss "Golden" Waterfall, which many Icelanders consider to be the country's most beautiful waterfall. Nearby, your group will discover the lively hot spring area of Geysir. View the vibrant Strokkur geyser spout a column of water up to 30 meters (98 feet) every few minutes, as well as many other bubbling and boiling hot springs.

The last stop is Þingvellir National Park, a UNESCO site famous for its tectonic plate geology and for its special place in Icelandic history. You'll even have the rare chance to take a walk between two continents! Your trip ends in Reykjavík in the late afternoon where your guide will say farewell to your group. The rest of the day is open for your own activities in the city. Dinner is on your own.

Overnight in Reykjavík.

Optional Activity: Visit to Friðheimar, a geothermal greenhouse farm, where tomatoes are grown all year round and enjoy a taste of the crops.

DAY 10: Departure

Breakfast at your hotel. (Please note that this might be a light breakfast if you are taking an early morning departure flight.) Depending on your schedule there may be free time to explore Reykjavík, take a refreshing morning walk, and do some shopping.

Meet your bus driver at your hotel for an unguided transfer to Keflavík Airport and your return flight. You'll have the chance to take in some final views of Iceland as you drive along the Reykjanes Peninsula to the airport. Enjoy your trip back to your home country and the fond memories of your time in Iceland!

