



Northern Lights Exploration

8 days / 7 nights

Explore the best of Western, Southern & Southeast Iceland in the wintertime: discover the Golden Circle, the Snæfellsnes Peninsula, the Blue Lagoon, the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon and the Black lava beach. Climb a volcano, embark on a fjord cruise, stop at a shark farmer, meet Icelandic horses on a farm, see turf farmsteads and churches. Optional ice cave tour at Vatnajökull glacier from mid-November to mid-March & optional Northern Lights by boat cruise from Reykjavík. A bestseller with up to 98% chances of seeing the Northern Lights.

Highlights and Experiences:

- Track record of 85-98% chance of seeing the Northern Lights
- See amazing Icelandic landscapes mixed with soft adventure and cultural experiences during the day. Most nights we stay in the countryside, away from light pollution, in order to maximise the chances to see the Northern Lights
- Climb a volcano crater and walk between two continental tectonic plates
- Visit a traditional shark farmer, turf farmsteads and churches
- Relax in the Blue Lagoon and learn about living next to Eyjafjallajökull volcano
- See Icelandic horses, taste freshly baked hot spring bread and enjoy a fjord cruise
- Six evenings Northern Lights Academy
- Program offered in two group sizes: maximum 16 or 45 persons
- **New:** Optional ice cave tour at Vatnajökull glacier for departures between November 15th and March 15

Prices for October 2018 – April 2019:

For large groups with maximum 45 persons:

1.970 EUR per person in double, twin and triple* room

2.940 EUR per person in single room

For small groups with maximum 16 persons:

2.810 EUR per person in double, twin and triple* room

3.330 EUR per person in single room

Prices for September 2019 – April 2020:

For large groups with maximum 45 persons:

1.775 EUR per person in double, twin and triple* room

2.160 EUR per person in single room

For small groups with maximum 16 persons:

2.540 EUR per person in double, twin and triple* room

2.925 EUR per person in single room

Note that most double rooms in Iceland are actually twin bedded rooms *Triple room on request



CHILDREN DISCOUNT: 20% discount for children 8-11 years of age if sharing room with parents. Tour is not recommended for children younger than eight years of age. Triple rooms are double rooms with extra bed and ideal for two adults and one child.

Departures

Big groups (maximum 45 people) departures on Sundays and Fridays.

Small groups (maximum 16 people) departures on Tuesdays

Included:

- 7 nights accommodation at comfort tourist-class hotels
- 6 days escorted bus tour with English-speaking guide/driver-guide
- Arrival & departure airport transfer by Flybus shuttle (no guide)
- Fjords cruise on Breiðafjörður fjord including light lunch (day 3)
- Visit traditional shark curing farm
- Hot spring Tasting with geothermal cooked bread & eggs
- Visit Icelandic horse stable & geothermal greenhouse
- Visit Lava Exhibition Center
- Skógar folk museum & turf houses
- Entrance with towel to Blue Lagoon
- Traditional Icelandic dinner at local restaurant (day 7)
- Northern Lights program

NOT included:

- Any private expenses
- Any additional services
- All meals not listed under "included"
- Single supplement (mandatory when in single room)

EXTRA COSTS FOR DINNERS TO BE PAID AT THE HOTELS: Fixed 2-course dinners with fish, meat or vegetarian main courses are available at the hotels starting at ISK 7.200 (about EUR 63) per person per night. Note, that the country hotels do not offer a la carte meals and there are no other restaurants nearby. Paying for a 2-course dinner directly at the hotel is less expensive than to have it included in the tour package.

Additional Services at extra costs possible:

- Extra night in Reykjavik before/after the tour - on request
- **Optional ice cave visit (mid-November to mid-March)**

NOTE: Itineraries may be subject to change at short notice during severe weather conditions and certain outdoor activities/day trips may be cancelled during the winter season in Iceland. In these rare cases, where situations of force majeure apply, excursions/activities cannot be refunded but the local guides will try their best to find reasonable alternatives where and whenever possible.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: This program includes a special six-night Northern Lights Academy – which means that during 6 evenings there is a combination of presentations, lectures, a film and guided searches for the Aurora Borealis – the Northern Lights. All countryside hotels in this program offer a Northern Lights wake-up call for guests that register for that special service at the hotel reception. The Northern Lights Exploration series are designed to spend 6 evenings in the countryside to maximise the chances of seeing the elusive Northern Lights, still the tour is dependent on weather and therefore sightings are not guaranteed. The Northern Lights are in the northern hemisphere from September through April but are only visible when the sky is clear



ICELAND

and free of clouds. Like many of natural wonders, the Northern Lights are ephemeral – they may be visible, they may appear for a bit and then be gone (it is not a TV show that you can just turn on and off). But it is worth the patience which is much required. Because they are a winter event, you need to be prepared to wait outside while looking for them. It is best to dress very warmly, in layers, with good footwear, gloves, hats and whatever else makes you comfortable while you await patiently this truly outstanding event. For the best photos, we recommend using a tripod.

Itinerary



Day 1: WELCOME to ICELAND (50 km/31 mls)

Individual transfer by airport shuttle bus from Keflavik Airport to your accommodation in Reykjavík where you spend the night.

Day 2: REYKJAVIK CITY TOUR & BORGARFJÖRÐUR SAGA VALLEY (245 km/152 mls)

At 09:00 meet your tour guide who shows the group the highlights of Iceland's exciting capital. Then we head west. Borgarfjörður is known as the Saga Valley because of its many important historical events. We get a chance to climb the Grábrók volcano crater and get warmed at Deildartunguhver, Europe's most powerful hot spring which produces 180 litres per second of water that is nearly boiling - 97° Celsius. Hraunfossar is a series of waterfalls pouring from beneath a wide lava field. Barnafoss – the Children's falls, is nearby with its own tragic tale. We spend two nights in Borgarnes, West Iceland. The afternoon includes a lecture about Northern Lights. After dinner, we step into the hotel garden in search of the Northern Lights followed by a hot cup of chocolate or tea.

Overnight location:

Icelandair Hotel Hamar. Breakfast included. A la Carte dinner is on your own.



Snæfellsjökull Glacier

Day 3: SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA & FJORD CRUISE (250 km/155 mls)

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula “the peninsula of the snowy mountain“ just out from Iceland’s west coast, like a long arm with a clenched fist at its tip, and is in many ways a microcosm of the whole island. A rugged mountain chain runs its length. We travel to the charming fishing town of Stykkishólmur for a cruise in the Breiðafjörður fjord. After a light lunch a uniquely Icelandic “treat“ awaits us at Bjarnarhöfn, where they make Hákarl - the fermented shark. Depending on road and weather conditions, we visit the fishing village of Grundarfjörður, a place with an impressive coastline and mountains, lakes and waterfalls behind the village. Jutting out into the bay rises one of the most photographed mountains in Iceland, Mt. Kirkjufell. On the way back to Borgarnes the guide gives you some practical tips on how to photograph the Auroras as part of the Northern Lights Academy program. Naturally, once darkness falls, we are out in the hotel garden to chase the Northern Lights and to soak in the hotel’s outdoor hot tubs.

Overnight location:

Icelandair Hotel Hamar. Breakfast & light lunch included. A la Carte dinner is on your own.



Gullfoss waterfall in winter

Day 4: GOLDEN CIRCLE, GEOTHERMAL TASTE & ICELANDIC HORSES (220 km/136 mls)

Today we travel along the Hvalfjörður fjord. The first stop is at an Icelandic wool outlet store, just to see what they do with all those sheep! We continue inland to Þingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. We travel the Golden Circle route and see steam rising from the Geysir geothermal fields as we arrive. There is a variety of hot springs and bubbling pools. The original geyser is now dormant but has been replaced by Strokkur “the Churn“ which erupts at 5-10 minute intervals. The chef of the Restaurant Geysir invites you to taste freshly baked hot spring bread served with Icelandic butter, geothermally boiled eggs and herring. It is best served with a small glass of Geysir Schnapps, very cold – nearly freezing. On we travel to Gullfoss, a double waterfall that tumbles 34 meters into the Hvítá river and attracts tourists and travellers in summer and winter. In the afternoon, you learn about the Icelandic horse, its special qualities and history and visit a geothermal greenhouse, before we reach the accommodation in South Iceland. Tonight, step into the darkness and search for the elusive Northern Lights, while best enjoyed from a comfortable hot tub in the garden of the hotel, amidst the peace and stillness of rural Iceland.

Overnight location:

Fosshotel Hekla. Breakfast included. A la Carte dinner is on your own.

Day 5: SOUTH ICELAND & EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL VOLCANO (220 km/136 mls)

Today we travel along the South coast. At the Lava Exhibition Center, we learn about active volcanos. Further east we visit one of Iceland's finest folk museums. This museum contains an outstanding collection of farm and domestic artefacts from Iceland's past and several turf-built houses. Nearby is Skógafoss waterfall which is 60 meters high and one of the most impressive waterfalls in the country. In the afternoon we take a stroll on the black lava beach and along bird cliffs at Reynisfjara in South Iceland. We spend 2 nights near Kirkjubæjarklaustur in the Vatnajökull National Park region, located in darkness and ideal for Northern Lights search.

Overnight location:

Fosshotel Núpar. Breakfast included. A la Carte dinner is on your own.



Floating icebergs on the Glacier lagoon

Day 6: SKAFTAFELL NATIONAL PARK & VATNAJÖKULL GLACIER (280 km/174 mls)

Today's program is all about glaciers, ice and icebergs. We travel to Jökulsárlón, a glacial lagoon filled with floating icebergs, and we explore the extraordinary site and might see seals swimming in arctic waters. You can walk on the black sandy beach where large icebergs get stranded. In the afternoon we visit the tiny turf church at Hof and spend time at Europe's largest national park, which has Iceland's highest mountains, an alpine environment, and Europe's largest glacier. In the evening enjoy a film presentation about the Northern Lights as part of the Northern Lights Academy program. Be careful not to go to bed too soon in this remote and quiet location or you may just miss out one more chance of seeing the Northern Lights shimmering and dancing across the night sky.

Overnight location:

Fosshotel Núpar. Breakfast included. A la Carte dinner is on your own.

Day 7: SOUTH SHORE, REYKJAVÍK & BLUE LAGOON (370 km/230 mls)

From Kirkjubæjarklaustur we head across the Eldhraun lava field to the village of Vík, where we make a photo stop. The black lava beach with high bird cliffs and pounding waves is very impressive. Further west we reach the high but narrow Seljalandsfoss waterfall which plunges from the mountain. In the afternoon we return to Reykjavik and have about 2 hour leisure time to explore Iceland's capital on our own, visit museums, do some shopping or simply rest after

all this touring. In the evening, we get to soak in the famous Blue Lagoon. After an Icelandic farewell dinner at a local restaurant, we go on one last nocturnal tour to seek more Northern Lights. Around midnight we reach Reykjavík for one last night.

Overnight location:

Centerhotel Plaza or Arnarhvoll, Fosshotel Rauðará, Baron or Lind. Breakfast & Farewell dinner included



Skogafoss waterfall

Day 8: DEPARTURE HOME (50 km/31 mls)

Individual transfer by airport shuttle from your accommodation in Reykjavík to Keflavík Airport.

Breakfast included.

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Daily driving: Total mileage without airport transfer is about 1.585 km (983 miles) which is an average of 265 km (164 miles) per day. You spend about 3,5 hours per day on the bus, depending on road conditions, traffic and daily distances. On some days the driving might be longer than on some other days.