Northern Lights Exploration
8 days | Starts/Ends: Reykjavik

Explore the best of West and South Iceland on our most inclusive Northern Lights tour. Start and end in Reykjavik, discover the Golden Circle, climb a volcano, meet Icelandic horses and relax in the Blue Lagoon. Cruise along fjords and taste fermented shark all whilst looking out for the spectacular Northern Lights on this soft cultural adventure.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights
- Reykjavik: step foot in the Capital of Iceland
- Borgarfjörður Valley: climb volcanoes, watch waterfalls and warm up next to Europe’s most powerful hot springs
- Snaefellsnes Peninsula: wander across rugged mountains, charming fishing villages and fjords
- Borgarnes: explore the Icelandic Settlement Centre and geothermal pools
- Golden Circle: tour Geysir geothermal fields, the Gulfoss Waterfall, Strokkur geyser and Thingvellir National Park - a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Eyjafjallajökull Glacier: see the site of the famous eruption of April 2010 that halted international air travel for a week
- South Coast: take in the beauty at Skógafoss waterfall, black lava beach & bird cliffs at Reynisfjara beach
- Vatnajökull National Park region: witness Western Europe’s largest national park and glacier
- Vik: roam Lava fields, black lava beach and Seljalandsfoss waterfall
- Blue Lagoon: take a relaxing dip in a natural geothermal spa surrounded by a lava field
- Icelandic Countryside: stay up for a night showing of the Northern Lights

What's Included
- 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 1 dinner. (traditional Icelandic dinner at Northern Light Inn Hotel)
- 7 nights standard hotels and cottage accommodation
- Arrival and Departure Transfer with FlyBus from Keflavik Airport
- Fjord Cruise on Breidafjördur fjord including lunch
- Visit to multi media presentation at Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Information Center
- Entrance into Skogar folk museum and turf houses
- Entrance with towel into the Blue Lagoon
- Services of an English Speaking Icelandic Guide
- Transportation in heated coaches with free Wi-Fi on board
- Northern Lights programme during 6 evenings with a combination of lectures, presentations, film and guided searches for the Northern Lights and midnight refreshments
- Use of winter and Northern lights explorer equipment simple non-slip snow and ice grippers spikes for shoes and a flash light that is helpful when walking in the dark and operating a photo camera at night
- This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers from different operators, not solely On The Go. The sightseeing group may vary in size from 10 - 45 persons.

What's Not Included
- International Flights and Visas
- Gratuity for your tour guide. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY
Northern Lights Exploration

Day 1 : Reykjavik
Reykjavik. Welcome to Iceland and the start of your Northern Lights adventure! Your transfer to your accommodation is by Flybus shuttle. Your travel documents include a separate voucher for the FLYBUS airport shuttle, located outside the arrival hall in front of the main airport exit. If you need assistance, contact the Flybus representative at their sales counter in the arrival hall. The transfer takes about 45 minutes to BSI bus station in Reykjavik. There you might either continue with the same bus or be transferred to a smaller coach to your accommodation in Reykjavik (see information on your separate voucher), according to instructions of the driver. For the check-in at your accommodation in Reykjavik see separate voucher. Please note that the FLYBUS no longer stops at the Centrehotel Plaza but at a bus stop (number 4 Tryggvagata) a 4 minute walk from your hotel. Please see the map on the below link:
https://www.re.is/media/map/BusStop4-Centerhotel-Plaza.jpg

If you wish to maximize your chances to see the Northern Lights, you might want to book an evening Northern Lights bus tour on arrival day at the front desk of your accommodation, if the weather conditions are good. These tours can be booked on the same day and they start at 21:00 or 22:00, depending on season. Pick up from the accommodation starts 30 minutes prior.

Day 2 : City Tour & Hot Springs
Reykjavik - Borgarfjörður Valley - Borgarnes. This morning we meet our tour guide and depart on a Reykjavik city tour exploring some of the highlights of Iceland’s capital.

The Borgarfjörður valley is known as the Saga valley of West Iceland because many important historical events took place there. You get a chance to climb the Grabrok volcano crater and warm up at Deildartunguhver, Europe’s most powerful hot spring, producing 180 litres of nearly boiling water (97°C) per second! Next we head to Hraunfossar, full of waterfalls that pour from beneath a kilometre wide lava field.

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 the next two nights at Borgarnes in West Iceland. This afternoon includes a lecture about Northern Lights and after dinner we take a walk into the garden to search for the Northern Lights followed by a hot cup of chocolate or tea.

Day 3 : Mountains & Lights

Day 4 : Golden Circle & Horses

Borgarnes - Golden Circle - Selfoss. This morning we travel along the scenic shores of the Hvítá river, stopping at an Icelandic wool outlet store before turning inland to Thingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. After a stop at the park, we continue to Gulfoss “the golden falls”, a double waterfall that tumbles 34 meters into the Hvítá River. Look out for the steam from the Geysir geothermal fields as we arrive. Here there is a variety of hot springs and bubbling pools with the original geyser now dormant but Strokkur „the Churn“ very much still active with eruptions every 5-10 minutes. When we get to Geysir, we visit the restaurant and taste freshly baked hot spring bread served with delicious Icelandic butter, geothermally boiled eggs, and local herring. This is best served with a small glass of ice cold (nearly frozen) Geysir Schnapps.

This afternoon, we learn about the history of the hardy Icelandic horse and the special qualities they possess. We also visit a geothermal greenhouse, before reaching our accommodation in South Iceland.

Tonight, we step into the darkness and search for the elusive Northern Lights, which are best enjoyed from the comfort of the hot tub in the garden of the hotel amidst the peace and stillness of rural Iceland.
Northern Lights Exploration

Distance Covered: 220 km/136 mls
Overnight - Sëlssó (B)

Day 5: Black Lava Beach

Hella - Eyjafjallajökull - KirkjubæjarklaUSTur. Today we travel along the South coast. Today we travel along the South coast. At our first stop of the day we will learn about the geology and the active volcano's in Iceland at the Lava & Volcano Exhibition centre.

Further east we visit one of Iceland's finest folk museums. This museum contains an outstanding collection of farm and domestic artefacts typical of Iceland's past as well as turf-built houses. Nearby is the waterfall of Skógafoss which stands 60 meters tall and is one of the most impressive waterfalls in Iceland.

This afternoon we take a stroll along black lava beach and the bird cliffs at Reynisfjara beach in South Iceland. We spend the next 2 nights near Kirkjubæjarklaustur in the Vatnajökull National Park region, located in complete darkness and ideal for Northern Lights search.

Distance Covered: 220 km/136 mls
Overnight - Kirkjubæjarklaustur (B)

Day 6: Vatnajökull NP

Kirkjubæjarklaustur - Jökulsárlón - Kirkjubæjarklaustur. Today's program is all about glaciers, ice and icebergs. This morning we travel to Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon that is filled with floating icebergs. Exploring this extraordinary site we keep an eye out for seals swimming in the freezing Arctic waters. We can walk along the black sandy beach where some large icebergs have been stranded.

This afternoon we visit the tiny turf church in the town of Hof before heading to the National Park. The Vatnajökull National Park covers about 12,000 square kilometres and is the largest National Park in Europe. Here we find Iceland's highest mountains, an alpine environment, and Europe's largest glacier which the park is named after. Alternatively we can take an optional Ice Cave tour (between Nov 15th and March 15th only) - see Trip Notes for more details.

Tonight we enjoy a movie presentation about the Northern Lights as a 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.

Distance Covered: 280 km/174 mls
Overnight - Kirkjubæjarklaustur (B)

Day 7: Lava Fields & Lagoon

Kirkjubæjarklaustur - Vik - Reykjavík. This morning we depart Kirkjubæjarklaustur and head across the Laki lava field to the village of Vik where we make a photo stop. We take a stroll on the black lava beach and along the bird cliffs at Reynisfjara beach in South Iceland, Further west we reach the high but narrow Seljalandsfoss waterfall which plunges over the mountain. Those wishing to get a bit closer can take a trail that goes behind the falling water but be prepared to get wet!

In the afternoon we return to Reykjavík where we have a couple of hours to explore Iceland's capital on our own, visit museums, do some shopping or simply rest after all this touring. This evening we head to the famous Blue Lagoon for a relaxing soak, followed by a traditional Icelandic dinner at the Northern Light Inn Hotel and finishing off with one last nocturnal tour to seek more Northern Lights. Around midnight we reach Reykjavik for one last night.

Distance Covered: 370 km/230 mls
Overnight - Reykjavík (B, D)

Day 8: Reykjavik

Today our Northern Lights Icelandic experience comes to an end with included FlyBus transfer to Keflavik Airport. Pick up time is according to reservation arrangements that you made with the receptionist at your hotel on the evening prior to flight departure. Your travel documents should include a separate voucher for your transfer to the airport.

Distance covered: 50km/31mls

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.
Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Centrehotel Plaza

In the main square of Reykjavík, the Centrehotel Plaza offers travellers a warm welcoming atmosphere. Guest rooms offer bright and modern decor with lots of contemporary oak furnishings.
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Complimentary Wi-Fi is available in each room as well as flat screen tv, mini bar and excellent en suite facilities. The hotel also boasts the elegant Plaza Bar - the perfect place for a tipple before heading out for an unforgettable night in Reykjavik. Be sure to make it for happy hour! Located in the heart of the city - just a short walk to the harbour, shopping and restaurants.

Hotel Klettur
Just a short walk to the main shopping street of Laugavegur, Hotel Klettur is a modern hotel believed to be home to many elves! Guest rooms are clean and brightly furnished with comfortable beds and excellent ensuites. A typical Icelandic breakfast is served in the Breakfast Room and there is also a bar serving Iceland’s best beers! Head outside to the local pizzeria for dinner and look out for the elves that live under the rocks in the corridor!

Icelandair Hotel Hamar
Surrounded by an 18 hole golf course, Icelandair Hotel Hamar is one of Iceland’s most picturesque locations. Guest rooms are all single-storey and open out directly onto the grounds - allowing fantastic access and views. Guests can take advantage of complimentary Wi-Fi in public areas as well as outdoor hot tubs - perfect for relaxing in and spotting the Northern Lights! The onsite restaurant serves up a delicious array of locally sourced meals - most ingredients hand delivered by the local farmers each morning! Perfectly located close to Selfoss, Skogafoss and Eyjafjallajökull.

Fosshotel Hekla
Situated close to Mount Hekla, Fosshotel Hekla offers comfortable accommodation in the south of Iceland. Guest rooms are beautifully furnished and immaculate in design. Hard wood floors feature throughout and all guests can take advantage of the outdoor hot tubs for a classic Icelandic experience. The on site restaurant serves up a delicious array of locally sourced meals - most ingredients hand delivered by the local farmers each morning! Perfectly located close to Selfoss, Skogafoss and Eyjafjallajökull.

Hotel Eldhestar
A cosy countryside hotel, Hotel Eldhestar is attached to the famous Eldhestar riding school and was the first hotel in Iceland to be given the Nordic Swan ecolabel. Guest rooms are decorated in calm tones with luxurious beds and private entrances onto the garden. The hotel also benefits from outdoor hot tubs, free Wi-Fi and an onsite restaurant.

Icelandair Hotel Klaustur
Set in spectacular surroundings, Icelandair Hotel Klaustur is a comfortable country hotel. Guest rooms are smartly furnished with modern colours and excellent amenities. The hotel also boasts a first class restaurant serving up a variety of local and international cuisine. The restaurant is set in a beautiful terrace area which is lovely during summer days. Why not try the signature ‘Fire and Ice’ desert which is a hot fruit suit combined with ice cream - delicious! Well located in Kirkjubæjarklaustur, halfway between Myrdalsjökull and Vatnajökull.

Optional Northern Lights evening tours from Reykjavik
If you wish to maximize your chances to see the Northern Lights, you might want to book an evening Northern Lights bus tour on the arrival day at the front desk of your accommodation, if the weather conditions are good. These tours can be booked on the same day and they start at 21:00 or 22:00, depending on season. Pick up from the accommodation starts 30 minutes prior. The companies that operate these tours are decide between 18:00- 19:00 whether the excursions will be operated or not.

Fosshotel Nupar
Surrounded by lava fields and famous Vatnajökull, Fosshotel Nupar offers comfortable accommodation in a picturesque setting. Guest rooms are simply furnished with bright interiors and hardwood floors as well as excellent en-suite facilities that include heated floors! The hotel offers complimentary Wi-Fi as well as an onsite restaurant and bar with breakfast included with all stays. Well located a short distance from Lakagigar, Skáftafell National Park and unique Jökulsarlon glacier lagoon.

TRIP NOTES

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There are also Northern Lights boat tours in the fjord/bay of Reykjavik. These Northern Lights cruises could get cancelled due to unfavourable weather conditions. When the Northern Lights forecast looks good - but it is too windy to go out on sea – these excursions might still be made by bus. If you are interested to participate in such a Northern Lights cruise, we suggest booking directly with the reception staff at your accommodation once you arrive in Iceland and if the weather conditions are suitable for such optional excursions.

Tour Arrangements

This tour is operated in conjunction with other tourist groups, not solely On The Go. You will join travellers from several different operators, some staying in different hotels for sightseeing each day and spend your evenings at leisure. The sightseeing group may vary in size from 10 - 45 persons.

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions.

Optional Ice Cave Tour (Nov 15th - March 15th only)

Experience a spectacular crystal ice cave in Europe's largest glacier, Vatnajökull. It is like standing under a frozen blue ocean or in a frozen cathedral surrounded by millions of shades of blue. Deep under Iceland's massive Vatnajökull glacier, beautiful caves of ice are formed by rivers of meltwater during the summer time. Too dangerous to visit in the spring and summer due to a threat of collapse, cold winter temperatures strengthen the ice and make exploration possible and safe to visit between November 15th and March 15th (subject to change). The tour takes about 2.5 hours in total - about 30 minute drive (subject to change). The tour takes about 2 hours in total - about 30 minute drive (subject to change). The tour takes about 2 hours in total - about 30 minute drive (subject to change). The tour takes about 2 hours in total - about 30 minute drive (subject to change).

Extra Cost of dinners to be paid at hotels

Fixed 2-course dinners with fish, meat or vegetarian main courses are available at the hotels in the countryside starting at ISK 5,000 (about EUR 34) per person per night. Note, that the country hotels do not offer a la carte meals and there are no other dining options at the country hotels. Paying for a 2-course dinner directly at the hotel is less expensive than to have it included in the tour package. You will need to prebook the dinners via your tour guide on the first day of the tour and meals can be paid in ISK or by Credit Card at the hotels. In Reykjavik dinner is on your own. There are many restaurants for fast food and fine a la carte dining in Iceland's capital. See suggestions on the following pages under restaurant tips.

For lunches calculate from ISK 1,000 up (about EUR 6) depending what you are planning to eat. Warm soups and meals start from ISK 1,400 (about EUR 9) up and cost up to ISK 3,500 (EUR 24). Lunch stops are at restaurants, road side petrol station diners or café-shops en route. If any special diet is requested please let us know in advance and reconfirm it with your tour guide on the first day of tour.

Daily Driving

Total mileage without airport transfer is about 1,650 km / 1.023 miles, which is an average of 275 km (171 miles) per day. You spend about 3.5 hours per day on the bus, depending on road conditions and daily distances. On some days the driving might be longer than on some other days.

Northern Lights Programme

This program includes our special six night Northern Lights Academy – which means that during 6 evenings there is a combination of presentations, lectures, a movie and guided searches of 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 maximize 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 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 will make you comfortable while you wait patiently this truly outstanding light show. We also recommend using a torch for your night excursions and operating your photo camera in the darkness. The Northern Lights can be pretty spectacular, and for the best photos we recommend using a tripod.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Double rooms in Iceland

Please note that in Iceland double rooms are not very common - instead twin rooms are more likely. We can request double rooms if required but these are not guaranteed.

Visas

UK, AUS, NZ, USA and CAN passport holders do not require a visa at present to enter Iceland.
Northern Lights Exploration

Iceland for touristic purposes for a stay of up to 90 days. South African passport holders can obtain a visa prior to arrival for touristic purposes, for a stay of up to 90 days. Please note that there is no Iceland Embassy in South Africa, you will need to apply at the Royal Danish Embassy in Pretoria. A full passport with two full blank pages and at least 6 months validity beyond date of exit from Iceland upon entrance is essential. Please check your personal visa requirements with your embassy if you are from another country. Please double-check all visa requirements with the relevant embassy at least one month before travel as the above is intended as a guide.

Please Note: Visa information is subject to change. Contact your nearest Iceland Embassy for the most up to date information. Visa procurement remains the responsibility of the passenger and not that of On The Go Tours.

Flybus Transfer

Applies to all tours except the Iceland Getaway tour.

If you have the Flybus/Reykjavik Excursions airport shuttle included in your tour package then please note the transfers are on an individual basis and without a guide. The bus operates in connection with all arriving and departing flights from the Keflavik airport. So if you are arriving late at night or your flight is delayed, don’t worry, there will be a Flybus waiting for you.

Once you have cleared immigration and collected your bags please head to the exit of the airport where the bus(es) will be waiting. Please note that it may be necessary to change buses at the BSI (central bus station in Reykjavik) depending on your start hotel. The staff of the Reykjavik Excursions/Flybus are very friendly, speak great English and will help with any questions you may have.

Please note that the FLYBUS no longer stops at the Centrehotel Plaza for Land of the Northern Lights Comfort Upgrade and Northern Lights Exploration (including Small Group) but at a bus stop (number 4 Tryggvagata) a 4 minute walk from your hotel. Please see the map on the below link:
https://www.re.is/media/map/BusStop4-Centerhotel-Plaza.jpg

The Flybus has free Wi-Fi on board and sometimes USB charging points. It usually takes around 45 minutes to an hour from airport to hotel (and v.v.)

Currency

The official currency in Iceland is Icelandic Krona.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged in Iceland, and you'll get a better rate of exchange if you buy and sell in destination. Just about every establishment in Iceland will accept a credit card, including taxis, gas stations, souvenir stands, and even the most remote guest house, so it is not necessary to carry large amounts of Icelandic currency. However, due to the currency's instability some credit cards are still wary of Krona transactions, so check with your bank before you go and don't rely entirely on plastic. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities.

Traveler’s Cheques are not recommended as they’re often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage

Iceland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and does not observe daylight saving.

The voltage here is 220 volts at 50 Hz (cycles/second) which is standard throughout most of Europe (U.K. 240 volts). Icelandic electrical standards are European (50Hz, 220 volts) so many North American electrical devices will require converters and all will require plug adapters.

See ‘Special Notes for North American Visitors’ for more information.

Health Requirements

The medical facilities in Iceland are good and available free to European Union citizens with a valid EHIC form or its replacement ID card. Infectious diseases aren’t a problem in Iceland. Inoculations aren’t required except if you are arriving from countries that suffer from infectious diseases like cholera. The biggest threat to your health is likely to be accidental injury or bad weather. Always make sure you have more than adequately warm and waterproof clothing. Selection of appropriate clothing is especially important in Iceland and can even be a matter of life and death. Exercise extra caution in geothermal areas: What may appear to be solid ground can sometimes not be so solid, breaking from underneath your feet with you falling into potentially deadly boiling water. The water quality in Iceland is excellent and tap water is always drinkable.

Food & Drink

Icelandic food is mainly made up of lamb or fish in some form or another. A vegetarian diet isn’t as common and as a result not as easy to find in the more remote parts of the country. However that said, Reykjavik is fast becoming a culinary capital with lots of different types of restaurant including European, Asian, Argentinian and lots more. There are number of distinctively Icelandic foods including
- Fish
- Hardfiskur, dried fish pieces eaten as a snack with butter
- Skyr, a yoghurt-like dairy product available in flavoured and unflavoured varieties all over the country. Low in fat and high in protein.
- Hangikjöt, smoked lamb

The Northern Lights

The Northern Lights are in the northern sky from September through April but are only visible when the sky is clear and free of clouds. Like many of natures wonders, it’s 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’s worth the patience required. Because they’re a winter event, you need to be prepared to wait outside, while looking for them. It’s best to dress very warmly, in layers, with

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good footwear, gloves, hats and whatever else will make you comfortable while you await this truly amazing event. The Northern Lights can be pretty spectacular, and for the best photos we recommend using a tripod. Much of Iceland offers a very good chance to see the Northern Lights when conditions are right, and you’re in the right place.

Remember – the Northern Lights are natural phenomena, not guaranteed, but appreciated all the more for their elusive qualities. Please dress very warmly to enjoy Iceland’s long winter nights, and perhaps be rewarded with a light show unlike anything you’ve ever seen!

For Northern Lights forecast and further information visit: http://www.gi.alaska.edu/AuroraForecast/

PLEASE NOTE: Our Iceland Circle tour is not a Northern Lights tour. Most hotels used on this tour are located in towns and villages and therefore not ideal for Northern Lights viewing due to light pollution. From some of the hotels it might be easy to walk just a short distance to get to a darker location nearby when searching for the Northern Lights. Please ask the front desk of the hotel and your tour guide for suggestions.

Icelandic Weather

Iceland isn’t as cold as its name implies but it’s not exactly a tropical paradise, either. Iceland’s weather can fluctuate wildly and a warm sunny day can quickly become chilly and wet. You’ll need sturdy gear for outdoor activities, and yet, Reykjavik is known for its forward-thinking fashionistas, so packing for a trip to Iceland can be quite daunting. The following pages give you a bit of advice.

It doesn’t snow as much in Iceland as you may think, especially in Reykjavik where there is hardly any snow, even in winter. In some parts of Iceland – the north, east, and Westfjords, there is some snow and nice skiing areas where you can take advantage of it.

Thanks to the Gulf Stream, Iceland enjoys a moderate maritime climate: cool in summer and fairly mild in winter. It is an island in the North Atlantic, nestled against the Arctic Circle, so the weather is very changeable and visitors should be prepared for the unexpected. Normal summer day temperatures range between 5-8 °C (41 – 47°F) for lows and 12 – 18 °C (54 – 64 °F). The interior highlands are often colder than that — close to 0°C (32°F) even in summer. Normal winter temperatures range between 0-5 °C (32 – 41 °F). When it comes to Iceland’s weather — the one thing you can count on is unpredictability.

You never know what is going to happen next! A beautiful sunny day can suddenly turn windy and rainy — then it can all change again in a moment. You may experience every weather imaginable over the course of a few days, especially in late autumn and early spring. Important to remember when packing: Iceland is a very windy place! The best plan is to be prepared for anything and everything AND always dress in layers. The Icelanders have a saying: “there’s no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.”

Daylight in Iceland

Iceland enjoys/suffers long daylight hours in summer and long darkness hours in winter.

In the height of summer (July) the city of Reykjavik can be awash with daylight for as much as 21 hours a day whereas come January it can be as little just 4 hours of daylight. In the north of the country this can increase to 22 1/2 hours a day in July with sunset being midnight and sunrise 1:20am and come January sunrise is at 11:30am and sunset at 3pm.

Preparing to pack

Pack for activities first:

Start by studying your itinerary to see what you’ll be doing on your trip to Iceland. Most outdoor activities (horseback riding, caving, hiking, glacier walking, etc.) will require basically the same gear (with the outfitter providing any specialized gear that’s required – helmets, crampons, etc). You’ll need to wear heeled boots, such as hiking boots, moisture-wicking socks, long pants, and long sleeve shirts. You’ll also want a lightweight, waterproof but breathable shell for rainy or misty days, and a few wool (not cotton) or fleece sweaters for cooler days and evenings. You should consider bringing a hat, scarf and gloves all year round. There are also many opportunities to purchase Icelandic woollen goods!

Add in some “city clothes”:

In Reykjavik and Akureyri, the only unified theme in fashion is “unique.” It’s all about personal style, from the frilly dresses and stiletto heels you’d expect to find in New York and London to the hippe-chic styles you might imagine as the norm in any modern city. What you won’t find is anything boring and basic – no plain jeans, white t-shirts and sneakers here. Dressing for Reykjavik isn’t about changing your personal style, but it is about taking it to the next level. Though, if you plan on going on the weekend Runtur (pub crawl), you’ll want to add a few dressier items to your wardrobe. Women generally “dress” in a skirt or dress, or jeans with trendy tops. Men wear tailored dark jeans and button-up shirts, or dark pants and sportcoats. For footwear, men usually wear sport loafers or Converse, while women wear anything from high-heeled boots to open-toed stilettos to fashionable flats.

Be prepared for anything:

A day that starts out rainy and cold can become warm and sunny by mid-afternoon (or vice versa) and when it’s pleasant in the city it may be frigid twenty minutes away, so always plan on wearing layers and being ready for a range of conditions. A light, breathable, waterproof shell jacket that can be layered with a wool sweater or cardigan, and a scarf and hat will prove invaluable. And don’t forget the bathing suit. Icelanders love swimming and there is a municipal pool in nearly every town. Admission prices are generally just a few bucks, with towels and bathing suits available for rent. Visiting one of these hot spring pools is one of the best ways to experience Icelandic culture, so be sure to come prepared for a soak.

What to pack

- Clothes for cold/cooler outdoor weather: warm trousers, a woolen pullover or fleece sweater, a warm wind and water proof jacket and rain pants, woollen socks and an insulated bottom layer, like thermal underwear. Remember, it is a winter trip
Northern Lights Exploration

and it is ICELAND, known for unpredictable weather.
- A hat, scarf and gloves that are made from material that will dry overnight are great protection in Iceland’s winter weather and strong winds.
- Sturdy comfortable (hiking) boots are necessary for walking and when there is snow and icy terrain. Make sure your feet will be warm and dry – otherwise it is not fun. All sightseeing tours in the countryside involve some short walks here and there. In order to maximize your experience to explore these many nature sites good walking boots or shoes that may get dirty and wet are important.
- Buildings are often very warm, so bring light indoor clothes – t-shirts, lighter shirts and blouses.
- Bathing suits are essential, as a lot of the natural hot water is used to fill swimming pools, which are all over the country. Towels can be rented at most swimming pools.
- Binoculars, especially if you’re a bird watcher!
- Sunglasses and a bit of sunscreen are helpful
- the air is very clear in Iceland so when the sun shines, it is very bright.
- A camera with lots of film or memory cards. Many travellers say that they shoot twice as many pictures in Iceland than in other destinations. For Northern Lights photography we recommend bringing a second battery for your camera and also a tripod.
- A small alarm clock or cell phone with an alarm clock feature, since not all hotels offer wake-up calls.
- A torch for evening walks and Northern Lights photography in order to operate your photo camera in the dark.
- If you like a drink every now and then, consider stopping at the duty-free store on arrival at Keflavik Airport because alcoholic beverages are very expensive in Iceland. The same applies to tobacco. Travellers are allowed to bring 1 litre of strong liquor as well as 1 litre of wine or similar drinks into the country, and 1 carton of cigarettes. For more details see http://iceland.visahq.com/customs/

Special Notes for North American Visitors

Electricity in Iceland is 220 volts (as opposed to 110 volts in North America) most modern appliances – computers, cameras, hairdryers - will adapt to either voltage - check the power unit, which should indicate 110- 220 volts. If not, you'll need to bring a transformer. In most cases you’ll just need to get an adapter to allow you to plug into Iceland’s power outlets. You’ll need a two pin adaptor, typically labelled as “northern European”. They are available in many electronic stores, or if you forget to bring them, you can often buy them at the international airports before you go.

Cell phones are ubiquitous in Iceland, but they work on a GSM system, which often doesn't work with North American cell phone systems. You should check with your service provider before you travel to see if they have an international cell phone service upgrade available. If not, it’s possible to rent a phone from your airline or from an international cell phone rental company before you leave. Once in Iceland sometimes it’s possible to rent phones from a telephone company, but that may require a visit to their office during business hours. Because there are so many cell phones, public pay phones are hard to come by. Most hotels have phones that you can use for long distance calls with a credit card for payment.

Nature Fees

Since the beginning of 2014 it has become apparent that landowners of several scenic tourist sites in Iceland intend to start charging fees for visits in the future. The ownership of these sites is not clear. The Icelandic state partly owns these sites and questions the legitimacy of this action by some of the landowners. The Icelandic state has requested landowners not to implement a fee collection but rather to wait for the proposals of the government in regards to the implementation of a “nature pass”. The “nature pass” is meant to finance the structure and maintenance of most tourist sites in Iceland. Therefore it is possible that some of the nature attractions around Iceland might charge an entrance fee during your trip. These entrance fees are not included in the tour price and need to be paid by all tour members additionally on spot, if you wish to enter any of these nature sites. Locations, amount of entrance fee, form of payment and other details are not known at the moment and are subject to change.