

ICELAND

Reykjavík & National Parks

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

Overview

Iceland is a country defined by active volcanoes, glaciers, waterfalls, and hot springs; traveling from one place to another means seeing multiple panoramas unfold in rapid succession—steaming lava fields, deep fjords, black sand beaches, and plunging cliffs. This comprehensive exploration does justice to Iceland's diverse landscapes; taking you to the geologically active north, the picturesque fjords of the east, and the dramatic glacial scenery of the south, where you find the country's tallest mountains and eerie blue lakes filled with fantastically shaped icebergs.

From cosmopolitan Reykjavík, the route brings you to the site of Iceland's 1,000-year-old parliament at Þingvellir National Park. In Vík, the wild North Atlantic crashes onto striking stretches of black sand backed by sculpted basaltic columns. To the east, the idyllic village of Seyðisfjörður delights not only for its 19th-century charm, but also for its sheltered fjord and scenic heathland and valley walking. In the north, you witness the land in formation with steam rising from volcanic craters and lava fields, and the warm waters of Lake Mývatn, teeming with migratory waterfowl. Full days exploring are rewarded in Scandinavian comfort, welcoming hotels in stunning locales, and exceptional restaurants serving fresh and local harvest of sea and field. The long summer evenings mean there is time to further enjoy the serene light, with after-dinner lakeside strolls, upland horseback riding, or simply soaking in natural hot tubs.





Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Meet in Reykjavík. Þingvellir National Park; 3 miles, easy to moderate. Geysir and Gullfoss; 1 mile, easy. Transfer to Hella. Optional evening river walk; 2 miles, easy

You begin with an early meeting in your centrally located Reykjavík hotel for a brief orientation before departing on the 50-minute drive northeast of the city through the countryside to Þingvellir National Park, one of the three national parks that you visit on this itinerary. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Þingvellir, literally “Parliament Plains,” is the site of Iceland’s ancient parliament, first established in 930 AD and convened continuously until 1798. Not only a gathering place for chieftains establishing law, it was also an open-air meeting place for games, feasts, marriages, and trade, and the site of some of the country’s momentous decisions: from the adoption of Christianity in 1000 AD to the foundation of the Republic of Iceland in 1944. Fascinatingly, it is situated on the dramatic rift valley where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates pull apart, clearly visible at the great Almannagjá (Everyman’s Gorge), a group of gorges extending almost continuously from Lake Þingvallavatn north to Mt. Ármannsfell. The trail continues to Lögberg (Law Rock), where the “Law Speaker” proclaimed memorized laws.

Moving into the park, a two-hour walk takes you to Öxarárfoss waterfall and through a lava field covered by patchy pine plantations, dwarf birch forest, and heathland plants such as bog bilberry, woolly willow, lady smock, sweet grass, and lichen. Continuing along some of the many fissures in the rift valley, you enjoy great views of the crystal-clear, deep waters of the Vallagja, Flosagja, and Nikulasargja fissures.



From Þingvellir, a short drive takes you to a local farm for a tour of a state-of-the-art greenhouse and delicious lunch featuring fresh tomato-and-herb soup and homemade bread, followed by warm apple and rhubarb pie. The farmer and his family will also take you on a tour of the stables and introduce you to the Icelandic horse.

After lunch you make your way to your first hotel, with a number of stops en route. The first stop is at Geysir, the place giving its name to the phenomenon worldwide, and Strokkur, or the “churn,” the latter spouting every five minutes. From here, a 10-minute drive takes you to Gullfoss, or Gold Falls, Iceland’s most-famous and most-visited waterfall, a national monument. Then you continue about 90 minutes more through much of the country’s agricultural land to Hella, known for its gentle Icelandic horses.

Before gathering for a welcome cocktail and dinner in your hotel’s acclaimed riverside restaurant, you may slip into one of its geothermally heated outdoor hot tubs. On the menu of high-quality local offerings, you may choose the organic lamb pastrami, followed by fresh wild salmon from the neighboring river, chocolate and *skyr* (Icelandic cream cheese) cake for dessert. After dinner, with daylight lingering well into the night, you may choose to go for a peaceful evening walk along the banks of the Eystri-Rangá or an optional horseback ride at a nearby family-run ranch.

Hotel Rangá, Hella

A member of the Special Hotels of the World, Hotel Rangá is beautifully situated on the banks of Iceland’s premier salmon river, the Eystri-Rangá. This four-star, log-cabin-style resort features cozy and comfortable rooms, facing either the river or Iceland’s famous volcano, Mt. Hekla, as well as an acclaimed riverside restaurant and several geothermally heated outdoor hot tubs.



DAY 2

1¼-hour transfer to Vík with stops en route at Seljalandsfoss, the Skógar folk museum, and Skogafoss waterfall. Vík cliff/beach walk; 2 miles, easy. 2-hour transfer to Freysnes. Optional late-afternoon glacier walk; 2 miles, easy

After a bountiful buffet breakfast, you drive east along the Ring Road (the one road encircling the entire island) where you take in some of the southern coast's most dramatic scenery—tall mountains with a succession of waterfalls cascading from the glaciers above on one side and views of the North Atlantic coastline with its black sand beaches and dramatic headlands on the other. A 20-minute drive brings you to a brief stop at Seljalandsfoss, a narrow waterfall dropping 130 feet into a shallow pool with space to walk behind it. From here another short drive brings you to the tiny village of Skógar, a summer resort and home to one of Iceland's finest folk museums; its old turf farmhouse provides a glimpse into the fishing and farming culture of past centuries. Afterward, you stop at the town's breathtaking Skogafoss waterfall, which drops nearly 200 feet into the river Skógaá, full of salmon and char, and, according to legend, hiding a gold treasure trove visible when the sun hits it the right way.

Continuing eastward, a 35-minute drive brings you to the town of Vík, Iceland's most southerly village. This quaint town is tucked in between mountains, sea cliffs, and a long, beautiful, black sand beach. Following lunch, a spectacular coastal walk departs directly from the restaurant. Reaching the outskirts of the village, you skirt the vertical Reynisfjall cliffs—home to a remarkable bird colony including kittiwakes, fulmar, and puffins—as well as the Reynisdrangar, a series of black basalt columns sculpted by the sea. According to local folklore, these twisted shapes are trolls turned to stone by the sunrise while dragging their boats to shore. The walk concludes with a stroll along the beach, ending with an optional visit to Vík's lovely woolens shop.

Another hour's drive traverses the beautifully austere landscape of the moss-covered Eldhraun lava field, one of the largest lava fields in the world, and then another 60 minutes through a glacial floodplain called "The Sandur," the world's largest example of a black sand desert, the sand and sediment deposited by subglacial volcanoes.

By late afternoon you reach your hotel, situated at the base of vegetated glacial moraines in front of Iceland's most impressive (and largest) glacier, Vatnajökull, and also adjacent to the breathtaking Skaftafell National Park (the second national park on this tour). Before dinner at your hotel, your guides will take you on an optional two-hour walk on the run-off glacier, Svínafellsjökull.



Hótel Skaftafell, Freysnes

Ideally located three miles east of the breathtaking Skaftafell National Park, this three-star property boasts incredible glacier and mountain views, a restaurant, spacious bar, and very simple yet comfortable rooms.

DAY 3

Skaftafell National Park; 12-mile full-day option, moderate to challenging, or 4-6 mile morning option, easy to moderate, followed by visit to Ingólfshöfði headland, 1-2 miles, easy

Following a buffet breakfast, a few minutes' drive brings you to the start of an optional full day's loop walk in Skaftafell National Park. An initial ascent up the Bæjargil gully with its multiple waterfalls, including the spectacular Svartifoss (Black Waterfall), you continue across Skaftafellsheiði heath to the viewpoint at Sjónarnipa, where you enjoy a picnic lunch. From here, you may decide to continue across Skaftafellsheiði heath for the remainder of the afternoon. As you proceed toward Kristínartindar (the Peaks of Kristín), you take in some of Iceland's most imposing and picturesque views, with Vatnajökull glacier and its craggy peaks to the north and the vast black desert to the south.

The flora and fauna in the park are much more varied than in other parts of the country, and in midsummer you find large numbers of butterflies and considerable birdlife on the wooded slopes—the redwing, common snipe, meadow pipit, and wren are among the most common species. This is also one of the North Atlantic's most important breeding areas for the Great Skua. The park's sheltered position and rich volcanic soil encourages a profusion of lush vegetation, and more than 200 species of plants have been found here, including abundant summertime wildflowers.



Those who wish to forgo the more challenging afternoon walk option through Skaftafell National Park return to the Visitor Center following lunch. From here you drive south to Ingólfshöfði, a striking headland and the arrival point of Iceland's first Norse settler, Ingólfur Arnarson, more than 1,000 years ago. Today these cliffs and grassy fields atop the promontory

provide nesting grounds for more than a dozen bird species, including kittiwakes, snipe, guillemots, the Great Skua, various gulls, graceful Arctic terns, and their ungainly but charming opposites, the puffin. Getting to Ingólfshöfði is truly half the fun; you ride in an open cart towed by a kindly—and now famous—local farmer over hard, sea-washed volcanic sand. Once at the promontory, you climb up a sand dune to the top, where your farmer-host regales you with stories of the ancient Norse settlers, and dramatic tales of modern sailors shipwrecked along these shores.

A late-afternoon coffee at the Skaftafell visitor center is a chance to explore the exhibition room, with its interesting display showing the intertwined lives of the local people and natural history, as well as to view a video showing the effects of the Skeidarár glacial outburst floods (*jökulblaup*) in 1996. You return to relax at the hotel before gathering for dinner in its dining room.

Hótel Skaftafell, Freysnes

DAY 4

1-hour transfer to Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon. Jökulsárlón beach; 1 mile, easy. 4½-hour transfer to Seyðisfjörður with stops en route in Höfn and Djúpivogur. Seyðisfjörður town walk; 1-2 miles, easy

Today's travels take you from Skaftafell in the south to the final destination of Seyðisfjörður in the east. With an early departure, an hour's drive takes you to the dramatic Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon, the best-known and largest of a number of glacial lakes in Iceland. Here, you board an amphibious vehicle for a 40-minute boat ride and a close look at the blue-tinted natural ice sculptures, a myriad of unique shapes and sizes. Two James Bond movies, "Die Another Day" and "A View to a Kill," were filmed in this fantastic location, where a large pool between the nose of the Breiðamerkurjökull glacier and the sea formed

after the glacier began shrinking rapidly in the 1940s, and filled with icebergs calved from the glacier. Floating among the ice you may spot seals and eider ducks, and even witness the glacier calving into the crystal turquoise waters. Crossing the road, an awe-inspiring walk takes you along the iceberg-covered black sand beach where you might spot seals as well as the Great Skua.



Climbing into your private coach, an 80-minute drive provides fantastic views of the Vatnajökull glacier before arriving at the busy fishing port of Höfn, the epicenter of Iceland's lobster catch. At the lobster/langoustine capital of the north, the menu for lunch at a charming local restaurant with harbor views features langoustine tails grilled with butter, parsley, and garlic, served with salad and fresh bread. You have a short stroll before the three-hour transfer to Seyðisfjörður. Breaking up the drive, you take a coffee break in the charming East Iceland fishing village of Djúpipogur, at the tip of the lower Eastfjords.

You reach your final destination of Seyðisfjörður by late afternoon. Iceland's most picturesque coastal town, Seyðisfjörður is nestled in an 11-mile-long, calm, deep fjord, lined with snowcapped mountains and tumbling waterfalls. The town's streets are lined with colorful Norwegian wood kit homes from the 19th and early 20th centuries, Iceland's best-preserved old wooden buildings. With a thriving arts scene, Seyðisfjörður also serves as the port to mainland Europe, as the Smyril Line car ferry Norræna transits weekly to Norway, the Shetland and Faroe islands, and Denmark. The modern Icelandic poet Matthías Jóhannessen called the town a "pearl enclosed in a shell."

You enjoy an easy walk through the town before settling into Hotel Aldan. Your home base for the next two nights lives up to the setting: a lovely heritage hotel, its rooms beautifully furnished with handcrafted bedspreads, embroidered rugs, and antiques. The hotel's warmly lit gourmet restaurant—housed in one of Iceland's oldest general stores—invites, serving local, organic ingredients such as East Icelandic reindeer steak with caramelized onions, root vegetables, and red wine sauce. Intrigued, you may opt for a late-evening stroll through the old town or visit the vibrant Skaftfell Cultural Center and Café, where local artists and musicians meet in a grand old house with an art gallery.

Hótel Aldan, Seyðisfjörður

This lovely in-town Heritage Hotel is comprised of three historical buildings: a former bank, post office, and one of Iceland's oldest stores, now completely restored more than a century later to their former splendor. Inviting rooms exude old-fashioned charm and are beautifully furnished with handcrafted bedspreads, embroidered rugs, wood floors, and antiques. (Please note: while rooms do not feature telephones, there are phone services available at the reception desk.)

DAY 5

Skálanes; 7 miles, moderate. Fjarðará River; 3 miles, moderate with some challenging downhill sections

A scrumptious breakfast buffet starts the day with still-warm home-baked bread, fresh fruit, and cereals. Afterward a 20-minute drive brings you to the trailhead for a four- to five-hour walk to Skálanes—a nature reserve located at the mouth of Seyðisfjörður fjord. With snowcapped mountains and cascading waterfalls on one side and the deep blue fjord on the other side, the morning route takes you across peaceful meadows, along sandy beaches, and into lush wildflower fields. The area is known for its beauty and considerable birdlife, including the Arctic tern, black-tailed godwit, golden plover, and eider duck. Other wildlife includes seals and whales in the fjord and reindeer populating the high-mountain heathland. Around lunch time, you arrive at Skálanes farm, where a delicious lunch is served. Continuing on after lunch, the trail proceeds to the edge of the fjord, up along the bird cliffs with large colonies of sea birds including kittiwakes and puffins. From here you ascend lupine-covered hills before descending alongside a stream bank back toward the fjord trail. The bus is waiting to drive those who wish back to town; others may choose to walk into town.

This afternoon a short drive takes you above the town of Seyðisfjörður for an optional walk along Waterfall Lane. You follow a path along the south bank of the Fjarðará River dotted with more than 20 waterfalls, past Iceland's oldest operational power plant (1913), and down the dramatic valley back to your hotel.

You are free to continue your explorations this evening with dinner on your own in one of Seyðisfjörður's restaurants or cafés, or at your hotel. Afterward, with the late setting sun, you may venture out to visit to the local pub, Kaffi Lára, known for its beer, El Grillo, named for a British tanker sunk in Seyðisfjörður by German bombers in 1944.

Hótel Aldan, Seyðisfjörður

DAY 6

3-hour transfer to Lake Mývatn with stop en route at Sænautasel Farm.

Jökulsárgljúfur National Park: Dettifoss; 1 mile, easy. Lake Mývatn: Leirhnjúkur and Námaskarð; 1-3-mile options, easy



Today you leave the Eastfjords to head north with a final destination of Lake Mývatn, via a three-hour drive across the fascinating interior of the island, with its stark and barren northeast highland desert plateaus. The halfway point is a coffee break at Sænautasel Farm, a reconstructed turf farm on a 37-mile-long remote heathland called Jökuldalsheiði, where you may see reindeer grazing! Halldór Kiljan Laxness, Iceland's Nobel Prize-winning author, used the farm as the setting for his novel, *Sjálfstætt fólk* (“Independent People”).

You first stop is Jökulsárgljúfur National Park, which translates as “Glacial River Canyon,” Iceland's most well-known canyon, replete with extraordinary rock formations, waterfalls, and plant life. Arriving at the park's southern boundary, an easy, one-mile loop leads to Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall (often compared to Niagara Falls).

After fueling up with lunch, you proceed to the day's final destination—the Mývatn/Krafla region—the part of Iceland where you see that it is indeed a land in formation. Geologically active, the landscape is teeming with volcanic craters, recent lava fields, and bubbling mud flats, and is part of the greater Krafla volcanic system, a three-mile-wide and 50-mile-long strip of faults and fissures running north to south, with the Krafla caldera at its center. In the midst of the evolving geology is stunning Lake Mývatn, a unique ecosystem and Europe's largest migratory bird sanctuary, with its many species of waterfowl feeding on the insects and algae of the lake's warm, shallow waters. The region is also the center of the country's geothermal energy industry.

Not far from the lake, in the active Krafla volcanic zone, you stop for an easy two-hour walk at Leirhnjúkur, an eerie expanse of still-smoldering lava resulting from the Krafla fires of 1974-1984. You explore the multicolored sulfurous slopes of Námaskarð Pass at 1,300 feet above sea level and Hverir, a large geothermal field, full of bubbling mud pots, hissing steam vents, and fumaroles.



This evening, after settling in to your room on the shores of Lake Mývatn, you gather for dinner in the hotel's dining room. If you still have energy after dinner, you may take an evening walk along the southwest shore of the lake to observe some of the varied birdlife—merganser, widgeon, teal, and the rare Barrow's goldeneye, to name a few. Or you can jump on one of the hotel's bikes

for an easy spin. The Northern version of Reykjavík's Blue Lagoon, the Mývatn Nature Baths, are nearby, and your guides can arrange a visit at your own expense. Lastly, a neighboring farm provides Icelandic horse rides, also at your expense, but with the guide's assistance.

Hótel Reynihlíð, Reykjahlíð

The family-run Hotel Reynihlíð is ideally located on the shores of Lake Mývatn. Spacious rooms, with lake or mountain views, are well-equipped with modern amenities. This comfortable hotel also features a welcoming lobby bar, sitting rooms, and restaurant.

DAY 7

Lake Mývatn: Hverfjall and Dimmuborgir; 8 miles, moderate. Skútustaðagígar; 2 miles, easy, or Hofdi; 1-2 miles, easy

After a delicious breakfast buffet, you set off on foot directly from the hotel for a full day's exploration of the Lake Mývatn region. The morning's trail transitions from richly vegetated lava fields to an area blighted by wind erosion. En route you pass by the Storagja and Grjotaga fault fissures, both used for bathing in earlier times. From Grjotaga, you proceed through sandy plains and lava formations up the northern side of Hverfjall, a classic tephra ring. This near symmetrical crater appeared 2,500 years ago in a cataclysmic eruption. Rising 1,520 feet from the ground and stretching 3,400 feet across, it is a massive and awe-inspiring landmark in Mývatn. The trail circles along the western edge of the crater, from where you enjoy stunning views of the crater itself and the surrounding landscape, before continuing down the southern side of the crater into Dimmuborgir. The giant jagged lava field at Dimmuborgir (literally the "Dark Castles") is one of the most interesting lava flows in Iceland. The strange lava pillars were created about 2,000 years ago when lava flowed across older

lava fields and was dammed into a fiery lake. The surface of the lake cooled but when the dam broke the remaining lava flowed onwards and left behind the cooled oddly-shaped pillars.

Following lunch in Dimmuborgir, you continue your exploration of the natural wonders of the Lake Mývatn area. A short transfer brings you to Skútustaðagígar craters, an unusual geological formation found only in Iceland and on the planet Mars! Alternatively, you may elect an easy and tranquil walk through the forested lakeside Hofdi area; viewpoints over the lake may offer sightings of Barrow's goldeneye, wigeon, Slavonian grebe, scaup, and many other water birds.

This afternoon you return to your hotel in Mývatn with time to relax and pack before a celebratory farewell dinner in the hotel's dining room. Starting with the Mývatn specialty of Hot Spring bread, baked in the local underground bakery using geothermal heat and traditional methods, topped with butter and smoked arctic char, the main course may be wild thyme-crusted roasted leg of lamb or pan-fried Lake Mývatn trout.

Hótel Reynihlíð, Reykjahlið

DAY 8

Transfer to Akureyri with stop en route at Goðafoss. Flight from Akureyri to Reykjavík. Departure from Reykjavík

The final day of your tour begins with an early-morning departure to the city of Akureyri for the flight back to Reykjavík. En route, after just under an hour's drive, you stop at the beautiful Goðafoss waterfall, meaning as it sounds, "waterfall of the gods." Another 50 minutes brings you to Akureyri. After your 40-minute flight, you arrive into Reykjavík's domestic airport just after noon. Following lunch in Reykjavík, you are driven to the bus terminal to catch the 2:00 p.m. Flybus to Keflavík for guests departing later in the day, or to the city center hotel for guests staying on in Reykjavík.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

A “Green” Island: In addition to staying in hotels throughout Iceland that use sustainable environmental practices such as geothermic heat, Country Walkers is committed to supporting the precious town of Seyðisfjörður. While it is considered Iceland's most picturesque coastal town, with historic buildings, arts, and tourism, there are only 700 permanent residents, and most of its local young people have to move elsewhere to find work. For the walks here, Country Walkers hires local guides from the town to join you (in addition to your tour guides), to provide a truly in-depth perspective of living in this community year-round. And your Heritage Hotel here is a wonderful marriage of comfort, style, and responsible tourism—in the heart of the town, a vibrant and unique hotel was created from joining a restored bank, post office, and country store, also with a gourmet restaurant serving locally grown and sourced organic ingredients.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hotel Reykjavík Centrum (lobby), Reykjavík, Iceland, 8:30 a.m.

Aðalstraeti 16
Reykjavík, Iceland
Tel 011 354 514 6000
Email info@hotelcentrum.is
hotelcentrum.is

NIGHT 1

Hotel Rangá

Hella, Iceland
Tel 011 354 487 5700
Fax 011 354 487 5701
Email hotelranga@hotelranga.is
hotelranga.is
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 2 & 3

Hotel Skafafell

Freysnes, Iceland
Tel 011 354 478 1945
Fax 011 354 478 1846
Email hotelskf@centrum.is
fosshotel.is
Wireless Internet available. Hair dryers available from front desk upon request. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 4 & 5

Hótel Aldan

Seyðisfjörður, Iceland
Tel 011 354 472 1277
Fax 011 354 472 1677
Email hotelaldan@simnet.is
hotelaldan.is
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 6 & 7

Hótel Reyhlið

Reykjahlið, Iceland

Tel 011 354 464 4170

Fax 011 354 464 4371

Email info@myvatnhotel.is

myvatnhotel.is

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

BSÍ Bus Terminal, Reykjavík, Iceland, 2:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International

Email mail@oncallinternational.com

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.838.3169

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

8 days, 7 nights

DEPARTURE DATES (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

June 11-18, 2016

June 18-25, 2016

July 2-9, 2016

July 23-30, 2016

August 6-13, 2016

August 21-28, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY

\$6,598 (Single+\$698)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo **for our scheduled group departures**, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

PRIVATE TOUR-ONLY PRICE FROM

6–9 guests: \$6,998 (Single+\$698)

10+ guests: \$6,598 (Single+\$698)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from June 1 through August 31.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hotel Reykjavík Centrum (lobby), Reykjavík, Iceland, 8:30 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

BSÍ Bus Terminal, Reykjavík, Iceland, 2:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with challenging sections. Walks average 4-9 miles per day, with shorter and longer options on some days. The walking terrain is widely varied on well-worn heathland paths, grassy mountain trails, exposed trails with lava, rocks, and roots, and stretches of sandy beach along the North Atlantic Ocean. Occasionally,

there will be shallow river crossings. While this is not a mountain climbing tour, there are daily ascents and descents. The hills are short (usually 20-minute, gradual climbs), but the terrain may be rocky, with roots and/or loose gravel, and may be slippery when wet. Due to the tricky footing on many of the trails, a walking stick is recommended. At Skaftafell National Park, you have the option to walk on a glacier and crampons are provided. The pace on this tour is leisurely with stops en route to explore villages, or to visit cultural and historic sites.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one dinner; local beer or wine included with dinner
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency. Gratuities for your bus driver are included in the tour price, but additional tips are always welcome.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **new optional Flight + Tour Combo**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hotel Reykjavík Centrum (lobby), Reykjavík, Iceland, 8:30 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Keflavik International Airport (KEF), Keflavikurflugvöllur, Iceland
kefairport.is

Please note: Keflavík International Airport is sometimes called “Leifur Eiríksson Air Terminal” or “Reykjavík Airport,” even though Reykjavík has a small, domestic airport in the city proper.

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

By Air: All North American and most European international arrivals come through Keflavík International Airport, about 31 miles from Reykjavík. From North America, Iceland is serviced by Icelandair, Iceland Express, and Delta. Icelandair (icelandair.com) offers service to Iceland from Boston, New York-JFK, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Denver, Toronto, and Edmonton, with seasonal service from Newark, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Orlando Sanford, Portland, Vancouver, Halifax, and Anchorage. Icelandair’s route network is a hub and spoke system with Keflavík as the hub. Most flights depart from North American cities in the evening and arrive in Iceland early the next morning, approximately 60 to 90 minutes before departures to destinations in Scandinavia, the UK, and Central Europe. Delta (delta.com) offers nonstop service between New York (JFK) and Keflavík. The flight also operates direct from Delta’s hub in Minneapolis-St. Paul under the same flight number, with a stop at New York (JFK).

From Keflavík International Airport:

Flybus: Most travelers choose this easy and economical option to transfer from Keflavík International Airport to Reykjavík city center. The Flybus operates in connection with all arriving flights and your seat is always guaranteed. It is

located right outside the arrival hall and departs 35-40 minutes after each flight arrival. The trip to Reykjavík takes approximately 45 minutes and costs approximately 3,500 ISK for a standard Flybus return ticket or 4,500 ISK for a Flybus Plus return ticket (recommended). Please note: It is advisable to purchase a return ticket as you will need a ticket from the Reykjavík BSÍ Bus Terminal (or Reykjavík city center) to Keflavík International Airport at the conclusion of the tour. Tickets may be bought inside the terminal building at the Flybus information desk or at a ticket automat (either option is clearly positioned right by the exit door of the terminal building). Tickets may also be purchased online at flybus.is. Tickets are payable by credit card and in major foreign currencies, including USD. Keflavík does have two currency exchange offices, one on either side of passport control, and there is an ATM in the arrivals hall after customs. Please note: when booking a return ticket, you need only choose the arrival date, as the departure date is open and valid for one year. The Flybus makes a final stop at BSÍ Bus Terminal in the center of Reykjavík (a 5-10 minute drive from our meeting-point hotel in the historic center of Reykjavík). Passengers with Flybus Plus tickets (recommended) can board smaller buses that will transfer you to many of the major hotels and guesthouses in Reykjavík, including our meeting-point hotel (please check the Flybus website for a complete list of stops). Total duration of the trip is 50-75 minutes from the airport to your hotel.

Taxi: Taxis are readily available outside the arrival hall. Credit cards are accepted by taxi drivers, and there is no need to tip. Should you wish to arrange one ahead of time, you may contact either Airport Taxi or Hreyfill. Both companies offer to meet you outside of customs with a sign and assist you with your luggage to the waiting car.

Airport Taxi

Tel 011 354 420 1212
Email taxi@airporttaxi.is
airporttaxi.is

Approximate day rates (8 a.m.-5 p.m.): 11,900 ISK (1-4 pass.) or 14,500 (5-8 pass.)

Approximate night and weekend rates (5 p.m.-8 a.m.): 14,000 ISK (1-4 pass.) or 17,300 ISK (5-8 pass.)

Hreyfill

Tel 011 354 588 5522
Email hreyfill@hreyfill.is
hreyfill.is

Approximate rates: 13,700 ISK (1-4 pass.) or 17,100 ISK (5-8 pass.)

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Hotel Reykjavík Centrum, the meeting point for your tour. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly.

Hotel Reykjavík Centrum

Aðalstraeti 16
IS-101 Reykjavík, Iceland
Tel 011 354 514 6000
Fax 011 354 514 6030
Email info@hotelcentrum.is
hotelcentrum.is

Located in the historical heart of the city on one of Reykjavík's oldest streets, the Hotel Reykjavík Centrum spans three buildings: a 1764 house and two new structures that have been designed in coordinating traditional style. The hotel has 89 rooms, each equipped with modern amenities, including satellite TV, telephone, Internet access, mini-bar, radio, iron and board, hair dryer, safe, and tea and coffee set. The hotel's restaurant specializes in traditional Icelandic and Scandinavian dishes prepared from local ingredients and features a carefully selected wine list (winner of a *Wine Spectator* Award). The hotel also offers a comfortable bar and café, as well as a large buffet breakfast.

Additional nearby recommended pre-tour hotels include The Radisson Blu 1919 Hotel (radissonblu.com/1919hotel-reykjavik), Hotel Borg (hotelborg.is), Centerhotel Plaza (centerhotels.com/our-hotels/hotel-plaza), and the City Center Hotel (citycenterhotel.is).

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

BSÍ Bus Terminal, Reykjavík, Iceland, 2:00 p.m.

Please note: On the final day of the tour, your 40-minute domestic flight from Akureyri departs at 11:40 a.m. and arrives at the Reykjavík domestic airport at

12:20 p.m. Following lunch in Reykjavík, you will be transferred to the BSÍ Bus Terminal in time to catch the 2:00 p.m. Flybus to Keflavík International Airport. You may plan on arriving at Keflavík by 3:00 p.m. for early evening departures.

LEAVING REYKJAVÍK

The BSÍ Bus Terminal, Iceland's central bus station, is located one mile south of Reykjavík's city center. Inside the BSÍ bus station, there is a Flybus ticket office, a small café, an ATM, postbox, and public telephone. All bus timetables are published on their website at bsi.is. Your guides will assist you in purchasing Flybus tickets or arranging a taxi for your transfer to the airport or, should you choose to extend your stay, back to Reykjavík city center.

Getting to the Keflavík International Airport from the BSÍ Bus Terminal:

Flybus: If you did not purchase a return Flybus ticket upon arrival in Reykjavík, you may purchase a ticket inside the bus terminal. A one-way transfer to Keflavík International Airport costs 1,950 ISK and takes approximately 35-45 minutes.

Taxi: Taxis are readily available outside the bus terminal. Credit cards are accepted by taxi drivers, and there is no need to tip. A taxi to Keflavík International Airport ranges from 11,900-13,700 ISK (1-4 pass.) or 14,500-17,100 ISK (5-8 pass.) and takes approximately 45 minutes.

Getting to the Reykjavík city center from the BSÍ Bus Terminal:

Taxi: A taxi to the city center costs approximately 1,200 ISK and takes 5-10 minutes.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

Iceland at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Iceland uses the Iceland *kronur* (ISK). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards).

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), and some dollars to exchange.

TIME ZONE

Iceland is in the Greenwich Mean but does not observe daylight savings time. Throughout the summer, Iceland is Eastern Standard Time plus four hours, and during the winter, Iceland is Eastern Standard Time plus five hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Iceland country code: +354

Cell phone coverage throughout Iceland is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Iceland is Icelandic.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix/icelandic.shtml or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Iceland. Outlets have two round holes. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

Iceland's weather is notoriously changeable and windy, although the country experiences relatively mild temperatures year-round. The Gulf Stream and prevailing southwesterly winds carry warm, tropical air and moisture northward, producing frequent but brief showers.

Average high/low temperatures in Reykjavík in the summer months are: June - 54/45; July - 60/50; August - 57/48.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK



Icelandic cuisine is a blend of traditional Scandinavian dishes and Continental cuisine, and has become increasingly innovative in recent years, particularly at the many fine restaurants in and around Reykjavík. With a thriving fishing industry, fresh fish and seafood dishes are ubiquitous on menus, including salmon, trout, arctic char, and lobster. Adhering to strict quality standards for purity, Icelandic meat is grass-fed, free-range, and delicious, especially lamb. Similarly, Icelandic beef is high-quality and tasty. Dairy products, such as many cheeses and the yogurt-like *skjúr*, are equally excellent. And lastly, despite Iceland's climate, much of its produce is locally produced in geothermally heated greenhouses. Typical sweets and desserts are licorice, chocolate (or a combination of the two), and *snudur* (frosted pastries).

LIFE IN ICELAND

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to early afternoon.



Banks are open from 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants and cafés, lunch is served from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

Tipping is not practiced in Iceland for service in restaurants, cafés, or taxis. If you wish to tip, you will not offend anyone, although it may be politely refused.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Icelandic tourist board official site

visiticeland.org

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Iceland's public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. For a list of public holidays and events, see iceland.is/the-big-picture/people-society/traditions/.

TRAVEL IN ICELAND

A wealth of travel information is available at visiticeland.org.



Airports

International flights arrive at Keflavík International Airport (kefairport.is), sometimes called “Leifur Eiriksson Air Terminal” or “Reykjavík Airport,” about 30 miles outside the capital of Reykjavík (which also has a small, domestic airport in the city proper). A network of domestic flights connects to smaller cities within Iceland and is a fast and fairly economical way to travel within the country.

Local transportation

Iceland does not have a rail system, but does have an extensive long-distance bus network made up of several private companies; information about all bus lines, schedules, and fares is compiled by one company, BSÍ (bsi.is).

Renting a car is also a popular way to get around Iceland and most major car rental agencies are available at airports, as well as local agencies in city or town centers. If you do rent a car, be aware of rules and regulations for two- versus four-wheel-drive vehicles. Taxis are available and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to visiticeland.org.

Travel Tip

A hot spot in Iceland: According to legend, the Norse gods guided Iceland's first Scandinavian explorer, Ingólfur Arnarson, to settle in the region of what is now Reykjavík, meaning "Smoky Bay," which he named for the billowing geothermal steam he saw rising from the ground. Geothermal energy is Iceland's sustainable resource used for heating homes and the many outdoor pools throughout the capital city. A popular way to relax, a variety of pool and spa locations offer swimming, soaking in "hot pots," as well as spa and beauty treatments. For information, visit www.visitreykjavik.is.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Waterproof hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 4-9 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » Polypropylene or synthetic, moisture-wicking T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Thermal underwear

- » Dinner attire: dress is casual but neat

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Warm hat or ear protection, polar fleece is ideal
- » Lightweight gloves (polypropylene; but heavyweight in case of variable weather, if you are particularly sensitive to cold)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent and head net for optional evening walks in Lake Mývatn area
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks. (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Sleep mask (to aid with sleeping as it is light all night long during our tours)
- » Bathing suit (our hotels do not have pools, but one hotel has hot tubs; you might also want to try the hot springs or local swimming pools while in Iceland)

- » Flip flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Alarm clock