

REYKJAVÍK – ICELAND'S CAPITAL CITY

You have a bit of time in Reykjavík - most travellers just dip their toes in the wild soup that is Iceland's capital city. It's partly a big city, partly a cultural hub, partly a nightlife nirvana, partly a pedestrian paradise, raucous, recent but mainly a big small town. Reykjavík has plenty of charms to be sought out – since most folks have just a day or two we toss out a few ideas for taking on the town here. There's more to see, less to know and always something lurking around a corner.

Explore: Stroll through the city centre. Reykjavík offers wonderful architecture, many restaurants, café houses, museums and shops. See more below under Reykjavík Stroll.

Shopping: The best places downtown are Laugarvegur main shopping street, Skólavörðustígur connecting Laugarvegur with Hallgrímskirkja church and known as the art and design street. The two main shopping malls are called Kringlan and Smáralind.

Laugardalur: Visit the family park and farm animal zoo near to the botanical garden and take a dip in the outdoor swimming pool in Laugardalur – you can rent bathing suits and towels if you don't have yours with you.



The Pearl: Don't miss the viewing platform at the "Pearl" where you also can get good ice cream and visit the Saga & Viking Museum. The Pearl is Reykjavík's most striking building by day and its finest restaurant by night. See: www.perlan.is and www.sagamuseum.is

On a warm summer day you could wander down the hill from the Pearl through the forest, relax at Nauthólsvík, a small natural beach where the sea water is warmed by a hot-spring fed brook.



View over town: Go up to the top of Hallgrímskirkja-Church tower and enjoy the view over the colourful roofs of Reykjavík.

Árbær folk museum: Experience the past brought to life at the Árbær folk museum. This open-air museum, incorporating an 18th-century farm, a turf church and several antique houses, was established to show and preserve selected historic properties.

Viðey is a small but impressive island, with a long history, located in the nature reserve of Kollafjörður fjord inlet. It is just a 5 minute ferry trip from Reykjavík. Viðey's highest point rises 32m above sea level, and no fewer than 30 species of breeding birds have been spotted there. The island also provides a peaceful setting for leisurely walks and you will find a play ground and picnic/BBQ area.



Whale Safari: From Reykjavík harbour (check tour information at the hotel reception). There are at the moment 4 companies offering whale watching tours from Reykjavík. www.elding.is, www.lifeofwhales.is, www.specialtours.is and www.seasailing.is

In the winter time there are only very few departures and please note that the best time for whale watching in Iceland is from April to October.

Reykjavík Stroll: We always suggest starting your visit at the Tjörn, Reykjavík's city pond with its brigade of ducks, geese and swans. If it's during business hours, you should also cross the bridge and go into the Radshus, or Town Hall, an interesting architectural statement evoking the breadth of Iceland's landscape. There's a fabulous relief map of Iceland on the lower floor. And it's the only Town Hall we know of where you can see ducks out the portholes in the restrooms.



From the town hall head towards the city centre. Most people start with Austurvöllur Square which is in front of the Parliament, The Hotel Borg and several restaurants and bars. A sunny day immediately fills this area with families, picnics and Icelanders of all ages on their cell phones! A couple of blocks over is Ingólfstorg Square, in front of the Tourist Information Office and Hotel Plaza bounded by Aðalstræti and Hafnarstræti which also has a square with ramps in case you brought your skateboard. The main downtown streets converge here, so many of the most well known restaurants, cafés, and night spots are nearby. Not to mention good hotdogs, ice-cream and other Icelandic fast food.



There is a concentration of small shops around this square with a lot of interesting Icelandic hand made goods, woolens and the latest in Nordic fashion. At the far end of the square towards the Tjörn (city pond) is the Hotel Reykjavík Centrum. During its renovation a few years ago, one of the oldest settlements in the country was discovered, essentially in its basement.

The Reykjavík 871+ - 2, museum is now the newest (and oldest) branch of Iceland's National Museum. This archeological

exhibit highlights the farm sited there in Settlement times, circa 871 AD. This museum combines the actual old building foundations with clear multi-media displays for a very nice picture of life during Iceland's early days. This spot always merits a short visit.

The Tourist Information Center is at Aðalstræti 2, on the east side of the Ingolfstorg square. The square itself is usually occupied by skateboarders, but provides a good view of the densely packed streets nearby. The Tourist Information Center can be very helpful with a wide variety of brochures for sights all over the country, a booking service, a foreign currency exchange and a good source for good advice.



The harbor waterfront is only a couple of blocks away and it is where the various whale and puffin watching cruises embark. Iceland's only train is here - it moves about 6 feet. There are a couple of good harbor side fish restaurants (see later chapter "the old harbour"), and the Kola Port – Iceland's Weekend Flea Market is just across the street. Nearby is one of Iceland's Icons – the Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur- the Worlds Best Hot Dog Stand, located next door to Radisson Hotel 1919. This humble stand satisfies hunger to visitors and locals alike. We recommend getting one with everything - remoulade, mustard, fried onions and pickles!



At some point you should head up Laugavegur – which means the "washing way" in Icelandic, but everyone calls it the shopping street. Lots of good window shopping there – and the real thing for those who are confident of their credit lines. Skólavörðustígur veers off of Laugavegur a few blocks up and it's known as the art gallery street. There are wonderful little shops chock full of classic and innovative design, wool, jewellery and all sorts of grand things. There are two excellent book shops on Laugavegur - Eymundssons in the old town, and Mal og Menning up the hill. But be careful - shopping in the excellent selection of books in English, Icelandic, and other languages can get heavy and expensive very quickly.

At the top of both streets, you can't miss Hallgrímskirkja – the impressive Lutheran church designed by State Architect Guðjón Samúelsson and built in the 1930s and one of the tallest structures in the land. The tower is said to mimic the basalt lava flows in Iceland. Note the statue to Leif Eiríksson out front, the work of Alexander Stirling Calder and a gift to Iceland from the people of the United States. There's a very impressive pipe organ inside – if you're in the least inclined to take in a church service at a holiday destination, this is a good choice. The tower at the top of Hallgrímskirkja is open for visitors and the view from the top can be very impressive.



For a nice overview of the city, during the summer months, you could hop on the Hop on Hop off Bus that offers an hour long guided trip around the city. It's easy to catch at the BSI Bus terminal or at any of the other 10 stops. Once on, you can disembark and then re-join the bus at any point. Similar to sightseeing buses in London - and in fact, it's a double decker, right from

London - it's a very nice way to get acquainted with Reykjavik, offering plenty of ideas of places to return to for further exploration. Tickets can be purchased with a credit card at the Reykjavik Excursions office at BSI or at several hotels, or on the bus (but there you must have cash). They're good for 24 hours after first put into use. There's a recorded guide, in 8 languages.

If you have some time to sample the cities cultural activities, you might consider purchasing the Reykjavik Card at the Tourist Information Center. The Reykjavik card offers free and reduced admission to many of the capital's best known sights - Iceland's National Gallery, the Reykjavik Art Museum, Arbaer Open Air Museum, Kjarval Museum, the Ásmundarsafn Museum & Sculpture Garden, The Settlement Exhibition, the Reykjavik Maritime Museum, The Culture House, as well as admission to all Reykjavik Thermal Swimming pools, the Zoo & Family Park and free travel on the Reykjavik Municipal Buses and Viðey Ferry. Cards are sold in 24, 48 and 72 hour increments. They come with information about opening hours for museums, bus schedules, and a list of all companies offering discounts. It's one of Iceland's true bargains, offering a lot of history, culture and fun for small change.



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND - The Making of a Nation

The National Museum of Iceland's permanent exhibition, Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland, is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day. The aim is to cast light on the Icelanders' past by placing the cultural heritage preserved by the National Museum in a historical context, guided by the question: What makes a nation? See: www.nationalmuseum.is. The museum is located near the City Pond and Hotel Radisson Saga at Suðurgata 41.



VÍKIN MARITIME MUSEUM REYKJAVIK, Grandagarður 8 at the harbour

Iceland's past, present and future are intimately tied to seafaring. This activity defines the nation's character, making it difficult indeed to know Iceland and Icelanders without knowing its maritime history. The Maritime Museum's exhibitions are insights into Iceland's relationship with the sea through the centuries. The main exhibitions illustrate the development from rowboats to modern trawlers and cargo vessels, as well as the construction of Reykjavík Harbor. Temporary exhibitions are changed regularly. Docked to a specially built pier alongside the museum is the Coast Guard Vessel *Þinn*. *Þinn* participated in all three Cod Wars against Britain in the latter part of the 20th century. Moreover,

it was a highly effective patrol and rescue vessel accredited with saving the crews of grounded or sinking ships, and towed nearly 200 vessels to safety. The tugboat *Magni*, the first steel ship built in Iceland, is also docked at the Museum pier.



Swimming, anyone?

One of the delights of a visit to Reykjavík is bathing in one of the many thermal pools, filled with geothermally heated water, which are found in every district of the city. Abundant resources of geothermal springs mean that the pools are always pleasantly warm, whatever the weather. Most pools are open-air. All have outdoor whirlpools or 'hot-pots' to bask in before or after swimming, and most have waterslides for the young (and young at heart). Reykjavík's thermal pools are open from early morning until 9:30 or 10:00 in the evening. There is a small entrance fee. Swimming suits and towels are

available for rent. There is simply no cheaper or healthier way to experience Reykjavík and to get to know the locals! For further information see: www.visitreykjavik.is or www.swimminginiceland.com

Important Note on Hygiene and Etiquette

Pools are less heavily chlorinated than in many other countries (that is among other things possible because most of them are outdoors), and bathers are required to wash thoroughly without a bathing suit before entering the pool. Showering naked with strangers may be a little off-putting for some visitors, but Icelanders take it for granted – and rest assured, nobody is looking - and some pools provide guests with shower curtains.

Walking Suggestion in Reykjavík with Nature all around

1. Botanical Gardens & Laugardalur Valley

A beautiful oasis in Laugardalur Valley. The breadth of Icelandic flora on show, ponds and birdlife. Café on site during summer (May-September). Free entry. Located in the Laugardalur valley which is Reykjavík's main leisure area with numerous family-friendly attractions in one place such as Laugardalslaug *thermal* pool, Reykjavík Family Park & Zoo, Botanical Gardens, skating rink and football stadium. Extensive green areas, playgrounds and footpaths for walking, cycling and inline skating.

2. Visit Perlan (The Pearl)

Perlan is the spacy-looking dome located on a hill above the city. The building is a sight to see and the view is spectacular. Built in 1991 on top of six big thermal water tanks, each one holding 4 million liters of hot water. Just going up there for the view is worth it. There is a viewing platform with panoramic 360 degree views of the city and its surroundings. Access to the viewing platform is free of charge. Good selection of ice-cream in the cafeteria and fine gourmet restaurant on the top floor. On the ground floor is the Saga Museum which transports guests to the Viking Age and brings renowned figures and major events in Icelandic history to life using silicone figurines. The museum is located inside a former hot water storage tank at the Pearl. Only 50 meters away is a man-made spouting hot spring, built for education and fun. Öskjuhlíð hill, on which the Pearl is located, is a pleasant wooded area with many footpaths, ideal for a relaxing walk. At the bottom of the hill lies Nautholsvík geothermal beach, a popular place on a sunny day. - www.perlan.is



3. Hike Mt Esja

The 914-metre high mountain which presides over Reykjavík has stunning views of the capital area. This hike is very popular with Icelandic families. Don't forget to sign the guestbook at the peak! *Note: Mt. Esja can be steep in places and there is occasionally some snow in summer. Follow routes closely and consider weather conditions before climbing.*

It is possible to reach Mt. Esja by public transport: Take bus number 15 from Hlemmur bus station, get off at Haholt in Mosfellsbaer, then take bus number 27 to the foot of Esja at Esjumelar.



4. Heidmörk Nature Reserve

With its bushy vegetation, lava fields and caves, this extensive nature reserve on the outskirts of Reykjavík is popular for walks and family picnics. Playground, camping and barbecue facilities. Cross country skiing tracks in winter, snow permitting.

5. Viðey

Viðey is a small but impressive island with a long history, located in the nature reserve of Kollafjörður fjord inlet. It is just a 5-minute ferry trip from Reykjavík. Viðey's highest point rises 32m above sea level, and no fewer than 30 species of breeding birds have been spotted there. The island also provides a peaceful setting for leisurely walks and you will find a play ground and picnic/BBQ area.



5. Seltjarnarnes

Seltjarnarnes is situated west of Reykjavík on the tip of the Reykjavík peninsula. Seltjarnarnes is, in addition to being a residential town, a beautiful nature reserve and recreation area where birds thrive in abundance: about 106 bird species stay in the area for shorter or longer periods. Seltjarnarnes is encircled by walking and cycling paths, with Grotta lighthouse and nature reserve located at one end, a small island that is accessible during low tide. There is a black stone beach that invites for a stroll and collecting shells and beautiful stones. Seltjarnarnes also offers a seaside golf course and thermal pool. From Seltjarnarnes one can enjoy amazing views over Reykjavík and its surroundings, and on a clear day it is possible to see all the way to Snaefellsnes glacier in the west - www.seltjarnarnes.is



The Dinner dilemma

The toughest part of staying in Reykjavík will be deciding where to have dinner! There are choices from the traditional fine fare of Einar Ben to the new style like Icelandic Fish and Chips. There's the worlds best Lobster soup to be found at Humar Husid, great fish at the Fish Company, and lamb specialties at Einar Ben. Other options too.

For the intrepid, there's a wonderful little fish spot right on the harbor called Sea Greifinn, usually full of Icelanders. It's in a little building across from the Kola Port - Flea Market, and is run by a couple of former sailors who know their fish. Find below a list of several restaurants that we recommend additionally.

There are also a couple of excellent online resources, for restaurants reviews that we like, both sharp, opinionated, occasionally rude, but authentic. The Reykjavík Grapevine, which is Iceland's monthly English language paper which covers music and the arts, politics, nature and generally takes a wise guy approach to all the scene in Reykjavík. We don't know if they'd be flattered if we said it's like Rolling Stone in the 70's but it's a very nice compendium of what's happening. There's a directory of dining, shopping etc at the bottom of the home page <http://www.grapevine.is/Home>



One of the most useful guides to cultural, recreational and seasonal things is What's On in Reykjavík. Published 11 times a year it has all sorts of useful information about tours, museums, restaurants, music, theatres, cultural happenings of all sorts. Best part, it's available for free pretty much everywhere you turn in Iceland - tourism centres, hotels, the airports and even in the hinterlands. Grab one on arrival and study it.



[Here some restaurant tips in Reykjavik:](#)

Brassier Askur is a restaurant with fine dining and wine at moderate prices. Its location is at Suðurlandsbraut 4, near the Hilton Hotel Nordica, Grand Hotel Reykjavik and Park Inn Hotel Island, close to Hotel Cabin and Guesthouse Borgartún. This is a place where the locals go. Popular soup, bread and salad bar, lunch buffet Mondays through Fridays, Steak buffet every Sunday from 6:00 PM and menu every day full of variety. See: www.askur.is

Lækjarbrekka is a classic restaurant situated in the heart of Reykjavik in one of the oldest buildings in the city centre. The building has a remarkable history and there has been a restaurant here for twenty years. Lækjarbrekka restaurant creates the most delicious meals from the best possible Icelandic ingredients and provides first-rate service. There is a diverse menu from lunch time to evening, seven days a week. At lunch time they specialise in light, fresh dishes, such as soup or salad as well as fish and chicken dishes. In the afternoon the restaurant takes on a café atmosphere and a range of small dishes, sandwiches, coffee and cakes are available. In the evening, variety is the name of the game. Lækjarbrekka has everything from appetisers and vegetable dishes to sumptuous meat and fish dishes and there is something for all tastes. Old fashioned romantic atmosphere, outstanding modern Icelandic cuisine and excellent location in the heart of Reykjavik – this is a must go restaurant in Iceland's capital. See: www.laekjarbrekka.is



Dill Restaurant, a new Nordic restaurant located in the Nordic House in Reykjavik! DILL Restaurant is the mindful creation of Chef Gunnar Karl Gíslason and Sommelier lafur Örn lafsson, pioneers of the New Nordic Kitchen in Iceland. Dill is much more than a restaurant. It is the result of a dream Gunnar Karl and lafur have shared for a while about a small restaurant with personality. A restaurant where guests not only eat well, but where the meal becomes an experience in itself and classic Nordic ingredients are prepared in a modern way with contemporary kitchen gadgets. We look forward to sharing our dream with you. Located near to Radisson Hotel Saga and Reykjavik Natura Hotel. See: www.dillrestaurant.is

Fiskfélagið – Fish Company: Adventure under a bridge, located in the city center next door to Hotel Plaza. In the early days of the Fish Company, a satisfied patron set his plate to the side and remarked; “Without fail, all the best adventures take place under a bridge.” They immediately secured his permission to use this as their slogan. Not only is the menu an adventurous journey around the world, a sense of adventure is also reflected in the surroundings and essence of the venue. The imsen building dates back to 1884 and originally stood at Hafnarstræti 21, a few hundred meters east of its current location. It was extended in 1889, but in 2006 it was uprooted and lovingly renovated before being replanted at Grófartorg in 2008. During the groundwork stages of the Grófartorg reconstruction area, excavation unearthed remnants of the older harbour, which has now been incorporated into “The Tides”, a work of art by Hjörleifur Stefánsson, developed in collaboration with Minjavernd Heritage Trust. This gives the area a unique atmosphere which is further emphasized as the tides come in and go out in the artwork as they do in the current harbour. The restaurant was designed by Leif Welding and master chef Lárus Gunnar Jónasson. Chefs are drawn to experimentation with contrasts and with Leif's expertise they created an exciting yet functional venue. Window panes from the Hafnarfjörður Free Lutheran Church are backlit behind the bar, lending an adventurous light to their surroundings. The booths in the inner hall are made by GH húsgögn but the chairs are from Tom Dixon. Dinner is served on china from Figgjo in Norway, originally designed exclusively for the Fish Company, but due to their popularity they are now being manufactured for world wide marketing. Many of the items used in the restaurant, china and kitchenware alike, are on display and for sale in the outer hall. We are delighted to lead you through a world of culinary adventures, which, as most good adventures do, begins under a bridge. See: www.fiskfelagid.is

Þrír Frakkar, the restaurant Þrír Frakkar at Baldursgata 14 was opened on March 1, 1989 and has been run by the chef Mr. Ifar Eysteinnsson CF master Chef and his family since then. The restaurant is one of few restaurants in Iceland which has had the same owner for such a long time. The restaurant is conveniently located in the downtown area and is within walking distance of the major shops and services in the city center. The restaurant is located in the vicinity of most of the foreign embassies in Reykjavik, Hotel Holt and Hallgrímskirkja-church. The chef, Ifar Eysteinnsson, has always placed major emphasis on fish courses and the restaurant has become well known for its delicious fish fare. Other specialties on the menu include whale meat and sea bird entrees. The restaurant seats 44 guests and prides itself on its fine service. Prices are in the moderate range and the restaurant offers an inexpensive lunch menu. The restaurant is open Monday through Friday from 11:30 noon to 2:30 pm and 6:00 to 10:00 pm. On Saturdays and Sundays the restaurant is open between 6:00 pm. and 11:00 pm. See: www.3frakkar.com

Café Loki, located at Lokastígur 28 across from Hallgrímskirkja Church, is the complete Icelandic café with a menu which consists of Icelandic dishes. Café LOKI, opened in 2008, is a new and needed addition to Reykjavik's restaurant scene, just a 5 minutes walk from city center. Foreign guests visiting Reykjavik frequently look for restaurants to sample traditional Icelandic cuisine, not with much success. Search no more! Café LOKI does all that and more. At Café LOKI you find something affordable, tasty and completely Icelandic. The proprietor Hrónn Vilhelmsdóttir and her husband, Þórólfur Antonsson have found the right recipe to attract and impress both foreigners and Icelanders by using only Icelandic raw material. Þórólfur runs the coffee house with his wife and the homemade bread is his masterpiece. At Café LOKI You can choose from homemade food and bread, baked at LOKI, such as rye bread, flatbread and spelt bagels. LOKI uses family

recipes, some more than 150 years old while others are new but with an old stylish touch. LOKI is both an ordinary café and an Icelandic specialty. You can enjoy herring, smoked trout, sheep-head jelly, Icelandic Plates I or II covered with all sorts of Icelandic staples. With a neat, airy décor and a splendid view of Hallgrímskirkja, Café LOKI is the perfect place to take a load off your feet and enjoy solid homemade Icelandic food. In the basement of Café Loki is a small handicraft & textile store with amazing and unique products made in Iceland. See: www.textil.is

Lauga-ás Restaurant, that's where the locals go. Restaurant Lauga-ás was established June 25th 1979 and is one of Iceland's oldest restaurants with the same owner from the start, Ragnar Kr. Guðmundsson. Lauga-ás is known for its fish items, variety in cooking and most of all, known for serving fish not available elsewhere. They serve hearty portions of fresh seafood. Popular is also the lamb dish with béarnaise sauce. This restaurant is located near Hilton Hotel Nordica, Grand Hotel Reykjavík, Hotel Cabin, Guesthouse Borgartún, the Youth Hostel, very close to Laugardalur swimming pool. See: www.laugaas.is

Hamborgara Fabrikkan – Fancy the best hamburgers in Iceland? The Icelandic Hamburger Factory is a new restaurant overlooking the place where Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev almost ended the Cold War. But that's history. Try the unique Hamburgers and the first Icelandic Lamburger. Great prices on food, beer and wine. Come and feel the Factory buzz. It's worth it. This place offers a kind of Hard Rock Café atmosphere – just very Icelandic; playing mainly Icelandic pop music. Located in the glass tower called Turninn at Höfðatorg on Borgartún Street, near to Fosshotel Lind, Fosshotel Baron, Best Western Hotel Reykjavík, Guesthouse Borgartún, Grand Hotel and Hotel Cabin. See: www.fabrikkan.is

Argentína – Classy steakhouse with coal-grilled lamb, beef and fish courses. Cognac room. Located at Barónsstígur 11a, a side-street of Laugavegur shopping street, near to Fosshotel Baron, Fosshotel Lind, Best Western Hotel Reykjavík and Hotel Fron. See: www.argentina.is

Fish Market – Icelandic food prepared with a modern twist, using ingredients sourced directly from the nation's best farms, lakes and sea to create unforgettable Icelandic dishes. Housed in one of the city's oldest buildings and located in the city center at Aðalstraeti 12, between the Hotel Reykjavík Centrum and Hotel Plaza. See: www.fishmarket.is

Grillhúsið – A popular place by the locals. Ideal if you want to have an authentic American rock'n roll lunch or dinner at a good price. Located in the city center at Tryggvagata 20, near to Hotel Plaza, Hotel Borg, Hotel Reykjavík Centrum and Radisson 1919. See: www.grillhusid.is

Lobster House / Humarhúsið – In the city center, just a few steps from Laugavegur shopping street. A cosy restaurant in an old building which specialises in seafood and lobster. See: www.humarhusid.is

The Pearl – Fine dining in a revolving restaurant. Splendid view over the city. See: www.perlan.is

Seafood Grill, offers grilled fish, meat and vegetables from an award winning chef. Located in the city center at Skólavörðustígur 14 between Laugavegur shopping street and Hallgrímskirkja church. See: www.sjavargrillid.is

Vox – Gourmet dining at the Hilton Hotel Nordica. Award winning chefs. Mediterranean lunch buffet and sushi. Walking distance from Grand Hotel, Guesthouse Borgartún and Hotel Cabin. See: www.vox.is

Einar Ben, is one of Reykjavík's most elegant restaurants, located in one of the oldest trading buildings in the Icelandic capital. Einar Ben is named after one of the most remarkable Icelanders of recent times and we try to honour him by serving delicious food made from quality Icelandic ingredients: fish, seabirds, wild game and lamb. Service is relaxed but professional. Located in the city center near to Hotel Plaza, Hotel Reykjavík Centrum, Hotel Borg and Radisson 1919. See: www.einarben.is

Bæjarins Be tu – Close to the harbour and next door to Radisson Hotel 1919. It's the most popular hot dog stand in Reykjavík. You'll recognize it by the queue. This humble stand satisfies hunger to visitors and locals alike. We recommend getting one with everything - remoulade, mustard, fried onions and pickles!

Good to know

- You can ask for a children's menu when dining out with little ones.
- Tipping is not customary in Iceland since service is included in the price.
- All restaurants, cafés and bars in Iceland are non smoking.
- It is better to reserve a table in advance for the weekends.

Other good restaurant website:

www.restaurants.is

www.diningouticeland.com

www.dining.is

At the tourist information office and at most hotels you can ask for the DINING OUT brochure, a large booklet about restaurants & cafés around Iceland.

The Old Harbor, Culture & Activities

The downtown harbor is used primarily for fishery and services. Today the harbor has taken on yet a new role; visitors can get a taste from the sea in restaurants run in old warehouses and fishermen's huts, sip coffee from across the ocean, go whale watching, or take a stroll along the piers and look at the numerous small boats and sailboats docking there. The newest development is the Music Hall at the east side of the Old Harbor. The harbor area is the site of several outdoor activities, and it is also the main venue of the Festival of the Ocean, held at the Central Pier of the Old Harbor in early June every year. What can you find here?

- Volcano House – Exhibition, café, souvenirs and experience the amazing volcano-eruption in the cinema hall
- Icelandic fish and chips – Organic bistro offering authentic seafood with a healthy, creative twist
- Icelandic Restaurant Höfnin – Classical Icelandic style New Wave kitchen with Mama's recipes – beautiful harbour view and cosy atmosphere
- Café Haiti – Quality coffee, hot chocolate, sandwiches and a friendly atmosphere. Sometimes live music
- Different stores with unique Icelandic folk art and handcraft, wide selection of woollen products and souvenirs. Also handcrafted jewellery, Icelandic design and fine art
- Sægreifinn – The world's best lobster soup, grilled fish and Moby Dick on a stick
- Sushismiðjan – always fresh Icelandic sushi
- Hamborgarabúllan – Pure Beef Burgerjoint serving no nonsense burgers and excellent milk shakes.
- Whale watching companies, sea angling and puffin tours, educational whale exhibition and bird museum
- Rental of scooters, rollerblades, electric bikes and fishing rods. Guided bike tours.

Guided bike tours in and around Reykjavik

A visit to Reykjavik is incomplete without traveling along the city's coastline by bike. We won't just show you the essential "must-see" sights of Iceland's capital; we tell you the stories that bring these places to life!

From the city center to the greener parts of the city and picturesque views of the sea – you will take in some of the most important sights of Reykjavik on one of our popular Reykjavik bike rides. We do understand that a great tour is more than just a history lesson. That's why we work to weave amusing anecdotes and stories into an unforgettable historical performance destined to be a highlight of your visit! **The Classic Reykjavik Tour** is our most popular tour. The route may include but is not limited to the following places; Reykjavik's south facing beach - Ægissída, University of Iceland campus, Nordic House, Reykjavik's Catholic Cathedral, Parliament building, Reykjavik's Old Harbor, Tjörnin City Lake and City Center. We also pass the home of some of Iceland's most famous people. Tours are conducted in English but also in German and more languages on demand. 7 km (4,5 miles), about 2,5 hours. See: www.icelandbike.com

Ride some Icelandic horses

Horseback riding on the unique Icelandic horse is an Iceland experience no one should miss. The Icelandic horse is world famous for its five gaits and especially the smooth gait tölt. The Icelandic horse breed has been pure for over a thousand years making it one of the purest breeds in the world. The horse was brought to Iceland when the country was settled in the 9th century and it was the only means of transportation in the rugged Icelandic nature. Today people ride the Icelandic horse for pleasure, traveling and competition and there is a high demand for these friendly and strong horses all over the world.

This is your chance to enjoy the stunning Icelandic nature on the back of the unique Icelandic horse. You can go horseback riding for 1,5-2 hours on The Lava Tour around Helgafell volcano and through lava fields, ideal for beginners. There are also longer tours available for the more experienced riders. All riding is on excellent riding paths. Season: All year. For further information see: www.ishestar.is

Red Rock Cinema - The Volcano Show

Located at Hellusund 6A, 101 Reykjavik, near to Hotel Holt and next door to the German and British embassies.

Great place to watch the most important volcanic eruptions in Iceland since start of film. See Hekla, Westman Isles and Grimsvötn eruptions. Eccentric eruption-chaser Villi Knudsen is the photographer, owner and presenter of the fascinating Volcano Show, a film show that captures 50 years of Icelandic volcanoes. Although some of the footage is a bit old and wobbly, you're still left reeling by images of the town Heimaey being crushed by molten lava, or the island Surtsey boiling its way out of the sea. It's all about local volcano lovers sharing their knowledge and passion with the visiting world.

Daily film shows all year round. 1 hour program and 2 hour program. The Volcano Show is shown nonstop every day during the summer period (July and August). Part One starts in English at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and in German at 6:30 p.m. Part Two starts in English at 12. p.m., 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. and in German at 7:30 p.m. Once a week on Saturdays the program is showed in French Part One at 1 p.m. and Part Two at 2 p.m.

September through June the Volcano Show is shown in English twice a day. Part One starts at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Part Two starts at 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Winter Program, October, November, December, January, February and March, the Volcano Show is shown in English once a day. Part One starts at 8 p.m. and Part Two starts at 9 p.m.

Let's Talk Iceland – Comedy show / Cultural entertainment

Let's talk Iceland tells you all you need to know about the history of Iceland and Icelanders from its settlement until present day. It is a funny and vibrant play in English. You will meet Vikings from the past and go on an unforgettable journey with them through the history of Iceland and discuss the strange people living there, namely the Icelanders. You will participate in historical events. The Vikings will re-enact various events from the past and you will be a part of it. And if something is not clear, just interrupt and ask them. You will laugh and learn. The Vikings know Iceland and its history like the back of their hands but they are also very amusing and entertaining. Enjoy this comedy show and learn a little about the Icelanders then and now in a comic way.

When: Daily at 20:00 / **Where:** Next door to Gaukur og Stöng Bar located in the basement of the Víkingakrain Restaurant / **Price:** 2200 ISK (subject to change) / free for children under 12 years old **Duration:** Approx 1 hour / **Season:** 1st of January to 30th of November. You can book your tickets by email at letstalk@letstalk.is or call +354 699 0740 Web www.letstalk.is



HARPA REYKJAVIK CONCERT HALL

Located at the harbour is Iceland's main venue for cultural events, concerts and exhibitions and is the home of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. There is always something going on at Harpa. For further information and even calendar see: www.harpa.is Here below we like to highlight some events:

Pearls of Icelandic Song - A concert series in Kaldalón hall presenting beloved Icelandic music

In our concert series in Harpa this summer we'll present you with classical Icelandic music in programmes consisting of some of the most beloved Icelandic songs, folk-songs, hymns and national-songs. The performers are young Icelandic musicians, many of whom have already been noticed for their work, both in Iceland and abroad. All the programmes are sung in Icelandic but annotated in English to aid foreigners in getting acquainted with classical Icelandic music.

One of the leading classical singers in Iceland, **Bjarni Thor Kristinsson**, is the artistic director of the concert series. Available on selected dates between June 8th and August 26th

How to become Icelandic in 60 minutes

Opens May 25th A show in English performed by Bjarni Haukur Thorsson, directed by Sigurður Sigurjónsson. The show will open in Harpa on the 25th of May and will run until late August. The show is a tour-de-force theatrical comedy show focusing on the Icelandic human condition: Their attitudes, struggles and everyday life. From Vikings to Björk and from bankers to wankers! You will walk out of the show feeling 100% Icelandic!!

Harpa Guided Tours:

Reykjavík was featured in the New York Times mid-January as amongst the top four places in the world to travel to in 2011 with Harpa as one of its main attractions. Harpa is definitely a must-see on any Iceland travel agenda. Visit Harpa and take one of our popular guided tours of the building. See Harpa from a new perspective: the glass facade, the different floors and the different halls. Regular guided tours of the building are available every day at 11:00 and 15:30. Price 1500 ISK (subject to change). The guided tour takes around 45 minutes. Please book at the box office desk or tours@harpa.is

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Prepare for your trip to Iceland

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. Here's 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.

The climate in Iceland

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. 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."

Here are our tips for what to pack for a trip to Iceland

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 for evenings, or windy days (though the Icelanders running around rejoicing in this weather might look at you a little funny). There are also many opportunities to purchase Icelandic woolen 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.

For hotel or hostel based tours

- Buildings are often very warm, so bring light indoor clothes – t-shirts, lighter shirts or blouses. You could even consider bringing shorts, though they may not get out of the suitcase very often.
- Clothes for cooler outdoor weather: warm trousers, a woollen pullover or fleece sweater, a wind and water proof jacket and rain pants.
- A hat, scarf, and a couple pair of gloves are great protection in Iceland's cold weather and strong winds.
- Sturdy comfortable boots are very useful for walking. If they aren't waterproof, then rubber boots are a good idea.
- Bathing suits are essential, as a lot of the natural hot water is used to fill swimming pools, which are all over. You may even find a few natural ones! 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 travelers say that they shoot twice as many pictures in Iceland than in other destinations.
- A small alarm clock, or cell phone with an alarm clock feature, since not all hotels offer wake-up calls.
- If you like a drink every now and then, consider stopping at the duty-free store at Keflavik Airport because alcoholic beverages are very expensive in Iceland. The same applies to tobacco. Travelers 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/>
- If the long days of summer keep you from sleeping, consider bringing a sleep mask.

Additional gear for walking and camping tours

- For cold weather that you may find in the mountains or highlands: a woollen pullover or fleece sweater, a warm wind and water proof jacket and rain pants, woollen socks and an insulated bottom layer, like thermal underwear.
- A hat, scarf, and gloves, made from material that will dry overnight.
- Comfortable footwear - a pair of very good walking boots, well broken in before arrival.
- Hiking poles (sticks) can be helpful.
- Water and wind-proof rainwear is necessary and rubber boots can be very, very useful when it's raining! Rainwear should be waterproof, not just water resistant!
- Bring a small back-pack for the daily walks, to carry your camera, binoculars, sunglasses, lunch or snacks, rainwear and personal items.
- A warm sleeping bag is vital if camping or staying in hostels. If you can't bring yours, you can probably arrange to rent one in Iceland.

Midnight Sun

During summer the nights are bright all over Iceland. In the month of June the sun never fully sets in the north, and the days go on and on. Bear in mind, however, that the sun at midnight is not as warm as at midday, so bring along a sweater.

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 nature's 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 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! Ask the reception at your hotel for the best location or available tours for possible Northern Lights spotting in the area.

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

Time: Iceland stays on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) throughout the year. The east coast of the US is 4 hours behind Iceland during daylight savings time, and 5 hours in the winter. Greenland is two hours behind Iceland, London is one hour ahead in the summer, while Paris, Oslo, and Rome are two hours ahead.

Average Temperatures in Iceland

Location	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reykjavik in °C	0	0,5	2	4	7	10	12	11	9	5	2	0
Reykjavik in °F	32	33	35	38	45	49	53	52	47	41	36	32

Daylight (sunrise / sunset)

Location	Jan 1st	Feb 1st	March 1st	Apr 1st	May 1st	June 1st
Reykjavik	11:19/15:43	10:10/17:14	08:34/18:48	06:44/20:20	04:58/21:53	03:21/23:32
Ísafjörður	12:02/15:10	10:31/17:02	08:44/18:47	06:45/20:30	04:47/22:15	02:39/00:26
Akureyri	11:33/14:59	10:07/16:46	08:23/18:28	06:26/20:09	04:31/21:51	02:32/23:52

Location	July 1st	Aug 1st	Sept 1st	Oct 1st	Nov 1st	Dec 1st
Reykjavik	03:06/23:56	04:35/22:30	06:11/20:42	07:37/18:56	09:12/17:10	10:46/15:47
Ísafjörður	00:00/01:21	04:18/22:56	06:08/20:54	07:44/18:58	09:29/17:02	11:21/15:21
Akureyri	01:59/00:30	04:03/22:32	05:50/20:33	07:23/18:39	09:06/16:45	10:54/15:08

Weather forecast

For weather information in English, Tel.: 902-0600, extension 1, E-mail: office@vedur.is, www.en.vedur.id

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 labeled 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.

Paying for stuff in Iceland is easy – you can convert your own currency into Icelandic Kronur (ISK) when you get to the airport, as the bank there is open to coincide with flights, and it offers good rates. You can also change money at banks in towns, and there are many cash machines and ATM's. Nearly every business in Iceland accepts credit cards – Visa, Mastercard (sometimes called Euro Card), and American Express are commonly taken. Many gas stations have automatic pumps but will ask you for a PIN number for your credit card.

Reading material: As the country that created the Sagas, Iceland has a long involvement with the written word. They have universal literacy and it's estimated that one in five Icelanders will publish a book in their lifetime. Many tourist information centers will offer a selection of books and Reykjavik has several excellent large bookshops – Eymundssons and Mal og Mennig. If you're inclined to do a little homework, there are several books that will give you some insight into Iceland and should be available at your local bookstore, perhaps by special order.

Haldor Laxness – Iceland's Nobel Laureate wrote a series of novels about life in Iceland's countryside that are insightful, funny, pointed, amusing, and authentic. Many in paperback – *Independent People, the Fish Can Sing, Under the Glacier*.

Iceland – Land of the Sagas by David Roberts, photos by Jon Krakauer, takes you right in the midst of the landscape where the saga characters lived, loved, fought, and told yarns. Travelwith Grettir the lean, Egil Skjalgrimmson, Njal and Uhn the Deep-Minded.

Guide books: Both the *Lonely Planet* and *Insight Guides* offer useful information on Iceland. The Lonely Planet is perhaps more comprehensive, but the Insight Guide has great information on cultural aspects of the country.

The Sagas of the Icelanders, edited and with an easy introduction by Jane Smiley, offers great insight into Iceland's early centuries.

An earlier book of hers, *The Greenlanders*, tells the story of Eric the Red's clan who settled that icy island to the west of Iceland.

Practical Information

Emergency numbers

Emergency	112
Doctor on call	1770
Police	(+354) 444 1000
Dentist	(+354) 575 0505
Pharmacy	(+354) 533 2300

Information

Telephone directory	118
Overseas directory	1811
Weather	902 0600
Road conditions	1777
Tourist information	(+354) 590 1550
Reykjavik city	(+354) 411 1111
International flights	(+354) 425 0222
Domestic flights	(+354) 570 3030
City buses	(+354) 540 2700
Taxi	(+354) 588 5522

Lost Credit Card

Visa	(+354) 525 2000
MasterCard	(+354) 550 1500
Amex	(+354) 575 5900
Diners (US)	1 800 234 6377

Lost and found

Left luggage (int. Airport)	(+354) 425 0226
Lost property (police)	(+354) 444 1000

Exchange rates based April 2012

1 USD	ISK 125
1 EUR	ISK 165
1 GBP	ISK 200
1 DKK	ISK 22
1 CHF	ISK 135
1 CAD	ISK 125
USD 8	ISK 1000
EUR 6	ISK 1000
GBP 5	ISK 1000
DKK 45	ISK 1000
CHF 7.40	ISK 1000
CAD 8	ISK 1000

Opening hours (subject to change)

Banks	Mo-Fr 09:15-16
Shops	Mo-Fr 09-18, Sat 10-16
Supermarkets	Daily 10:00-19:00 some are open 24 hours
Convenience Stores	24 hours open
Liquor Stores	Mo-Th 11-18, Fr 11-19, Sa 11-18
Kringlan Mall	Mo-We 10-18:30, Th 10-21, Fr 10-19 Sa 10-18, Su 13-18
Smáralind Mall	Mo-Fr 11-19, Th 11-21, Sa 11-18 Su 13-18
Post office	Mo-Fr 09-18

How much things cost

Hamburgers and fries	from 900
Soup of the day	from 600
Hot meal of the day	from 1.100
Appetizer	from 500
Main course	from 1.300
Dessert	from 500
Set menus (3 course)	from 4.500
Appetizer (fine dining)	from 1.200-2.500
Main course (fine dining)	from 3.000-6.000
Set menus (fine dining)	4-5 courses from 7.500
Bottle of wine	from 3.000
Coffee	from 300
Beer	from 600
Tap water	free
Soft drinks	from 300

Restaurants / Cafés / Bars in ISK

How much things cost

Cinema, one ticket	1.100
Ticket to a symphony	2.500-3.600
Night club entrance	0-1.000
Spa treatments	from 6.000
Museums	0-1.200
Thermal swimming pools	for adults 400-600 for children 150-300
Blue Lagoon	for adults EUR 30 (subject to change)

Recreation and Activities in ISK

How much things cost

Petrol 1 liter	about 270
City bus single ticket	350
City bus 1 day card	700
City bus 3 day card	1.700

Transportation in ISK

GJ-TRAVEL SELF DRIVE ACTIVITY GUIDE

Whale Watching

Home and Summer Feeding Grounds

Icelandic waters are home for a variety of whales, although many of them only spend the summer months there. About 45% of the currently known whale species have their distribution in European waters and thereof about 23 species occur in the waters around Iceland. Some of them are just travelling through and are only seen occasionally. But for most of the whales, Iceland presents good feeding grounds, where they spend the entire summer in the search of food. The high productivity of the North Atlantic and the structure of the coastal areas offer a variety of habitats, suitable for many species with different requirements.

Whale Species in Icelandic Waters

11 whale species can frequently be seen in Icelandic waters. Many of them belong to a group known as great whales with respects to their body size. The smallest of the great whales is the minke whale, which is also considered to be the most abundant species, not only in Iceland but worldwide.

Migratory Species

Several of these species are migratory. They travel south and spend the winter months in warmer waters to give birth, but will return to the North Atlantic to feed during the summertime. The movement of the whales that stay in the North Atlantic year round is generally linked to the distribution of their food source.

Summer is the Optimal Season

The best time to go whale watching is from June - August, but trips are offered from April - October, depending on the location of the companies. Whale watching is available from Reykjavik year round.



KILLER WHALE



HUMPBACK WHALE



MINKE WHALE



FIN WHALE



SEI WHALE



BLUE WHALE



NORTHERN
BOTTLENOSE W.



HARBOUR
PORPOISE



SPERM WHALE



WHITE BEAKED
DOLPHIN



HARBOUR PORPOISE

Killer Whale

Schwertwal / Háhyrningur / Orque

Humpback Whale

Buckelwal / Hnúfubakur / Megaptere

Minke whale

Zwergwal / Hrefna / Petit rorqual

Fin whale

Finnwal / Langreyður / Rorqual common

Sei whale

Seiwal / Sandreyður / Rorqual du Nord

Blue whale

Blauwal / Steypireyður / Rorqual Bleu

Northern bottlenose whale

Nördlicher Entenwal / Andarnefja /
Hyperoodon boréal

Harbour porpoise

Schweinswal / Hnísa / Marsouin
common

Sperm whale

Pottwal / Búrhvalur / Cachalot

White-beaked dolphin

Weissnauzendelphin / Hnýðingur / Lagenorhynque á bec blanc

Pilot whale

Grindwal / Grindhvalur / Globi cepale noir

GJ-TRAVEL Day Tour Activity Guide

ATV Adventures

(1) Reykjavik area

Luxury Adventure & ATV Iceland www.atviceland.com
Arctic Adventures www.adventures.is

(2) Geysir area, South Iceland

Geysir ATV Tours www.atvtours.is

(3) Grindavík / Blue Lagoon, Reykjanes Peninsula

ATV Adventures www.atv-adventures.com

(4) Kirkjubæjarklaustur, South Iceland

Hólasport Quad Bikes www.holasport.is

River Rafting

(2) Gullfoss & Geysir area, South Iceland

Arctic Rafting on Hvítá River www.rafting.is

(5) Varmahlíð/Skagafjörður, Northwest Iceland

Arctic Rafting www.rafting.is

Glacier Walks & Ice Climbing

(6) Solheimajökull / Mýrdalsjökull, near Skógar, South Iceland

Arctic Adventures www.adventures.is
Icelandic Mountain Guides www.mountainguides.is

(7) Skaftafell & Vatnajökull National Park

Glacier Guides www.glacierguides.is
Icelandic Mountain Guides www.mountainguides.is
Ice Climbing Tours www.oraeferdir.is

Sightseeing flights

(1) Reykjavik

Eagle Air www.eagleair.is/adventure
Atlantsflug www.atf.is
Helicopter Service in Iceland www.helicoptericeland.com
Nordurflug / Helicopter Tour www.nordurflug.is

(8) Akureyri and (9) Lake Myvatn

Myflug www.myflug.is
Norlandair www.norlandair.is

(2) Geysir

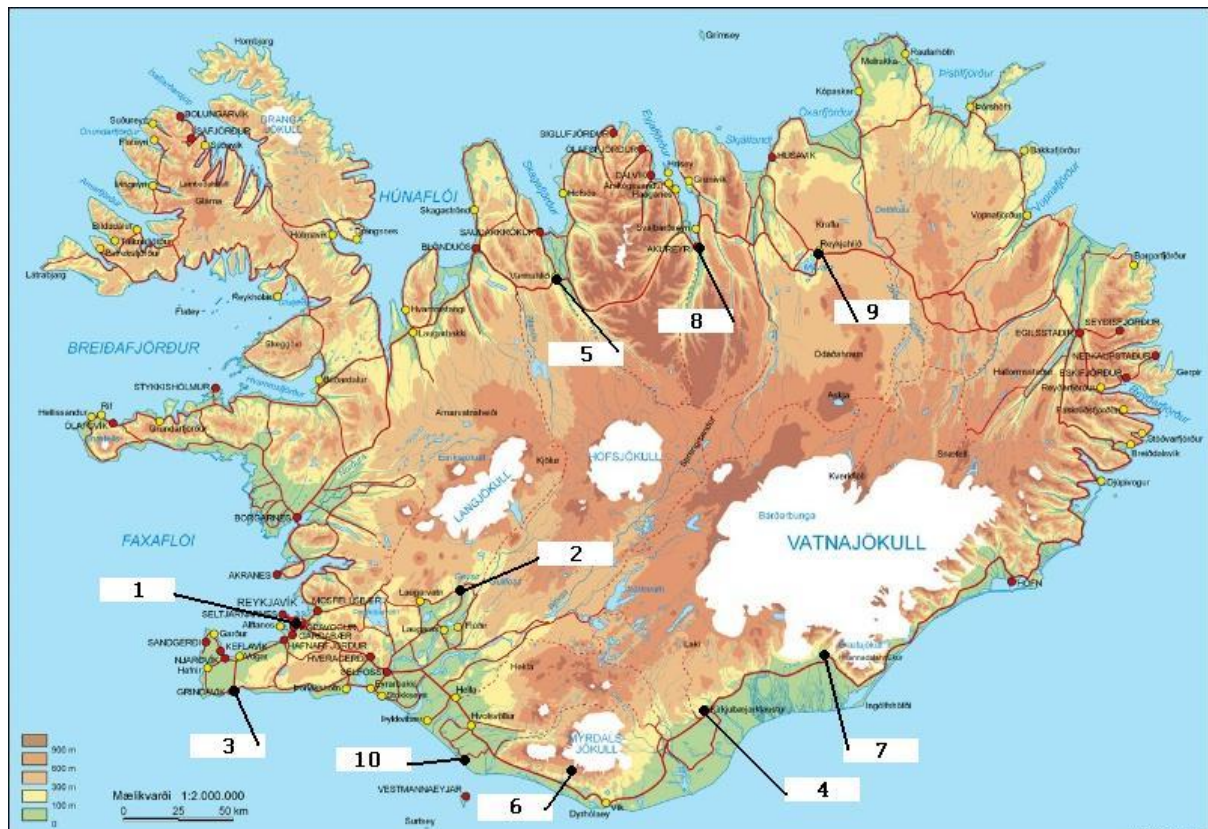
Helicopter Service in Iceland www.helicoptericeland.com

(7) Skaftafell

Atlantsflug www.atf.is

(10) Bakki, South Iceland (near Hvalsövellur & Hella)

Atlantsflug www.atf.is



GJ-TRAVEL SELF DRIVE ACTIVITY GUIDE

Spa & Relaxation around Iceland

(1) Reykjavik

In Reykjavik are seven outstanding geothermal swimming pools. The largest one is Laugardalslaug, located in Laugardalur, near to Grand Hotel Reykjavik, Hilton Hotel Nordica, Hotel Cabin, Youth Hostel Laugardalur and Guesthouse Borgartún. Thermal water has been known to have remarkable effects on the human body. It relaxes stiff muscles, reduces stress levels and has a positive effect on the heart and lungs. One of the main reasons for the longevity and good health of Icelanders is that the locals regularly visit the swimming pools to improve their overall wellbeing. Swimming in thermal water under a bare sky while breathing in clean, fresh air is one of the best exercises available anywhere. This is particularly true for asthma and heart patients. Most important however is the delightful feeling one gets from moving and stretching in a pool that is kept at a constant temperature of 29°C (84°F). Hot Pots are one of the most popular features of Reykjavik's thermal baths and pools. The hot tubs are small pools of very hot water temperatures ranging from 37°C-42°C (98°F-111°F). Some pots are equipped with Jacuzzis and water massages. Guests go from pot to pot enjoying the various temperatures, often cooling themselves in between, either in cool water or simply in cool air (regardless of season). There is nothing like relaxing in a hot pot or revitalize the body at the end of the day, and these trips to the baths and



pools are particularly satisfying for those who suffer from stress or arthritis. The most popular addition to the thermal baths and pools in Reykjavik are the steam baths. By pumping thermal water at the pressure through nozzles with minute droplets of water is created. This heat is remarkably comfortable. The steam heats the body, while cleansing the skin and respiratory passages. These steam baths are also particularly good for those who suffer from arthritis and lung diseases. In general, this steam has a relaxing affect on both body and soul.

If you want to meet Reykjavik, then hot pots are important and popular meeting places - a social experience - where people often get into topical discussions. Surveys show that 47 % of visitors spoke with other pool guests. If you need information about life in Iceland, what restaurants are good, interesting happenings or natural attractions in the vicinity, just make conversation with a fellow hot-potter. For further information see: www.itr.is

Grand Spa located in the basement of Grand Hotel - www.grandspa.is

Laugar Spa has a full-sized outdoor and indoor pool, gym, a spa, beauty and massage clinic, restaurant, hairdressing salon and a sports shop. www.laugarspa.is

Mecca Spa located in the basement of Radisson Hotel Saga - www.meccaspa.is

Nordica Spa located at Hilton Hotel Nordica - www.nordicaspa.is

Thermal Beach in Reykjavik: Close to Perlan and Hotel Loftleiðir, by the sea, you will find a surprising mix of outdoor activities around Nauthólsvík. Enjoy a dip in the warm water of the Ylströnd, take a stroll or jog along the seaside path and visit the grass-roofed cottage restaurant Nauthóll. The Ylströnd (warm beach) is a place of open-air bathing. Here you can take a dip in the Arctic Ocean heated by water from hot springs. In a small cove on the coast, modern bathing facilities have been built around a heated lagoon, complete with a white sandy beach, changing rooms, showers and a terrace for sunbathing. In addition there are large hot tubs with 30-35°hot water. Open from 15 May to 15 September.

(2) Reykjanes Peninsula - Blue Lagoon

The heart of Blue Lagoon's operation is the Blue Lagoon, Iceland's most unique and popular attraction. Guests enjoy bathing and relaxing in the warm 37-39°C Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater, known for its positive effects on the skin. A visit to the spa promotes harmony between body, mind and spirit, and enables one to soak away the stresses of modern life. The spa's guests rekindle their relationship with nature, soak up the scenic beauty and enjoy breathing the clean, fresh air. The Blue Lagoon holds six million liters of geothermal seawater, which is renewed every 40 hours. See: www.bluelagoon.is and www.bluelagoon.com/Geothermal-spa/





(3) **West Iceland – Reykholt:** Wellness & Yoga facilities at Fosshotel Reykholt in West Iceland, see: www.fosshotel.is

(4) **North Iceland - Mývatn Nature Baths:** What better way to enjoy a visit to one of Europe's most spectacular destinations than with a visit to Iceland's newest spa, located at Lake Mývatn, North Iceland, see: www.jardbodin.is

(5) **South Iceland:** Riverside Spa, located at Hotel Selfoss in South Iceland www.riversidespa.is

(6) South Iceland - Laugarvatn FONTANA

Icelandic Fountain of Wellness - composed of a series of interconnected baths and steam rooms that complement each other to create a healthy, natural and unique spa experience. Laugarvatn FONTANA's three steam rooms, collectively called GUFAN, have been built over the natural hot spring that has been used for decades. The temperature of the steam varies depending on weather conditions, and is usually between 40°C (104°F) and 50°C (122°F); humidity is high. Special grates in the floor of the steam rooms allow guests to see, hear, and smell the natural hot spring as it flows under the rooms straight from the ground, creating a unique and totally natural experience. Next to the steam room is YLUR, a Finnish-style sauna. The temperature inside YLUR will be between 80°C (176°F) and 90°C (194°F), with a lower humidity than the steam room. Next are the three interconnected outdoor mineral baths, named LAUGA, SÆLA, and VISKA. Filled with natural spring water, the baths will vary in both depth and temperature. There will be areas for relaxation and others where there is more movement, both of water and people. Stone artwork created by renowned Icelandic artist Erla Þórarinsdóttir will enhance each visitor's experience. At the south end of the baths will be VISKA, a hot tub. It will be built at a slightly higher level than the mineral baths, providing a panoramic view of the beautiful surroundings while the mineral-rich, healthy water nourishes both body and soul. Completing the ensemble are VATNID and STRÖNDIN — the water and the beach. Visitors will reach VATNID through a gate and over a small pool. STRÖNDIN has warm sand, which has been shown to be beneficial for those suffering from arthritis and other joint illnesses. VATNID provides an opportunity to cool down between visits to GUFAN and YLUR, a temperature shift that is both healthy and strengthening. See: www.fontana.is

