

Iceland In Depth

Departs 4th June 2024

Blue Dot Travel





\$10,990 pp
Twin-share. Excludes
international flights.
Single supp \$1,950

ICELAND - VOLCANOES, FJORDLANDS AND GLACIERS

Whatever your perceptions of Iceland may be, they are possibly off the mark, or at least dated, as this small North Sea nation keeps on reinventing itself.

Iceland is often called the Land of Ice and Fire. Its spectacular natural landscapes showcase the ancient geothermal forces have been at work for thousands of years. Iceland is known for its volcanoes, glaciers, fjords, mountains, lava fields, waterfalls, and hot springs. The island's interior is a cold and uninhabitable combination of sand, mountains, and lava fields. From humble Nordic origins it has become one of Europe's leading eco-paradises, boasting the largest national park in the European Union - Vatnajökull where you'll discover pristine streams full of salmon, trails through glaciers, five-gaited Icelandic horses running wild, and bubbling pools of mud and sulphur to heal the body and mind. Many things in Iceland remain exactly as the Vikings found them around 1,100 years ago, especially the raw and dramatic glacial fjords.

At about 100,000 square kilometres, Iceland is small – with a population of just 350,000 making it the most sparsely populated country in Europe. There is a volcanic eruption every 4 years on average. At 43.5 hours per week, they have the longest work week in Europe. The Icelandic language remains unchanged from ancient Norse.

Iceland is warmed by the Gulf Stream and has a temperate climate, despite a high latitude just outside the Arctic Circle. Its high latitude and marine influence keep summers chilly, with most of the archipelago having a tundra climate. The major towns are the capital city of Reykjavík, along with its outlying towns of Kópavogur, Hafnarfjörður, and Garðabær, nearby Reykjanesbær where the international airport is located, and the town of Akureyri in northern Iceland.



Day 1, Tuesday 4th June

TRANSIT

Depart Australia for Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. All flights and arrival times are to be confirmed and will vary across the group. Please refer to your flight itinerary. *Meals in flight*

Day 2, Wednesday 5th June

TRANSIT – REYKJAVIK

Welcome to the very chic and cosmopolitan city of Reykjavik. On arrival, transfer to the Hotel Klettur (three nights), where you can rest or explore the city within easy walking distance. Welcome dinner at local restaurant, Haust, a 15-minute walk from the hotel. *D*



DAY 3, Thursday 6th June REYKJAVIK

After breakfast, we'll enjoy a private guided city walking tour of this small but lively city. We'll visit the stunning opera

house, Hallgrímskirkja church with its impressive tower, the Þingholt neighbourhood and the beautiful CBD district with its colourful buildings, lively shops and café scene. There's also a visit to the Perlan Museum to see the glacier and ice cave exhibits. Later, we will head to the Blue Lagoon, on the

outskirts of Reykjavik, for a therapeutic soak in Iceland's most famous baths (bring swimmers). The silky smooth water will make you feel very relaxed. We'll stay for dinner before returning to the hotel. *B/D*

Day 4, Friday 7th June

THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

Experience Iceland's famous Golden Circle, including the stunning Thingvellir National Park, the Gullfoss Golden Waterfall, Strokkur Geyser and the surrounding hot springs. Lunch (at own cost) will be available at one of the geyser cafes. We begin our tour by driving to Þingvellir, a remarkable geological feature and the most historic site on the island. The world's oldest democratic parliament was founded here in 930. The beautiful canyon running through the park is the meeting point of two of the earth's tectonic plates. A fantastic day of breathtaking scenery and nature at its best! Return to the hotel late in the afternoon. Dinner is at your leisure tonight. *B*




Days 5 – Day 6, Saturday 8th June – Sunday 9th June THE WESTFJORDS

Over the next two days, we'll explore the highlights of Westfjords, focusing on the beautiful landscape of

fjords and mountains. Day one is from Reykjavík to Flókalundur. On day two, the group will travel to Rauðisandur, Breiðavík, Látrabjarg, Dynjandi and Ísafjörður. Both days involve a fair bit of driving, but the scenery from the vehicle (with regular stops) is mind-blowing. Weather and time permitting, we hope to see the Hólmavík Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft. The road is very windy (lots of bends), and progress will be slow but highly enjoyable. We'll stay at Hotel Flokalundur on the 8th and Hotel Isafjorour on the 9th. Dinner at the hotels on both nights. **B/D**

 **Day 7, Monday 10th June**
ISAFJOROUR – LAUGARBAKKI

Today, we drive from West Fjords to Laugarbakki. We'll see the Hvítserkur basalt column and the fertile farmlands along the way. The scenery changes dramatically from the volcanic fields to the glacial sculptured landscape created 10,000 years ago. Skagafjörður stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the highlands and is one of the "cradles of Icelandic history", playing a leading role in the events of the 13th-century civil war and cultural developments for centuries afterwards. Our hotel stay will be at Laugarbakki. Dinner is at the hotel. **B/D**

 **Day 8, Tuesday 11th June**
LAUGARBAKKI – SKAGAFJÖRÐUR – SIGLUFJÖRÐUR – AKUREYRI

After breakfast, the group will visit Glaumbær - an old farm with turf buildings in traditional style, sections of which date back to the 18th century (approx. 3.5 hrs drive). From there, we will drive past Hegranaes and then on to the scenic Skriður drive along the coastline of the North Atlantic Ocean. On arrival at Siglufjörður, the former herring capital of Europe, we will visit the herring museum, which provides a fascinating insight into the industry. From there, it's just a short drive to Akureyri, the capital of North Iceland. Overnight at Hotel Edda (two nights). Tonight's dinner is at the local restaurant Mulaberg - 10 minutes from the hotel. **B/D**

Day 9, Wednesday 12th June
AKUREYRI

Today's main activity is whale watching from Akureyri. After this excursion, we will drive to Husavik, a picturesque Harbourside town perfect for a stroll and coffee. There may be an opportunity to bathe in hot springs on the way back, so bring swimmers. Later, we'll head to Akureyri to enjoy dinner at Striko, one of Akureyri's excellent restaurants - a 15-minute walk from the hotel. **B/D**

 **Day 10, Thursday 13th June**
AKUREYRI – MYVATN – DETTIFOSS – EGILSTAÐIR

Today we will drive 270 km to the east of the island (approx 4 hrs) and learn about Iceland's volcanic nature. You will witness craters, sulphur mud pools,

geothermal energy, steam vents and waterfalls. Highlights include Lake Myvatn and the Dettifoss Waterfall. (Tip; insect nets for your head can be useful at the lake). Stay at the Lake Hotel where we will have dinner. **B/D**

 **Day 11, Friday 14th June**
EGILSTAÐIR – HOFN – KIRKJUBAEJARKLAUSTUR

After breakfast, our day starts in the East Fjords, towering mountains plunging vertically into the sea (approx 3 hrs). We will explore the majestic coastline to Höfn and beyond. We'll follow Vatnajökull Glacier - Europe's largest glacier - most of the day. The glacier controls the elements on the South Coast. You will see the Glacier Lagoon, where thousands of years old icebergs float past on their way to the ocean. Weather permitting, we will include an amphibian boat ride on the lagoon. Compare the vast stretches of black sandy wasteland and volcanic debris resulting from volcanic eruptions with the glaciers and the gorges with crystal clear brooks, beautiful waterfalls and lush vegetation. Our overnight stay is at Hotel Klaustur, where we will have dinner. **B/D**



 **Day 12, Saturday 15th June**
KIRKJUBAEJARKLAUSTUR – VIK – REYKJAVIK

Today we head west to the quaint township of Vik (approx 3 hrs). There are sights along the way, including Skógarfoss - a stunning waterfall over 60m high - the Reynisdrangar sea stacks, Reynisfjall Mountain, Dyrhólaey - a magnificent rocky headland with sheer cliffs renowned for its birdlife - and Reynisfjara, a black sand beach with beautiful basalt columns. We'll return to Reykjavik in the early evening and stay at the Klettur Hotel. A farewell dinner is planned at a local restaurant called Matarkjallarinn Food Cellar, a 20-minute walk from the hotel. **B/D**



Day 13, Sunday 16th June
REYKJAVIK – DEPARTURE

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight home or to your next destination (flight schedule to be advised). For those joining the Blue Dot Travel Arctic Expedition Cruise to Svalbard, you will fly to Bergen, departing at 10.15 am. **B**