

NORTHERN LIGHTS EXPLORATION

Highlights and Experiences:

- Climb a volcano crater and walk between two continental tectonic plates
- Visit a traditional shark farmer, turf farmsteads and churches
- Relax in the Blue Lagoon and learn about living next to Eyjafjallajökull volcano
- See Icelandic horses, taste freshly baked hot spring bread and enjoy a fjord cruise
- Six evenings Northern Lights Academy

Day 1, Sunday

WELCOME to ICELAND (50 km/31 mls)

Individual transfer by Flybus shuttle bus from Keflavik Airport to your accommodation in Reykjavik where you spend the night. We provide you with ideas how to explore Iceland's capital on your own.

Day 2, Monday

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

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

Day 3, Tuesday

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

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula “the peninsula of the snowy mountain“ juts out from Iceland’s west coast, like a long arm with a clenched fist at its tip, and is in many ways a microcosm of the whole island. A rugged mountain chain runs its length. We travel to the charming fishing town of Stykkishólmur for a cruise in the Breiðafjörður fjord. After a light lunch a uniquely Icelandic “treat“ awaits us at Bjarnarhöfn, where they make Hákarl - the fermented shark. Depending on road

and weather conditions, we visit the fishing village of Grundarfjörður, a place with an impressive coastline and mountains, lakes and waterfalls behind the village. Jutting out into the bay rises one of the most photographed mountains in Iceland, Mt. Kirkjufell. On the way back to Borgarnes the guide gives you some practical tips of how to photograph the Auroras as part of the Northern Lights Academy program. Naturally, once darkness falls, we are out in the hotel garden to chase the Northern Lights and to soak in the hotel's outdoor hot tubs.

Day 4, Wednesday

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

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

Day 5, Thursday

NATURAL WONDERS OF SOUTH ICELAND & EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL VOLCANO (220 km/136 mls)

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

Day 6, Friday

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

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

Day 7, Saturday

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

From Kirkjubæjarklaustur we head across the Eldhraun lava field to the village of Vík, where we make a photo stop. The black lava beach with high bird cliffs and pounding waves is very impressive. Further west we reach the high but narrow Seljalandsfoss waterfall which plunges from the mountain. There is a trail that goes behind the falling water and offers interesting views, if you are prepared to get wet! In the afternoon we return to Reykjavik and have about 2 hour leisure time to explore Iceland's capital on our own, visit museums, do some shopping or simply rest after all this touring. In the evening we get to soak in the famous Blue Lagoon, followed by an Icelandic dinner at the Northern Light Inn Hotel and followed by one last nocturnal tour to seek more Northern Lights. Around midnight we reach Reykjavík for one last night.

Day 8, Sunday

DEPARTURE HOME (50 km/31 mls)

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

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

Extra costs for dinners to be paid at the hotels: Fixed 2-course dinners with fish, meat or vegetarian main courses are available at the hotels starting at ISK 5.500 (about EUR 37) per person per night. Note, that the country hotels do not offer a la carte meals and there are no other restaurants nearby. Paying for a 2-course dinner directly at the hotel is less expensive than to have it included in the tour package.

Note: In rare cases, a change of itinerary might be necessary during winter programs in Iceland, should snow, road and weather conditions not allow to follow the scheduled itinerary, and certain outdoor activities might be cancelled. In this case no refund will be given, but our local Travel agent will try to find reasonable alternatives where and whenever possible.

INCLUDED:

- Arrival & departure airport transfer by FLYBUS Plus shuttle (no guide)
- Fully escorted 6-day bus tour with an English or German-speaking guide
- 7-nights accommodation in comfort tourist-class hotels including breakfast
- Fjord Cruise on Breiðafjörður fjord including light lunch
- Visit to traditional shark curing farm
- Hot spring Tasting with geothermally cooked bread and eggs
- Visit to Icelandic horse stables & geothermal greenhouse
- Visit to multimedia presentation at Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Information Center
- Entrance fee to Skógar folk museum and turf houses
- Entrance with towel at Blue Lagoon
- Traditional Icelandic dinner at Northern Light Inn Hotel
- Northern Lights Academy program during 6 evenings with a combination of lectures, presentations, film, guided Northern Lights searches and midnight refreshments
- Use of winter & Northern Lights explorer equipment: simple non-slip snow & ice grippers spikes for shoes and a flash light that is helpful when walking in the dark and operating your photo camera at night

ACCOMMODATION: Comfort tourist-class hotels (subject to change)

- Reykjavik: Centerhotel Plaza for first and last night
- West Iceland: Icelandair Hotel Hamar (2 nights)
- South Iceland: Fosshotel Hekla (1 night)
- Vatnajökull Region: Hotel Laki near Kirkjubæjarklaustur (2 nights)

Note that the hotel list is subject to change.

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NATURE FEES: There is a possibility that some of the nature attractions around Iceland might charge an entrance fee during the trip. These entrance fees are not included in the tour price and

need to be paid by all tour members additionally on the spot, when entering any of these nature sites. Locations, amount of entrance fee, form of payment and other details are not known at the present time and are subject to change.