

HIKING JOURNEY

# Iceland Explorer

WALKING THROUGH ICELAND

14 DAYS



**WALKABOUT**  
GOURMET ADVENTURES

## Journey Overview

Our journey begins in Reykjavik and takes us into an untamed world of fire and ice, of spouting geysers, blue lagoons, massive glaciers, and multicoloured valleys stretching to the sea. Our spectacular adventure immerses you in the full realm of Iceland's extraordinary landscapes, with fantastic coastal and mountain walks.

We travel northeast and our first few days are spent in the delightful remote fishing port of Siglufjord, a highlight of any trip to the north. The country's most northerly town, Siglufjord clings precariously to the foot of steep mountain walls, which enclose an isolated narrow fjord on the very edge of Iceland. The Arctic Circle is barely 40kms away but Siglufjord makes an excellent base for walking around the surrounding mountains.

In Dalvik we also have the opportunity to join a whale-watching excursion in search of humpbacks or even the giant blue whale.

After visiting Godafoss, "waterfall of the gods", with its spectacular cascade, we head to Lake Myvatn, known as one of the best bird-watching sites in the world. We explore the lake surroundings and also visit Dimmuborgir lava field, an area of bizarre lava formations with volcanic arches, pillars, caves, and bridges. We allow time for a soak in the milky blue waters at the Blue Lagoon of the North, a famed geothermal spring. In the Krafla volcano area, our hike brings us across countless rift fissures and lava flows from the eruptions of 1975 and 1984.

We pass through the starkly contrasting desert scenery of the Northeast Highlands to the enormous Dettifoss in Vatnajökull National Park. Europe's largest waterfall, in terms of volume discharge, Dettifoss is bizarrely set in an arid area of sand and rock formations.

We continue south towards the Vatnajökull icecap, Europe's largest glacier and the backdrop for our walks between mountain and shore. We walk along stunning Jökulsárlón Lagoon, cross Skaftafellsheidi Heath, passing the beautiful Svartifoss waterfall and skirting the massive Skaftafellsjökull Glacier.

We explore the Reykjadalur Valley, with its green hills and natural hot springs and magnificent Thingvellir National Park, a world heritage site.

We are happy to say that we have found some amazing hotels and Icelandic cuisine that deserves a special mention for its creativity and high quality! Attention coffee connoisseurs - this is high competition to Italy - we never had a bad coffee anywhere!

# Journey Schedule

**DAY 1**

Reykjavik - Blonduos - Siglufjörður

**DAY 2**

Siglufjordur - Siglufjardarskard - Fljot District

**DAY 3**

Siglufjordur - The Haunted Road - Herring Museum

**DAY 4**

Siglufjordur - Dalvik - Goddafoss - Lake Myvatn

**DAY 5**

Lake Myvatn Nature Reserve

**DAY 6**

Dettifoss - Mount Leirhnjúkur Hot Springs

**DAY 7**

Lake Myvatn - Eglisstaðir - Höfn - Jökulsárlón - Hnappavellir

**DAY 8**

Vatnajökull Glacier Walk

**DAY 9**

Hnappavellir - Kirkjubæjarklaustur - The Landbrot - Pseudocraters - Fjadrargljúfur Canyon

**DAY 10**

Kirkjubæjarklaustur - Free Day - Laki Crater - ½ Day Walk (Optional)

**DAY 11**

Kirkjubæjarklaustur - Vik - Reynisdrangar - Dyrholaey - Skogafoss - Seljalandsfoss - Selfoss

**DAY 12**

Iceland's Golden Circle - Thingvellir National Park - Geysir - Gullfoss

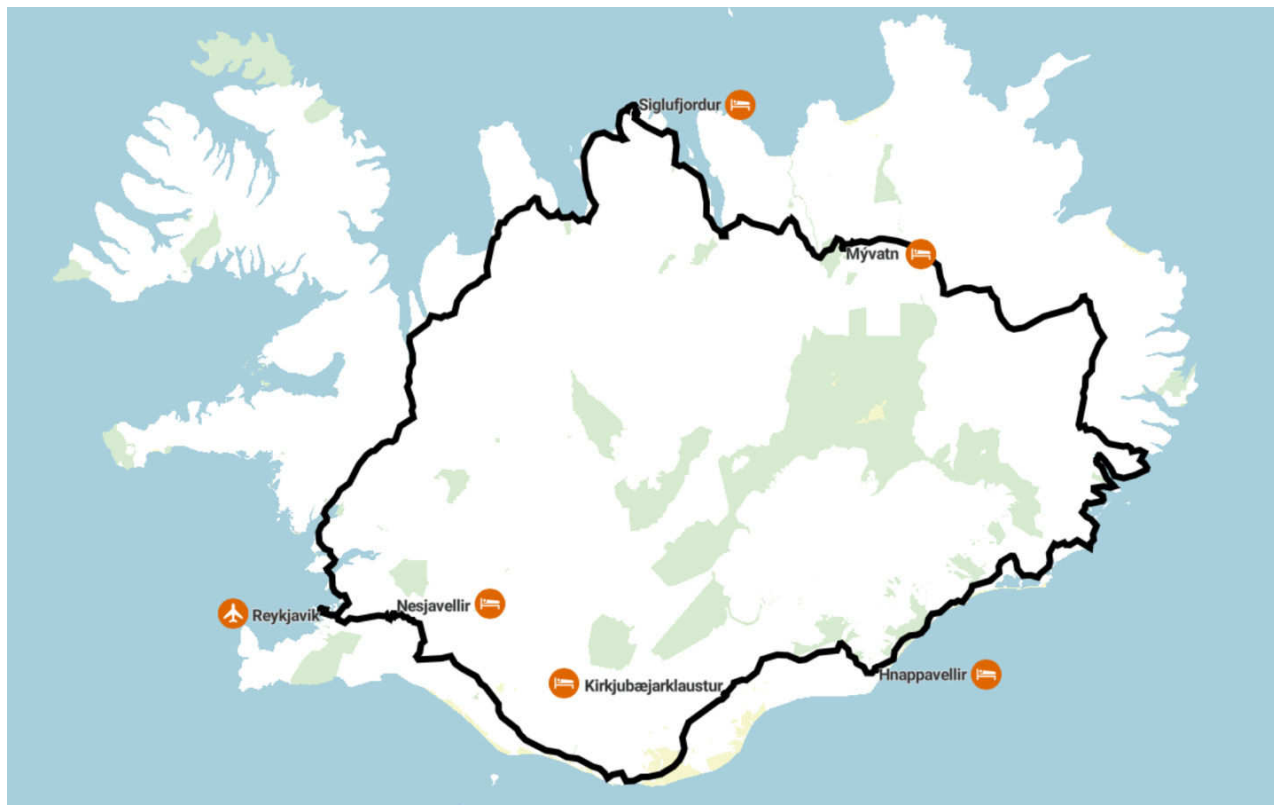
**DAY 13**

Mount Hengill- Hot Springs and Pools

**DAY 14**

Selfoss - Reykjanes Peninsula - Leif the Lucky (Midlína) Bridge - Reykjavik

## Journey Itinerary



### DAY 1

#### Reykjavik - Blonduos – Siglufjörður

Reykjavik is the most northerly capital in the world. The city's origins can be traced back to AD 870, when it is believed to have been Iceland's first permanent Nordic settlement. There are monuments to its past as a seat of the Vikings all over the city and also to its role as the birthplace of the Althing, the world's first parliament. Despite all its history, modern Reykjavik has its past and future in even balance. Its modernism is striking – from the clean lines of its buildings to its experimental music scene to its status as one of the cleanest, most environmentally conscious cities in the world. So there is plenty to discover and we recommend spending one extra day prior to our meeting. Reykjavik's compact size (it has only 120,000

inhabitants, over a third of Iceland's entire population) makes it the perfect place to get around on foot.

We meet at 9.30 a.m. at

**Iceland Air Hotel Reykjavik Marina**

**Myragata 2, 101 Reykjavik**

**T: +354 444 4000**

[www.icelandairhotels.com/en/hotels/marina](http://www.icelandairhotels.com/en/hotels/marina)

We leave the city behind us and travel north on the famous Ring Road – also known as highway number one. It is the major highway in Iceland and links most of the towns. It is 1,330 km long and takes us through fjords, mountains, plateaus and flat land. The Trollaskagi Peninsula, a mountainous area with hundreds of peaks, is cut by many deep valleys carved by glaciers during the last Ice Age. At the very tip of the peninsula, right in the North of the country is the charismatic town of Siglufjörður where we arrive in the late afternoon. This small fishing place is very scenically wedged between the fjord and the foot of the mountains. Here one can't help the feeling of having come to the end of the world, with the ocean behind us and the mountains in front. The town was largely built around the herring industry and at the beginning of the 20th century Siglufjörður was the most important herring fishing area in Iceland where 20% of Iceland's herring export was caught. There were lots of companies handling the catch. It was known as the "Klondyke of the Atlantic" – a sort of gold rush was happening. Then around 1965 the large schools of fish disappeared from the coast and with it, the herring industry. We check in to our lovely hotel which has been built into the fishermen's marina. From our rooms we have wonderful views of the stunning surrounding mountains and the peaceful environment of Siglufjörður.

 **SIGLUFJÖRDUR, ICELAND**

## DAY 2

### Siglufjordur - Siglufjardarskard - Fljot District

Siglufjordur is a particularly beautiful fjord, and high and dramatic mountains tower above the town. The birdlife is varied and some 18 different species are often found in the fjord. After breakfast we start out on our nature walk over the Siglufjardarskard, the old riding trail between Siglufjordur and the Fljot district.

The Siglufjardarskarð mountain pass is 630 metres above sea level and is very rarely used so we shall enjoy the sense of discovery in this uncrowded corner of the world, accompanied by a local mountain guide. Once we reach the other end of the pass, we transfer back to Siglufjordur and our hotel.

Time to relax or explore the town before we are spoilt with another delicious dinner.

 **4 - 5 HOURS**

 **SIGLUFJORDUR, ICELAND**



## DAY 3

### Siglufjordur - The Haunted Road - Herring Museum

After breakfast we meet our local guide and join him on a section of the old road between Siglufjordur and Fljot. This allegedly haunted road was once the main route into town but was closed when the 800-metre-long tunnel was built. The route is prone to avalanches and only opens between early July and late August.

In the afternoon we visit the award-winning Herring Era Museum, where a 1950's harbour atmosphere is brought to life. The Síldarminjasafnið herring museum is the largest marine and industrial museum in Iceland. It is housed in three widely differing premises where the visitor can become acquainted with the pursuit of the "silver darlings" and the processing of that valuable commodity.

On our way back to the hotel we stop at one of the nicely renovated harbourfront cafés for a drink before returning to our hotel.

 **4 - 5 HOURS**

 **SIGLUFJORDUR, ICELAND**



## DAY 4

### Siglufjordur - Dalvik - Goddafoss - Lake Myvatn

After breakfast we leave our comfortable hotel in Siglufjordur and drive the short distance to Dalvik, which marks the border between northeast and northwest Iceland. Here we board our whale watching vessel and enjoy a brisk sail on the Arctic. In these pristine, icy waters we have an exceptionally good chance of encountering marine-life such as the great humpback whale, white-beaked dolphins, minke whales, small harbour porpoises and if we are very lucky the majestic blue whale.

Our afternoon drive takes us along the picturesque fjord Eyjafjörður to Akureyri, often called "The Capital of the North", where we stop for afternoon tea.

On our way to Lake Myvatn we get epic views of picturesque Godafoss, 'Waterfall of the Gods'. It is a wide 12m tall waterfall on the Skjálfandafliót River that is segmented into two main components. This curling horseshoe-shaped waterfall had a key role in Icelandic history. Apparently back in the year 1000, the law speaker at the time, Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði, had the unenviable task of choosing the official religion of Iceland. Perhaps under the pressure of Christianity's convert or die methods, Þorgeirr chucked his icons of Norse deities into the falls (which means "waterfall of the gods") but secretly maintained allegiance to the Norse deities.

In the early evening we arrive at our hotel at Lake Myvatn. It is in a prime location south west of Lake Myvatn from where we can enjoy unique views of the lake and river Laxa. Dinner tonight is in the hotel's restaurant which specialises in local recipes and ingredients.

 **2 HOURS**

 **LAKE MYVATN, ICELAND**

## DAY 5

### Lake Myvatn Nature Reserve

This morning we drive to Hverfjall, one of the best-preserved circular volcanic craters in the world. It is a bare symmetrical and circular explosion crater and about 2800 – 2900 years old. With a depth of 140 metres and 1 km in diameter, it is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

After a short steep climb to the top, the view over Myvatn Lake and the lava fields is stunning. From here we make the tour of the crater and complete the circle of the rim. To enjoy the benefits of this highly active geothermal area, and to relax our muscles, we stop at the Myvatn Nature Baths – the blue lagoon of the North – for an optional dip in the warm and soothing waters.

In the afternoon we continue to explore this geological wonderland of wildly contrasting nature. With the ominous peaks of Mt. Hverfjall and Krafla volcano as a backdrop, Lake Myvatn has a surprising serenity that is ideal for walking.

Summertime is the peak birding season and a good reason to have the binoculars on hand for the diverse species and rare sightings like the Barrow's Goldeneye.

We enjoy the ominous scenery around Dimmuborgir (Dark Castles) with its rugged stacks of towering rocks. The entire area surrounding Myvatn Lake is bubbling with volcanic activity and remains very active to this day.

It sits on top of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and has a landscape unlike anywhere else in Iceland. Scanning the horizon, you can see plumes of sulphur steam coming from vents and volcanic cones and craters looming.

We return to our hotel and the rest of the afternoon we can relax and enjoy the surrounds of our hotel. Tonight is a free evening.

 **5 HOURS**

 **LAKE MYVATN, ICELAND**

## DAY 6

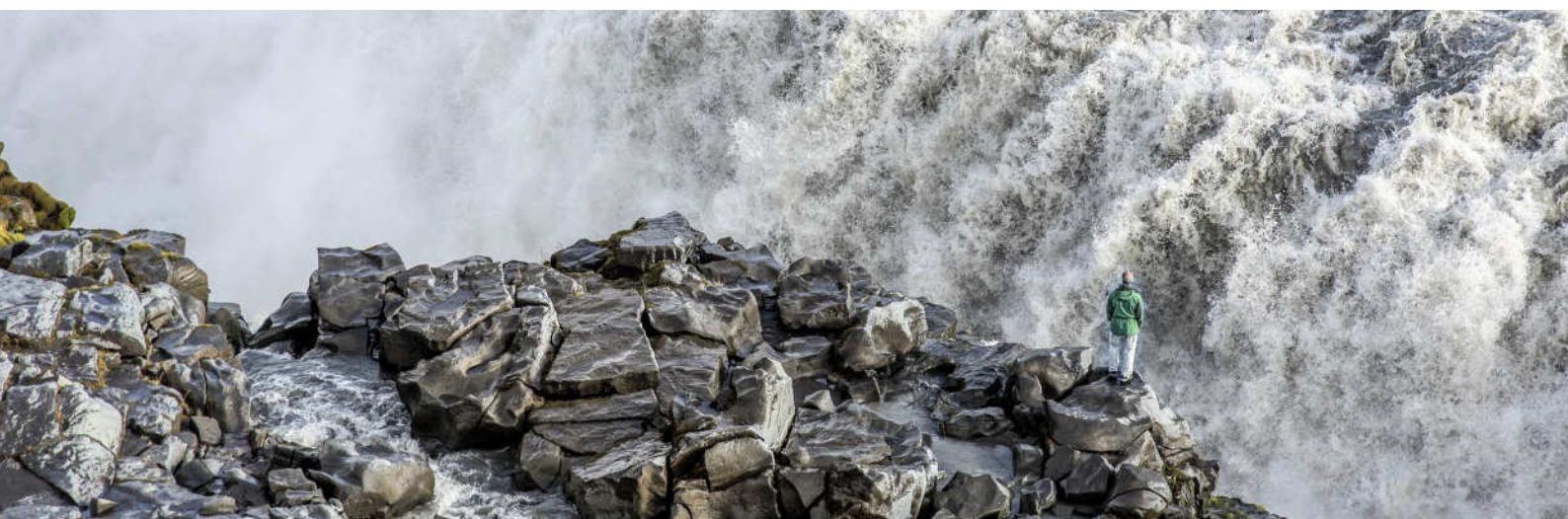
### Dettifoss - Mount Leirhnjúkur Hot Springs

In the morning we drive to Dettifoss, Europe's mightiest waterfall, a thundering cascade of glacial water and mist among shattered cliffs. We spend the morning walking in this contrasting landscape, one of the main characteristics of Jökulsárgljúfur. Our trail takes us first to Dettifoss from where we continue to the humble and beautifully shaped Selfoss waterfall. We continue along the riverbank and then circle back to our buses. In the afternoon we see the Leirhnjúkur lava flow and Krafla Caldera. This field of hardened lava was created in 1727 and is so recent that there are still huge plumes of sulphur steam coming out of the rocks. The walk around the caldera is incredible and it feels almost like we are in another world, with intricately hardened rock domes, needles, flows, and tubes running all over the place, amidst a fog of sulphur. We continue with a walk up to Mt. Leirhnjúkur's hot spring area which is part of the Krafla volcanic area and teeming with ancient lava flows and fissures. Visiting Namafjall geothermal field we encounter boiling fumaroles and violently bubbling pools of mud. The ground is still hot from volcanic activity and the field is covered with bubbling pools of mud, superheated by the magma below.

We return to our hotel and dinner is at a nearby restaurant.

 **4 - 5 HOURS**

 **LAKE MYVATN, ICELAND**



## DAY 7

### Lake Myvatn – Egilsstaðir - Höfn - Jökulsárlón – Hnappavellir

Today we leave our green haven and moving east we reach the pretty town of Egilsstaðir where we stop for lunch. It is the largest town in the East of Iceland and rumours are that it is the Icelandic 'Loch Ness' The Lagarfljót Worm lives in the Lagarfljót river and not far from here is the Hallormsstaður Forest – the largest forest in Iceland – in a country, which has hardly any trees.

We continue on Ringroad No.1 to the The Eastern fjords. They are a magical place with beautiful sights but unfortunately some bad roads. Parts of the ring road in the area are still gravel roads and many secondary roads are gravel as well. The Eastern fjords are also home to the Icelandic reindeer, and it is not uncommon to see them on or beside the roads. They were originally imported to the country but some of them either escaped or were let loose and now they roam wild in the nature. In the small fishing town of Höfn we have a short break before skirting around the base of Vatnajökull Glacier, framed by a giant icecap on one side and the sea on the other. After one more hour of driving we come to Jökulsárlón, a big glacial lagoon. Large blocks of ice break from the glacier and float around in this lagoon until they make their way out to the open sea, only to be washed back on to the beach, creating a picture-perfect setting. Seals are often found playing in the mouth of the lagoon.

Continuing along the ring road, we are rewarded with fantastic scenery before we reach Hnappavellir and our Glacier Lagoon Hotel where we stay for the next two nights. It is a new four-star hotel in Hnappavellir, a popular climbing area. The location is perfect right between Skaftafell and Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon. The landscape is quite special and a walk through some of the region's more prominent features is fascinating.

 **2 HOURS**

 **HNAPPAVELLIR, ICELAND**

## DAY 8

### Vatnajökull Glacier Walk

Iceland is a place that makes us feel small and fragile – even powerless, when immersed in all this surreal nature and truly spectacular scenery. It is covered by over 4,500 square miles of glaciers, and they are located in all regions. Vatnajökull is one of Europe's largest and covers a staggering 8% of Iceland.

Possibly the most famous is Eyjafjallajökull, responsible for aviation havoc in 2010, when a volcano beneath the glacier erupted, spewing ash, dust and small particles of glass high into the atmosphere.

After breakfast we drive the short distance to Freysnes where we meet our expert glacier guide. He knows the glaciers well and ensures that the safety during our walk is paramount. Together with him we discover the crevasses and glacier sculptures of the Svínafellsjökull glacial tongue in Skaftafell nature reserve. Here we are totally surrounded by the majestic scenery and experience the power of the living glacier. This glacier tongue is an outlet of the immense Glacier Vatnajökull, and the ice is 1,000 years old.

Glaciers are made up of fallen snow. They are not frozen waters but simply compressed due to the weight of the snow as it keeps accumulating. It's just like taking a handful of fluffy snow and squeezing it into a hard snowball and keep doing so for hundreds of years. The ice eventually gets so compressed that most of the air is forced out of it. This is what causes glacial ice to appear blue.

A glacier is a river of ice and flows because the highly compressed layers of ice are very flexible. At locations where a glacier flows rapidly, giant cracks, called crevasses are formed and the reason why it is so dangerous to walk on a glacier – the crevasses are sometimes covered over by snow. Our guide will show us with the ice axe spots that may look like solid ice and snow but are in fact a steep drop just covered in a light dusting of snow.

Our walk is fairly easy to moderate with real ice crampons attached to our hiking boots. They make it easy to walk on the ice to prevent slipping. Safety equipment such as helmets and goggles are also provided, and we will make recommendations for adequate clothing and supplies that will need to be worn and brought along for the walk.

It is a wonderful experience to be up on these enormous giants of ice and symbolises what a trip to Iceland is all about being at one with the awesome power of nature.

We return to our hotel and enjoy the view from the spectacular lounge over green pastures, moors, mountains and glaciers.

 **3 HOURS**

 **HNAPPAVELLIR, ICELAND**



## DAY 9

### Hnappavellier – Kirkjubæjarklaustur – The Landbrot - Pseudocraters – Fjadrargljufur Canyon

Today it's time again to pack our bags and continue our extraordinary journey along the picturesque south coast of Iceland to Kirkjubæjarklaustur. After checking into our hotel we explore the Landbrot pseudocraters and almost right in front of us we find the City of the Elves, the Elf-Church, an old collapsed Viking wall, and many many more interesting sights. The landscape is spectacular with panoramic views in all directions – from the higher pseudocraters to the mountains, glaciers and lowlands. The Landbrot area contains the largest group of pseudocraters in Iceland. They have been dated back to the Eldgjá eruption in 934. The craters are formed by steam explosion when flowing hot lava crosses over a wet surface, such as marshland, a pond or a lake. The gases rapidly expand through the lava surface and the tephra builds up crater-like forms, which can appear very similar to real volcanic craters, hence the name pseudocraters. Some of the craters are hollow, either open or almost closed. Farmers in the past have used them as sheepfolds and for shelter from the weather for cattle. With improvements in farm buildings during the 20th century the craters are no longer used for this purpose. We pass Hæðargarðsvatn lake, well known for trout fishing, which in the old days was reckoned to be equivalent of one spring cow. We follow a marked track until we reach the prominent pseudocrater called Glugasker. From here we retrace our steps back to Kirkjubæjarklaustur and from here it is not far to the magnificent canyon of Fjadrargljufur. It is 100 meters deep and two kilometres long. What makes it so special are the sheer, turning and twisting walls, full of oddly-shaped salients and bumps, dotted with soft grass and patches of moss. Deep in the canyon, a lazy river serpentine towards the sea creating a dreamlike sight. We follow a marked path that leads us along the top of the canyon with various viewpoints at the most breathtaking and amazing views over the canyon. We return to our hotel where we have time to relax before our dinner.

 **5 HOURS**

 **KIRKJUBÆJARKLAUSTUR, ICELAND**

---

## DAY 10

### Kirkjubæjarklaustur – Free Day – Laki Crater – ½ Day Walk (Optional)

For those who are interested, and weather permitting, in Kirkjubæjarklaustur we are ideally located to take a super jeep tour to the Laki Crater. Otherwise there is also a bus for a cheaper alternative. It is a spectacular natural phenomenon and only accessible by 4x4 vehicles. Laki's eruptions in 1783 are considered one of the worst natural disasters in history, reshaping the landscape of Iceland, by spewing out 30 billion tons of lava and gases, which caused the "haze-famine" that killed thousands of Icelanders, and most of its horses! The 25-kilometer long volcanic fissure with some 100-crater cones erupted in the year 1783. The resultant mass of emitted lava is considered to be the largest ever in historical times. Most of the craters stand 20 – 50 meters tall, the highest rising up to 100 meters over the surroundings. The material is black and red scoria and lava-splatters; some are even made of solid lava.

If you prefer to stay in Kirkjubæjarklaustur we will take you for a morning walk to explore the surroundings of this splendid location. Kirkjubæjarklaustur is, at least in historical terms, quite remarkable. The name of the town, which is often shortened to "Klaustur", translates roughly to "Church Farm's Monastery". For those of you who are familiar with Iceland's history, it might seem odd that a town is named after a monastery, as the settlers of Iceland were pagan Vikings.

But in fact the Vikings were not the first settlers of Iceland. Before the Norse settlers arrived in Iceland, a small population of Irish hermits is said to have lived in the area that is now Kirkjubæjarklaustur. During the Norse settlement, the Christian inhabitants supposedly banned all pagans to set foot in Kirkjubæjarklaustur. A Benedictine convent was founded at Kirkjubær in 1186 and it was active until 1550, when Icelanders converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism.

Today Kirkjubæjarklaustur has developed into a village, the only center of population in the district, with about 150 inhabitants. The surrounding nature is interesting as well and we notice stark contrasts of the landscape wherever we look. To the east, there's the largest glacier in Europe, Vatnajökull, and to the southeast there is the greatest sand plain in Iceland, Skeiðarársandur. At Systrafoss, which means twin sister waterfall, we walk the 311 steps up to the top. From here we have an amazing view of

the valley below and the icecaps in the distance. We continue our walk to the serene lake called Sisters Lake. According to the legend, nuns from the Benedictine convent used to bathe in the lake and one time, when two of the sisters were bathing, a hand holding a gilt comb arose from the water. The two nuns tried to reach it and then mysteriously disappeared.

On our way to Systrastapi (Sisters Rock), we walk past the fascinating Kirkjugólf (Church Floor), an 80 square metre flat of basalt columns, shaped and formed naturally by the tide and glacial melts. As only the top can be seen and as the name suggests, they have the appearance of a paved church floor and are a protected natural monument.

Systrastapi (Sisters Rock) is a steep-sided rocky hill and Folklore says that two nuns were buried on the rock after being burned at the stake for breaking their vows.

We stop for lunch in Kirkjubæjarklaustur and the rest of the afternoon and evening is at your leisure.

 **4-5 HOURS**

 **KIRKJUBÆJARKLAUSTUR, ICELAND**



---

## DAY 11

### Kirkjubæjarklaustur - Vik - Reynisdrangar - Dyrholaey - Skogafoss - Seljalandsfoss – Selfoss

Today it's time again to pack up our bags and continue our extraordinary journey along the picturesque south coast of Iceland.

We traverse the vast Eldhraun lava field ("Fire Lava »), which was created in one of the greatest eruptions in recorded history and is of the largest of its kind in the world. The Lakagigar craters were also created during this eruption.

This eruption lasted from 1783 to 1784 and is known as the Skaftáreldar (The Skaftá River Fires). This was a cataclysmic event for Iceland and beyond. In Iceland, it led to disease, crop failure and disasters.

The eruption affected Europe as well. In Great Britain, that summer is known as the Sand-Summer due to the fallout of ash and it is believed that the airborne haze and blocking of sunlight may have contributed to the French Revolution.

We pass the quaint little town of Vík with great views towards Reynisdrangar where we can admire one of the prettiest black beaches in Iceland.

From here it is not far to Dyrholaey with its outstanding cliffs by the sea and the lighthouse on top. The views are spectacular – from the waves crashing on the black sandy beaches, over green fields up to the glaciers in the distance. Here we also find an astonishing birdlife and the home to thousands of puffins!

We continue on to Skogafoss, one of the biggest and most beautiful waterfalls of Iceland with an astounding width of 25 metres and a drop of 60 metres. Due to the amount of spray the waterfall often produces a single or double rainbow on sunny days.

Only 20 minutes from here is Seljalandsfoss and the highlight is to walk around this beautiful waterfall as there is a big cave behind it.

Like nearly everywhere in Iceland, we drive past many fields of lupines. Looking at those purple fields reminds us of the beautiful lavender fields in Provence and the lupines surely make a vibrant scene wherever we go at this time of year in Iceland. Here we mostly find the purple species but lupines come in several colors; purple, blue,

pink, red, yellow and white. The lupine is one of the taller and prosperous plants in Iceland and can easily be recognized.

The lupines have been used for medical use as well. Ævar Jóhannsson, an Icelandic doctor, was the founder of the so-called Lupine-tea that has now been used for decades.

Some people use the tea to maintain good health while others have used it after being diagnosed with serious illness and need to build up the immune system. Many people have used it along with medication and radiation treatment for cancer.

Near the south-western town of Selfoss is our luxury Hotel Ion, once an abandoned inn. From the volcanic marvels of Mount Hengill to the urban sophistication of Reykjavik nearby, the unique landscape plays a pivotal role in the rich design of the hotel, which leans heavily on sustainable practices and the natural features of the island.

The farm-fresh cuisine at Silfra Restaurant, the Northern Lights Bar and the partially exposed Lava Spa all ensure that we have the ultimate Icelandic experience before even stepping foot outside.

 **3 HOURS**

 **NESJAVELLIR, SELFOSS, ICELAND**



## DAY 12

### Iceland's Golden Circle - Thingvellir National Park - Geysir – Gullfoss

Today we explore Iceland's famous Golden Circle. Our first stop is Thingvellir National Park where we spend the morning walking and exploring this exceptional site. It was the location of Iceland's first Parliament in 930 AD. At the Lögberg people could step forward and give speeches about important matters. An assembly of 48 chieftains gathered here to discuss laws and engage in court proceedings on behalf of the country's citizens.

This is also where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates are slowly splitting apart from each other, creating deep fissures in the ground. One of these, called Silfra, is full of icy glacier water where some people go snorkelling or scuba diving.

After lunch we continue on our Golden Circle walk which takes us to Haukadalur, a geothermal area about 60kms away from Thingvellir National Park. There are two famous geysers here called Geysir and Strokkur. The general term "geyser" was named after this particular one in Iceland.

The earth churns up boiling hot water that smells like rotten eggs, with steam rising from vents in the earth next to mud pools, fumaroles, and mineral deposits. The original Geysir no longer erupts after an earthquake shut it down but a second one called Strokkur constantly explodes with scalding water shooting 100 feet into the air every 10 minutes or so.

From here it is only a short walk to the mighty Hvítá River, which is fed by Iceland's second largest glacier, Langjokull. It abruptly disappears into a ravine at the majestic and spectacular Gullfoss waterfall. The wide and fast-moving river turns a corner and falls 100 feet into a crevice in the earth, producing thick mist and frequent rainbows.

After descending a long staircase, a concrete pathway allows us to walk along the edge and look down into the roaring cascade of water. The area around the falls gets pretty windy, so don't forget to take a waterproof jacket (and maybe even pants).

 **4 HOURS**

 **NESJAVELLIR, SELFOSS, ICELAND**

## DAY 13

### Mount Hengill- Hot Springs and Pools

After breakfast we have a short drive to the beginning of our walk in the hills of Hengill. This area offers most of the features of Iceland's natural beauty: a fascinating landscape, a geothermal area with hot springs and craters, diverse vegetation, rivers and lakes. The location is certainly unique with an atmosphere that would make any sci-fi fan feel right at home. The surrounding landscape is astonishing (for the fans that's where Game of Thrones Seasons 1 and 2 have been shot). Our trail follows a well-marked track which takes us across a scree slope through a rocky pass. Behind us are amazing views of the mountains and giant Lake Þingvallavatn. The Hengill area is certainly beautiful and has such an interesting landscape. Some folks' tales and sagas are connected to the region. For example, a young farmer is said to have killed the sleeping troll woman Jóra while she lay in wait for innocent wanderers or horsemen on the trail over Dyrafjöll. The nearby Nesjavellir Geothermal Power Station is the second largest geothermal power station in Iceland and located on Mount Hengill. It delivers around 1,100 litres of hot water to Reykjavík and neighbouring towns servicing heating and hot water. The station produces about 120 MW of electrical power, 73.8% of this electricity is hydro power. During the winter, pavements near Reykjavík and Akureyri are heated up to help transportation. Hot springs and pools can be found in all of the volcanic systems although they are most commonly found in the Hengill System. The most famous hot spring areas are in the Reykjadalur Valley. Our trail continues along a ridgeline behind the thermal power station - we shall see plenty of hot springs bubbling beneath us. They estimate that the temperature of the water at a depth of one km is around 250 degrees. Our trail makes its way down off the ridgeline and eventually brings us back to our hotel. Soothe your weary limbs in the delightful outdoor hot pool and soak up the surreal surrounds.

 **5 HOURS**

 **NESJAVELLIR, SELFOSS, ICELAND**

## DAY 14

### Selfoss - Reykjanes Peninsula - Leif the Lucky (Midlina) Bridge – Reykjavik

This morning we leave our comfortable hotel and drive to nearby Hellisheiði, the world's eighth-largest geothermal power plant, and Iceland's biggest, with a generation capacity of 303MW. It is close to the capital Reykjavík, and captures geothermal energy from the volcanic Hengill mountain. It has a fantastic geothermal exhibition centre where we can learn and experience first-hand how green, sustainable energy is produced.

Travelling south, we soon reach the small township of Eyrarbakki and follow the dramatic coastline to the Southern Peninsula - Reykjanes Peninsula. It feels almost off the beaten track and is marked by active volcanism under its surface - the large lava fields allowing little vegetation. There are numerous hot springs and sulphur springs in the southern half of the peninsula, around the Kleifarvatn Lake and the Krýsuvík geothermal area.

There is also a geothermal power station at Svartsengi. Near the power station a swimming pool has been installed using the hot and mineralized water coming down from the power station and it is nothing less but the famous "Blue Lagoon" (Bláa Lónið).

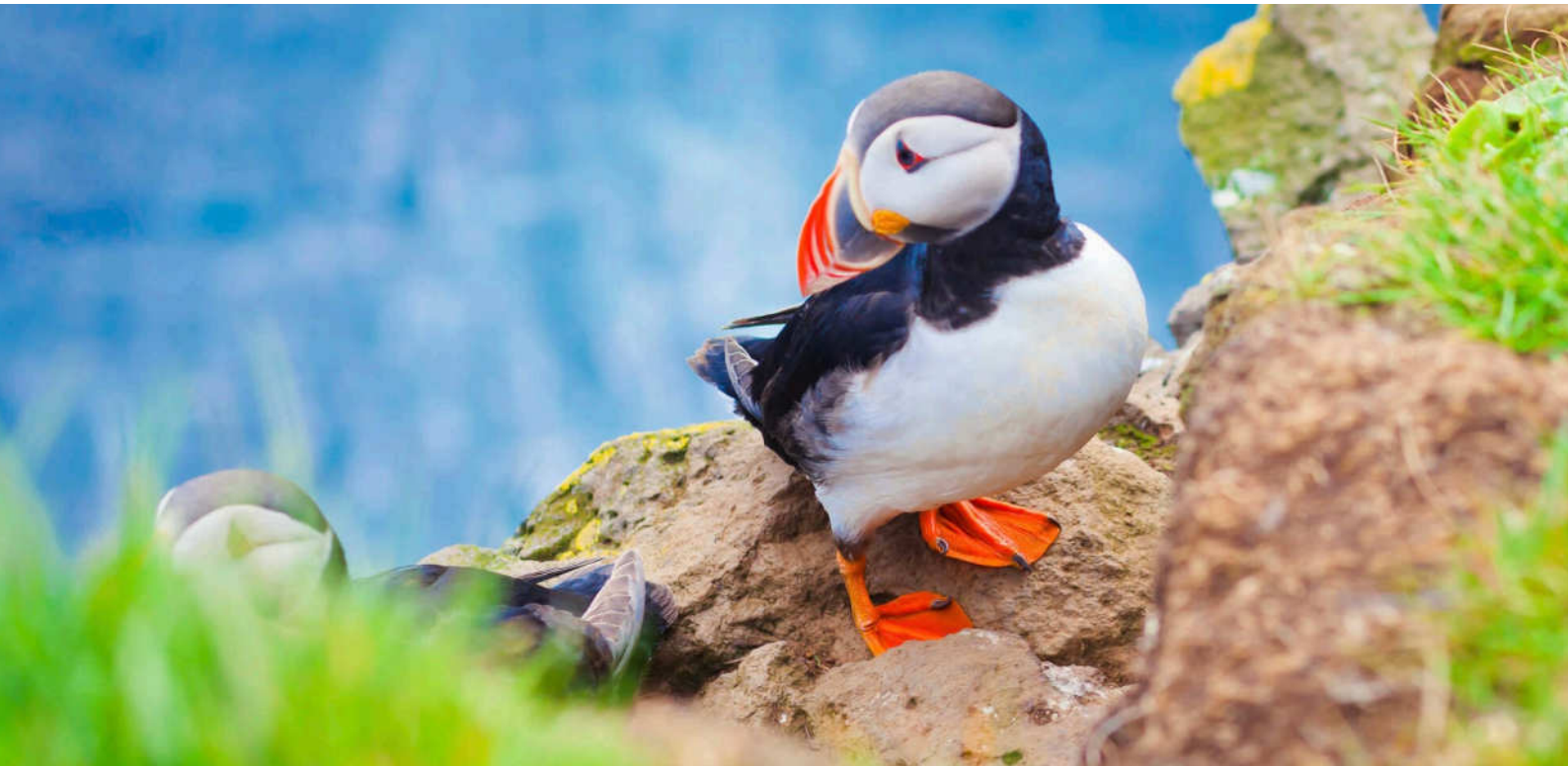
The stark contrast between the neon blue water and the dark volcanic rocks is an awe-inspiring image. Steam rises around the facility like a smoke machine out of a movie and the sting of the neon blue water plays tricks with our mind because, at a toasty 38 degrees Celsius, a natural pool is normally not this hot.

The lava-scarred Reykjanes peninsula lies on one of the world's major plate boundaries - the Mid Atlantic Ridge. According to the continental drift theory, the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates are continuously drifting apart (2 cm per year) with great forces under the gaping rifts. As the plates diverge, linear fractures, known as fissures, form due to stresses created by the tension that builds up as the plates move away from each other.

On our way to Reykjavik we have one final stop at the Leif the Lucky (or Miðlína) Bridge. It spans the Álfagjá rift valley (18 metres wide and 6 metres deep) near Grindavik, which marks the boundary of the Eurasian and North American continental tectonic plates. Named in honour of Icelandic explorer Leif Eriksson who travelled from Europe

to America 500 years before Columbus, it was built in 2002 as a symbol for the connection between Europe and North America.

From here it is not far to our final destination at the Hotel Icelandair Marina Reykjavik where the tour ends at approximately 4.00 p.m.



# Journey Accommodation

Siglo Hotel, Siglufjordur

**NIGHT 1 - 3**



Laxá Hótel, Myvatn

**NIGHT 4 - 6**



## Fosshotel Glacier Lagoon, Hnappavellir

**NIGHT 7 - 8**



## Hotel Laki, Kirkjubæjarklaustur

**NIGHT 9 - 10**



Ion Hotel, Nesjavellir

**NIGHT 11 - 13**



## Journey Notes

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Experienced guide.
- Local guides and glacier guide plus equipment for glacier walk.
- Pick up at 9.30 a.m. at the Icelandair Hotel Reykjavik Marina in Reykjavik, Iceland and drop off at the same hotel at approximately 5.00 pm on Day 14.
- Price includes transport between Reykjavik (Iceland) on Day 1 and Reykjavik (Iceland) and on Day 14.
- Twin share accommodation for 13 nights, including breakfasts (13) and dinners (11).

### NOT INCLUDED IN TRIP COSTS

Transport before and after "The Walk", 13 lunches, 2 dinners, evening drinks, in between meal snacks, personal clothing, laundry, medical expenses and items of a personal nature and entry fees.

## WHAT TO BRING

Daypack, walking boots, thick socks, waterproof raincoat (Gore-Tex), waterproof overpants, gloves & some warm clothing is recommended - layers work best in Iceland, sun hat, sunglasses, sun cream and bathers. We can also recommend telescopic walking sticks as being useful. As we are restricted with the amount of luggage, we can carry in our vehicles please ensure that your CASES DO NOT EXCEED 20 KG's per guest.

## PRE-WALK PREPARATION

We suggest that prior to your walking holiday you prepare yourself to obtain a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your walking holiday.

This, of course, is dependent upon your existing fitness level. Remember, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the holiday!

- Start with some short walks which include stairs or hills and increase the length of walks over a couple of months.
- We suggest you carry a backpack with water, camera, jacket, snacks, etc. to assist you with your preparation and allow you to get used to the extra weight on your back.
- We also ask that your boots are comfortable and well-worn in.
- Perhaps enjoy some walks through our local national parks and over uneven surfaces to gain confidence with your boots or new walking shoes.

## PLEASE NOTE

All accommodation on tour includes private facilities (toilet and shower/bath). Single rooms can be arranged for this tour for a supplement. Please ask for details. We will endeavour to match people together if they would like to share a twin room with another guest to avoid paying the single room supplement. However, as this is not always possible, 'single' clients will have to pay the supplement. All walks during the 14 Day tour are optional or can be taken in parts. Guests can choose to have more free days than the two already included in the itinerary. The walking pace on all walks is leisurely. Guests do not have to be experienced, although a good level of fitness is necessary.

# Get in touch and book your journey today.

 **0461 277 612**

 **info@walkaboutgourmet.com**

## Follow the journey.



### Quality Practices

Committed to exceeding your expectations with great customer service and the highest standards of quality practices, Walkabout Gourmet Adventures complies with the National Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP).



**Quality  
Tourism**  
Framework



**T-QUAL**  
AUSTRALIAN TOURISM  
QUALITY ASSURED

**Parks**  
VICTORIA

[www.walkaboutgourmet.com](http://www.walkaboutgourmet.com)