

Iceland: Northern Lights Exploration



Experience the best of Iceland's winter! Our Northern Lights Exploration series are designed to include the highlights of Iceland and aim to maximize the chances of seeing the elusive Northern Lights. This itinerary includes the Northern Lights Academy with 6 evenings of presentations and guided lookouts for the Aurora Borealis. Experience Icelandic winter as you head to the countryside: from the regions of Snæfellsnes Peninsula in the west to the Vatnajökull glacier in the southeast.

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: Tuesday – Arrival - WELCOME to ICELAND (50 km/31 mls)

Individual transfer by Flybus shuttle bus from Keflavik Airport to your accommodation in Reykjavík where you spend the night. This afternoon, at leisure explore Iceland's capital on your own.

Overnight in Reykjavík.

Day 2: Wednesday - 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: Thursday - 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: Friday - 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: Saturday - 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 darkness and ideal for Northern Lights search.

Day 6: Sunday - 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.

New: Optional Ice Cave Tour offered between November 15th and March 15th

Experience a spectacular crystal ice cave in Europe's largest glacier, Vatnajökull. It is like standing under a frozen blue ocean or in a frozen cathedral surrounded by millions of shades of blue. Deep under Iceland's massive Vatnajökull glacier, beautiful caves of ice are formed by rivers of melt water during the summer time. Too dangerous to visit in the spring and summer due to a threat of collapse, cold winter temperatures strengthen the ice and make exploration possible and safe to visit between November 15th and March 15th (subject to change). The tour takes about 2,5 hours in total - about 30-minute drive by 4x4 vehicle from the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon and 5-15 minutes hike (one-way). You spend about one hour inside the ice cave. You need good hiking boots, warm clothing that keeps you dry from the dripping water in the ice cave. Minimum age is 10 years old. The ice cave tour can only be booked on day 2 of Northern Lights Exploration tour. You will have to fill in and sign an order form, once done a cancellation is not possible. Ice cave bookings have to be finalised with the guide by dinner time on day 2 of the tour. Bookings afterwards cannot be accommodated due to limited space.

The price is ISK 23.000 (about EUR 210) per person; subject to change. Payment is due with the ice cave tour operator on day 6 in Icelandic Krona – cash only! The ice cave explorers meet their local guide at the glacier lagoon at 14:00 and will be brought back to the hotel after the ice cave tour, while the rest of the group continues the official tour program. The ice cave explorers will miss out on some of the official tour programs, as there is no time for everything, but the stop and visit at the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon are included for all group members.

Day 7: Monday - 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. 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 Reykjavik for one last night.

Day 8: Tuesday – 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.

***** Return home with wonderful memories *****

Price per person on a twin-sharing basis: EUR 2730

Single supplement: EUR 500

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 6.000 (about EUR 45) 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.

Price inclusions

- 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 Lava Exhibition Center
- Entrance fee to Skógar folk museum and turf houses
- Entrance with towel at Blue Lagoon
- Traditional Icelandic dinner at a local restaurant
- 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

Price exclusions

- Airfare to and from Reykjavik
- Meals and sightseeing not mentioned
- Visa for Iceland (schengen)
- Overseas Medical Insurance
- Items of a personal nature e.g. laundry, telephone calls
- Services of an Odyssey Tour escort
- Anything not specifically mentioned under “Price inclusions”

Please note

- This is a small group journey for upto 16 people

- This is the only tour where there will be no escort from Odyssey; however there will be a local tour escort with you through the trip
- Fellow guests on this trip will be from all across the world.
- Itineraries may be subject to change at short notice during severe weather conditions and certain outdoor activities/day trips may be cancelled during the winter season in Iceland. In these rare cases, where situations of force majeure apply, excursions/activities cannot be refunded but the local guides will try their best to find reasonable alternatives where and whenever possible.
- There is limited day light, about 5-6 hours, for departures mid November to End of January. For your information the shortest day light in Iceland is on the 21st of December, about 4 hours.
- Standard check in at hotels is at 14h00 onwards. Where necessary we will request an early check-in however, this is not guaranteed. The same applies to check out, which is at 12h00.
- Rates subject to change without prior notice due to circumstances beyond our control e.g. fuel increases, rate of exchange fluctuations.
- Please note that your passport should be valid for more than 6 months beyond the date of travel and that you must have at least 2 blank pages on your passport.
- Please contact us if you would like to book pre-tour or post-tour accommodation in Reykjavik.
- Payment is to be made in INR only at the prevalent rate of exchange.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: This program includes a special six night Northern Lights Academy – which means that during 6 evenings there is a combination of presentations, lectures, a film and guided searches for the Aurora Borealis – the Northern Lights. All countryside hotels in this program offer a Northern Lights wake up call for guests that register for that special service at the hotel reception. The Northern Lights Exploration series are designed to spend 6 evenings in the countryside to maximize the chances of seeing the elusive Northern Lights, still the tour is dependent on weather and therefore sightings are not guaranteed. The Northern Lights are in the northern hemisphere from September through April but are only visible when the sky is clear and free of clouds. Like many of natural wonders, the Northern Lights are 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 is worth the patience which is much required. Because they are a winter event, you need to be prepared to wait outside while looking for them. It is best to dress very warmly, in layers, with good footwear, gloves, hats and whatever else makes you comfortable while you await patiently this truly outstanding event. For the best photos we recommend using a tripod.

Dates of travel (Tuesday departures) – Choose from any of these dates

5 – 12 November 2019
26 November – 5 December 2019
7 -14 January 2020
21 -28 January 2020
4 – 11 February 2020
18 – 25 February 2020
3 – 10 March 2020
17 – 24 March 2020
24- 31 March 2020
31 – 7 April March 2020

Please note that this is the only ODYSSEY EXPLORE tour that does not include the services of an Odyssey tour escort. There will be people from all over the world on your tour and there will be a local guide with you throughout.

These tours will have a maximum of 16 people per group. If you would like a lower price, we also have tours that operate with a maximum of 45 people where the cost is lower. Please contact us should that be your preference.

Terms & Conditions

BOOKINGS AND PAYMENTS

1. A deposit of 10% will be payable at the time of booking. If paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to Odyssey Tours & Travels.
2. At the time of making the booking, please send a copy of the first page of your passport
3. Balance payment is to be made by 5 weeks prior to travel.
4. All rates are subject to a revision if there is a fluctuation in the currency rates.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

1. Should you be forced to amend / cancel the booking you must fill and sign the amendment / cancellation advice, which will entail cancelling your particular reservation, thereby the cancellation charges will apply. Should you wish to cancel any part of a confirmed booking / reservation all such cancellations must be advised in writing. Given below is the cancellation policy.
2. Payment of the booking deposit constitutes acceptance of our terms and conditions.
3. Cancellation of a reservation due to any visa being rejected will amount to cancellation charges being levied as per the scale mentioned below and Odyssey Tours & Travels will not be responsible for any visa rejection by the respective consulates.
4. Cancellation of any reservations are subject to the following conditions:

CANCELLATION: A cancellation fee of 10% of the tour price and accommodation will be retained by us for cancellations made from 4 to 8 weeks before departure. From 28 days until 8 days before departure, the fee is 50%. No refund is possible for cancellations less than 8 days before departure, or for no shows, and a tour begun but not completed. The exchange of one arrangement for another must be agreed by us beforehand.

5. Refunds due can take upto 5 weeks to process.

