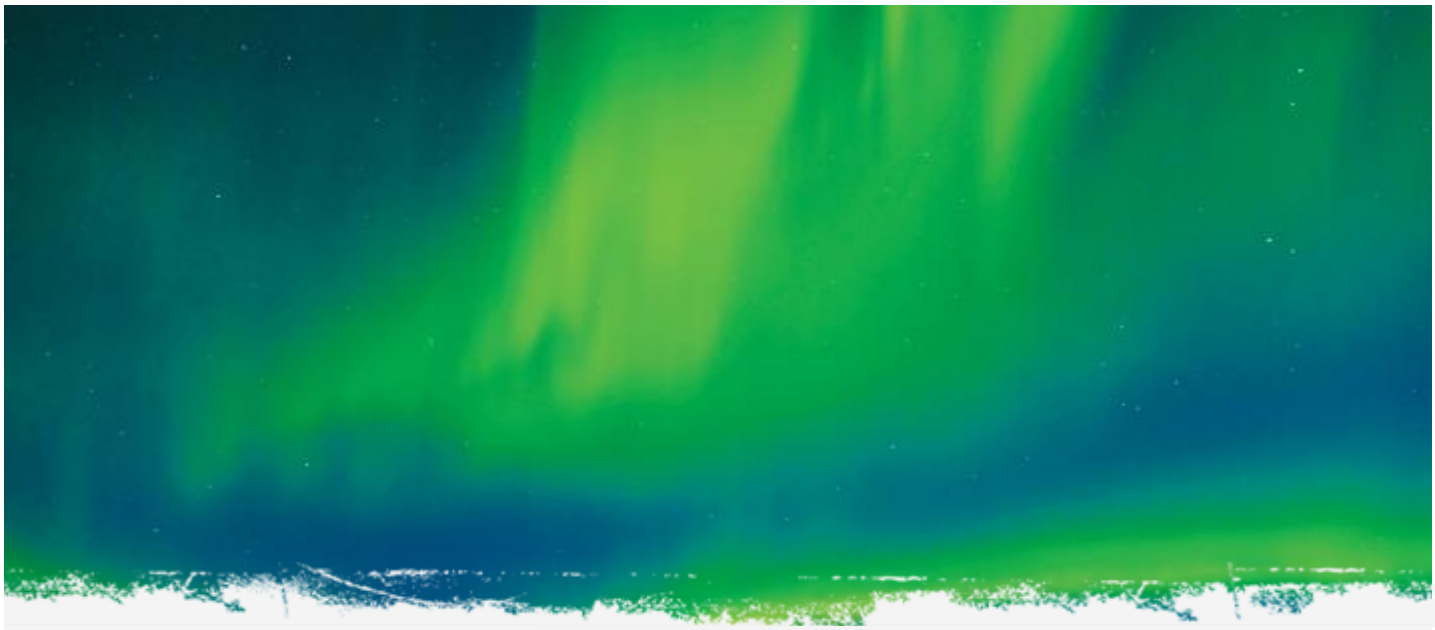
EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Northern Lights (SNL 2015)

GUEST SPECIALIST

TOURDURAT
4
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Simple
tour Code: SNL

Tour Highlights - Northern Lights

- ✓ Understand the Aurora Borealis - With astronomer Andrew Green
- ✓ Blue Lagoon - Relax in the famed thermal waters
- ✓ Natural wonders - Walk up to thundering waterfalls including Gullfoss and see spouting geysers
- ✓ Accommodation - Stay in hand-picked locations ideal for Northern Lights viewing

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	2 nights Simple Hotel 1 night Simple Guesthouse
Included Meals:	3 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Keflavik airport
End Point:	Tour ends: Keflavik airport
Transport:	Bus
Countries:	Iceland

Northern Lights

Accompanied by expert astronomer Andrew Green, we travel to Iceland in search of the spectacular Northern Lights. We explore the famous 'Golden Circle' including Thingvellir National Park and Strokkur geyser. We also visit lava fields and unwind in the geothermal waters of the Blue Lagoon.

Why Book this tour

Over 90% of our customers have seen the Northern Lights since this tours creation in 2012, thanks to the expert knowledge of our astronomer Andrew Green, hand-picked locations ideal for viewing the Northern Lights and carefully planned dates of travel.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, typically with en suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

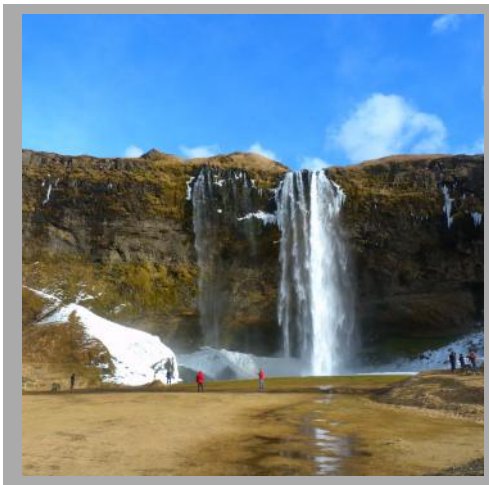
Your Tour Leader

This tour will not be accompanied by an Explore Tour Leader. Instead you will be accompanied by an Explore Representative. The representative will not be with you for every section of the tour and will not stay at the accommodation at night or eat out with the group in the evenings. However they will be available for you and your group during the included activities and will help if any problems occur.

DAY 1 Join tour at Keflavik airport and visit the Blue Lagoon

Meet at Keflavik airport. We start our tour directly from the airport by driving to the famous Blue Lagoon where we get our first glimpse of Iceland's volcanic scenery whilst relaxing in the warm geothermal waters. After a refreshing bath we will drive to the accommodation where we stay for the next two nights. We'll make a stop along the way for you to purchase dinner. Our accommodation has been especially chosen for its location so that we can maximise our chances of seeing the Northern Lights. If the lights make an appearance tonight you'll be woken to witness this amazing sight. Please Note: On some departures the Blue Lagoon will be visited on day 4 instead of day 1.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Exploring the south shore

This morning we visit the Eyjafjallajokull Museum that is located at the base of the glacier famed for the volcanic eruption here in 2010 that caused wide spread travel disruption due to the ash cloud it produced. The volcano is now quiet again and the museum here was setup by a local family to document the past events and features an interesting video that shows how the local people were affected. Following our visit we continue to Vik I Myrdal to marvel at the rocky beach with its incredible basalt cliffs. This is a great stop for photos on the wind swept beach. We'll stop nearby for you to buy lunch before visiting Skogafoss waterfall and the Skogar Folk Museum. This quaint museum is home to 12,000 artefacts as well as life-size examples of traditional Icelandic houses with turf roofs, a church and school. Next we stop at Seljalandsfoss waterfall before heading back to our hotel. This evening Astronomer Andrew Green will give a presentation and explain the Aurora Borealis.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Visit the Golden Circle before returning to Reykjavik

Today we go to the famous Golden Circle, which includes three of Iceland's most iconic sites. The order of the day may depend on conditions. We will visit the magnificent Gullfoss waterfall, cascading down in the white-coloured Hvita River that originates at the Langjokull Glacier. We then continue to Haukadalur, home of the Great Geysir and the reliable Strokkur Geyser that erupts with 3 to 7 minute intervals, spouting boiling water to a height of 25 to 35 metres. Passing Laugarvatn Lake we arrive at Thingvellir National Park, home of Iceland's ancient Viking parliament and listed as a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. Here we take a walk to experience first-hand the geological wonder of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. After free time nearby for lunch we will go to our next guesthouse in Kruines, on the outskirts of Reykjavik, chosen because it potentially offers the best view of the Northern Lights. We'll have time to check-in and freshen up before heading into the capital for a short tour of the city. After the city tour you can either choose to return to the guesthouse with our driver for dinner at the hotel (wild trout from the Ellidavatn is a very popular choice), or to stay in Reykjavik for your last meal in Iceland and to soak up the city's atmosphere by night. If you choose to stay in Reykjavik you will need to arrange a taxi at your own expense to return to this evening's guesthouse, as it is not walkable to the city centre.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Tour ends at Keflavik airport

Tour ends at Keflavik airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

Due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Iceland, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms. For this reason we would like to emphasise that hotel accommodation is subject to change, and we may need to change your night stops with little or no notice. Explore are working hard to grow and develop relationships with the hotels we use, to ensure our bookings are honoured whenever possible. In the case of unavoidable hotel changes we will endeavour to always provide accommodation of the same or a higher standard.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 3 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Iceland

Lunch £: 17.50

Dinner £: 35.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Iceland

Bottle of Beer £: 6.50

Water £: 2.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

There are no optional excursions available to book on this tour.

Tipping - Local Crew

Local Representative - Tipping is not a recognised part of life in Iceland for meals etc. though if you do wish to tip your local representative and/or astronomer (entirely at your discretion) it will no doubt be appreciated.

Foreign Exchange

Iceland

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in Reykjavik and at the airport.

Credit Card Acceptance: Most shops and restaurants take credit cards.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and post offices.

Local Currency: Icelandic Krona (ISK).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices.

Where to Exchange: Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

Iceland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US or Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Iceland

Nothing compulsory; tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Iceland

Iceland has a cool and temperate climate and, despite its location just south of the Arctic Circle, its northerly latitude is counteracted by the warm waters of the North Atlantic Drift which encircles the island. Temperatures in winter can fluctuate between about 10°C and -10°C and precipitation in the form of rain, sleet or snow is to be expected at any time. Days will be short, with daylight often only guaranteed between about 11 am and 4 pm in December. The best time for seeing the Aurora Borealis is October to March. Summer is generally cool with average temperatures for June and July around 12 - 15 degree centigrade in Reykjavik, although is known to be warmer in other parts of the country. In June and July you can enjoy continuous daylight and see the Midnight Sun, whilst late spring and early autumn offer long twilights.

Clothing

Weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. Temperatures can drop to -20 degrees centigrade. You'll need warm clothing for outdoors and cold evenings watching the Aurora Borealis. A warm wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential. Thermal layers, jumper, hat, gloves, thick socks and scarf/snood are all important.

Equipment

We recommend you bring a small torch, sunglasses and a medical kit.

We also recommend taking your camera and to get the best pictures of the Northern Lights it is advisable to take a tripod and use a camera with a long-exposure setting.

A towel will be provided at the Blue Lagoon for use during your visit.

Footwear

Walking boots with sturdy tread and trainers. Soft indoor shoes are recommended as it is normal in Iceland to have special house shoes.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage, a soft grip bag is ideal (not a framed rucksack) and a small daypack.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Iceland

Population: 318,452

Size of Country: 103,001 sq km

Major Language: Icelandic

Religion: National Church of iceland

Electric Supply & Plugs

Iceland

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety andÂ security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. ForÂ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link atÂ http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is ‘Available’ or ‘Guaranteed’ we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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