

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Reykjavik Short Break (IA 2017 APR ONWARDS)



TRIPDURATION
4
DAYS



Tour Style: Simply
Tour Pace: Relaxed

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation Grade: Simple

Trip Code: IA

Trip Highlights - Reykjavik Short Break

- ✓ Reykjavik - Iceland's capital, renowned for its cosmopolitan and friendly culture
- ✓ Natural Phenomena - Chance to see the Northern Lights (October to March departures, weather permitting) or Midnight Sun (in June-August)
- ✓ Secret Lagoon - Relax in these secluded natural hot springs
- ✓ Golden Circle - A tour of Iceland's spectacular scenic wonders, including Thingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 3 nights Simple Hotel
Included Meals: 3 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point: Join trip: Reykjavik
End Point: Trip ends: Reykjavik
Transport: Bus, Public Bus
Countries: Iceland

Long weekend in Iceland

A short trip that is big on experiences - explore raw, natural wonders and harsh, rugged volcanic landscapes that are rarely found anywhere else on the planet. Discover shooting geysers; experience the thermal warmth of the Secret Lagoon and the ice-cold spray of the spectacular Gullfoss Waterfall. Continue the adventure with the chance to take a super-jeep journey across lava fields and through glacial rivers.

Why Book this trip

This short break offers you a great introduction to Iceland. In summer you can experience the odd sensation of the midnight sun and in winter you may be lucky enough to witness the incredible sight of the Northern Lights. Our New Year departure of this trip include three dinners as well as the three breakfasts normally included.



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.

Accommodation Grade: Simple

No-frills accommodation which includes berths on sleeper trains, rooms in village houses, boat cabins, campsites, huts and simple family-run lodges, guesthouses and hotels. Sleeping arrangements are simple and amenities are adequate, sometimes with en suite facilities and occasionally communal.

Tour Style: Simply

If your idea of adventure travel is to experience everyday local life in a country then try one of our Simply Explore tours. These grassroots adventures are flexible, affordable and fun

Tour Pace: Relaxed

Easy paced tours with plenty of time to relax and absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings.

Your trip 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 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 trip in Reykjavik

On this trip our transfers from Keflavik airport to our hotel in Reykjavik will be on the very efficient and easy to use public FlyBus and you'll collect your voucher for this from a representative at the airport. On the drive from the airport to the hotel, which takes around 45 minutes, you'll get your first glimpse of the blackened and rocky volcanic scenery found on this part of the island. After checking-in to our conveniently-located hotel in the city, you may have time to explore a little of the world's most northerly capital. Bustling with cosmopolitan energy and surrounded by pure, unpolluted nature, Reykjavik is a city of striking contrasts. Small colourful corrugated iron houses nestle next to futuristic glass buildings; state-of-the-art facilities lie beside rugged volcanic terrain and international influences mingle with Icelandic national traditions. All this creates a unique culture where old embraces new. This evening you are free to settle in and enjoy the diverse dining and, maybe even the nightlife, of this charming city. On this short break you'll be met by an Explore Representative on day 1 and accompanied by them on your full day excursion on day 2. On day 3 you'll be free to explore at your own pace or to join one of our optional excursions, which your representative will be able to arrange for you on day 2.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**



Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Golden Circle tour of Geysir, Gullfoss and Thingvellir; soak in the Secret Lagoon

Today we take a tour of Iceland's 'Golden Circle' which includes many of the natural wonders which make the country so famous. Thingvellir is a rare site of both historical and geological importance. Meaning 'Parliament Plains', this was the location of Iceland's first National Assembly from 930AD until 1798 and, as such, is hugely significant in the country's cultural heritage. What's more, the impressive landscape sits on a unique spot where the Mid-Atlantic Ridge can be seen on dry land before disappearing to the ocean floor where it spends most of its existence. This provides the quirky opportunity to place one foot on the North American tectonic plate and one foot on the Eurasian plate. Our next stop is Geysir with the claim to fame that, as the first spouting spring known to Europeans, it gave all such springs their name. However, it is the Strokkur, meaning 'The Butter Churn', which is the main attraction these days, due to its impressive 100 feet eruptions every few minutes. Next we move onto Gullfoss, known as the 'Golden Waterfall' due the way it cascades into a deep gorge with tremendous force. Regarded by many as one of the most beautiful falls in the world, its spray forms colourful rainbows in the sun. Our final visit of the day is to the Secret Lagoon for a swim in the natural thermal waters, so remember to bring your swimsuit and a towel with you. These hot springs are located in the small village of Fludir and are entirely natural and are mostly frequented by the local people. The waters are between 38-40°C year round and there is also a mini geyser here which erupts every five minutes.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Free day with the chance to ride in a super jeep or snorkel in a fissure

Today has been left free for you to take part in one of a number of different optional excursions, depending on your interests and the time of year you are travelling. Throughout the year there's the opportunity to jump aboard a super jeep and enjoy an exhilarating drive into the wild Thorsmork Valley - widely viewed as one of Iceland's most beautiful spots. These 10 feet high monsters can cross glacial moraine, lava flows and fast-flowing rivers with relative ease. In fact, you won't believe what the drivers can make them do, but fear not - they do this for a living! Another option in winter is to take a super-jeep to another glacier in the mountains and try your hand at a bit of snowmobiling. You may also like to consider a whale watching trip. The nutrient-rich waters around Iceland attract 23 types from May to September, including humpback, minke and blue whales. In winter it's more common to see white-beaked dolphins, porpoises and humpback and killer whales, but the weather can be unpredictable, so it is a more adventurous experience. In the summer months (May to August), another option is a puffin tour to see these colourful birds up close. Whale watching and puffin tours depart from Reykjavik Harbour. For those of you with a real adventurous streak, why not consider a snorkelling trip in Thingvellir National Park. Although snorkelling in Iceland year round may sound crazy, the Silfra Fissure is something you have to see to believe. It doesn't look much from the surface but the rock formations in this giant lava field form a magical underwater scene that makes it easy to see why Silfra is frequently rated as one of the top 10 dive sites in the world. The near constant temperature of the fresh water, around 2°C, means that the visibility is regularly around 70 metres. You don't need to have any previous snorkelling experience to take part. For those keen to stay on dry land, a horse riding tour is also available. Alternatively, after all the action of the previous two days, you may prefer to step down a gear and enjoy the art galleries, museums and cafe culture of Reykjavik.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Trip ends in Reykjavik

Our trip ends after breakfast this morning. The transfer back to Keflavik airport will be on the public FlyBus and your Explore Representative will provide you with the details of your pick up time and with your voucher for this service on day 2.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Included Activities

There's no getting away from the fact that Iceland is an expensive destination, eating out can be pricey and the standard of accommodation you can get for your money is probably lower than you'd expect in most other European destinations. But having said this Iceland is one of our favourite places, as it is just so unique and there are so many incredible natural wonders to see, that you come home with amazing memories they tend to eclipse the cost of having gone there in the first place, but it's important to know what to expect and to budget accordingly. Please do take note of the accommodation rating, food and drink sections of our trip notes.

Please note that on our New Year departure date that three dinners are included. One of which will be at your hotel and the others at local restaurants.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

On this short break we use simple accommodation. The majority of hotels in Iceland are decorated in a plain style and many weren't originally built as hotels, but were instead converted from things such as old schools. Rooms can be small and the facilities can be basic. Most accommodation won't have hairdryers or teas and coffee making facilities in the room and some may not have a television, but the scenery outside is so stunning that after a busy day exploring you're unlikely to miss having one. In our accommodation in Reykjavik you will have rooms with private bathroom facilities.

Due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Iceland, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms and there have been some occurrences of overbookings, which are often notified to us at a late stage. For this reason, we would like to emphasise that hotel accommodation is subject to change, which may result in the need to alter your night stops with little or no notice. Explore are working closely with our team on the ground to minimise changes to accommodation, although 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 trip. 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 Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip 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 £: 10.00 - 12.00

Dinner £: 18.00 - 24.00

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 £: 4.00 - 6.00

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

All optional activities can be arranged upon arrival with your Explore Representative.

Reykjavik - year-round:

Super-jeep tour to Thorsmork - 36,000 ISK (minimum four participants required).

Pearl Tour with Snowmobile - 46,900 ISK (minimum four participants required, subject to availability and snow cover). Two people per snowmobile (if you wish to drive you must bring a valid driving licence). If you want to have a snowmobile to yourself and not share then there will be an extra cost of 5,000 ISK per person. This tour can usually be operated year-round because the snowmobiling takes place on a glacier, but it is dependent on conditions on the glacier and therefore may not always be available.

Whale watching from Reykjavik Harbour - 9,900 ISK without a pick-up transfer service or an extra 2,000 ISK to have transfers arranged.

Horse riding tour for 1.5 hours - 11,400 ISK. (Please allow three hours including transfers).

Into the Blue, snorkelling in Silfra Fissure in Thingvellir National Park - 22,990 ISK including pick-up. The trip will last about four hours including snorkelling for between 45-60 minutes. Snorkelling equipment will be provided for you including a mask, snorkel and dry suit with neoprene hood, gloves and shoes. All you need to bring with you is some warm thermal layers (preferably fleece or wool) and a towel to dry off. We do suggest bringing a change of clothes with you, just in case. For those of you that wear glasses, you won't be able to wear your normal glasses with the snorkelling mask. For this reason, we would suggest wearing contact lenses.

Reykjavik - summer only:

Puffin tour from Reykjavik Harbour - 6,000 ISK.

Reykjavik - winter only:

Northern Lights tour with Reykjavik excursion - 6,400 ISK (please note that this is weather permitting and it is not guaranteed that you will see the Northern Lights). From mid-November to mid-January it may be dark early enough to see the Northern Lights on your return journey on the super-jeep tour. If not then it will be necessary to go on this excursion if you would like the opportunity to try and view them.

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 (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 Trip

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.

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

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>.

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 booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Iceland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

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 Trip

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

In Iceland weather conditions can change rapidly - sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. You'll need warmer clothing for outdoor activities and cooler evenings, so pack layers. A good quality wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential.

In winter we'd suggest packing thermal underwear, fleece under trousers, a fleece jumper, a heavy duty waterproof and windproof jacket, waterproof trousers, woolly hat, scarf, gloves (and glove liners for when you're taking photos). You may also find ski trousers or salopettes and a ski face/neck mask useful.

You'll also need to bring a swimming costume and towel for the Secret Lagoon.

If you are planning to join a whale watching excursion then, no matter the time of year, we recommend wrapping up warmly as it can be very chilly out at sea, so take a woolly hat, scarf, jumper and gloves with you.

Equipment

We recommend you bring a small torch and medical kit. The sun can be very strong, so take a sun hat, sunscreen and sun glasses. Iceland is one of the most photogenic places on the planet and there are lots of different birds to admire, so we'd suggest taking binoculars and a camera with a spare memory card and battery.

Footwear

We recommend taking walking boots with a sturdy tread and also trainers. Soft indoor shoes are recommended as it is normal in Iceland to have special house shoes. For the Secret Lagoon you may also find a pair of flip flops useful.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage, and a small daysac.

Luggage allowance on trip: 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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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, 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.

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

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, 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) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip 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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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