


THE ARCTIC - NORTHERN LIGHTS ESCAPE



INTRODUCTION

Gurgling hot springs, majestic waterfalls, volcanoes alive and extinct, Europe’s biggest glacier – Iceland, where adventures a la naturale await. Discover the raw natural beauty of this spectacular Nordic wonderland on a 6-day trip that will have you stalking close to epic glacial sheaths, feeling the icy spray of the Gullfoss waterfall and becoming acquainted with the culture and cuisine of an Arctic island outpost unlike any other.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ICITNLE
DEPARTURE
Daily October - March
DURATION
6 Days
LOCATIONS
Arctic


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DAY 1: Reykjavik

Hallo! Welcome to Iceland. The world's northernmost capital of Reykjavik lies just below the Arctic Circle. The city sees around four hours of sunlight a day in winter and 22 hours or more in summer. Surrounded by volcanic peaks and crystalline ocean, and boasting a vibrant arts and nightlife scene, Reykjavik's contrasts are utterly beguiling. Your adventure begins with a Welcome Meeting at 6pm today – see reception for more details. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please have these on hand. You can check in at the joining point hotel anytime after 2pm. While early check-in is not guaranteed, feel free to store your luggage until needed. Please note that the guest rooms may be spread across a number of buildings all situated along a quiet street in central Reykjavik, a 5-minute walk from each other. Why not arrive early and head to the National Museum, which depicts the history of Iceland from the 9th century, when the first Vikings from mainland Scandinavia arrived and settled, to the present day, or join locals who gossip and chatter in the Laugardalslaug Geothermal Pool.



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DAY 2: Reykjavik / Golden Circle / Hvolsvollur Area

This morning take a short guided walk of Reykjavik, and visit the old harbour, the city center, the famous Hallgrímskirkja church and the Pearl monument. Following the route of the 'Golden Circle', visit Þingvellir National Park, the site of Iceland's first parliament, founded in 930, and a geological wonder where the American and Eurasian tectonic plates are pulling apart. Next, head to Iceland's Geysir geothermal area, where you'll see the Strokkur geyser shoot water 30 metres into the air. Be spellbound by the immense beauty and sheer power of the Gullfoss Waterfall, also known as Golden Falls, before continuing on to the Hvolsvollur Valley, where you'll spend the night in an Icelandic farm hotel. The Northern Lights (also known as the Aurora Borealis) are a natural display of coloured lights in the night sky that are often visible in the high northern hemisphere. Colours of the Northern Lights vary from person to person, with most people seeing them as pearly-grey with hints of greens and reds. Far away from the city lights, the hotel is an ideal Northern Lights base. If the skies are clear tonight, take a stroll out into the countryside to search for the dancing green lights. Remember to pack warm clothes, as temperatures can drop to below -5°C. Please note that while there is a good chance of seeing the lights of the aurora this far north, there is no guarantee, as they are a natural phenomenon.



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DAY 3: South Coast / Jokulsarlon Lagoon

Start the day with a trip to the eerily beautiful Skógafoss waterfall, one of the biggest waterfalls in Iceland. Skógafoss is a giant of a waterfall, 25 metres wide and also dropping down 60 metres. You can get up close and feel its power, and also climb a (long) windy set of stairs up to a stunning viewpoint. On a sunny day you should be able to spot a rainbow or two in the spray. Continue along Iceland's South Shore to take in more of the country's renowned natural wonders. From the stepping-stone rock formations of Reynisdrangar, the promontory of Dyrhólaey, and the night black sand beach of Reynisfjara, this is one of the country's most scenic regions. En route you will pass the lava of the Laki eruption of 1782 to 1783. In the afternoon, you will visit the famous Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon, a stunning sea of floating icebergs whose blue contrast with the charcoal coloured sand of the beach. Stop for the night at a farm stay on the South Coast. Weather permitting, there will be another opportunity to step outside and witness the natural wonders of the Northern Lights tonight.



DAY 4: Skaftafell National Park / Vik

Today drive to Skaftafell National Park, where you'll have the option take a walk on Europe's biggest ice cap - Vatnajökull - which has around 30 glaciers flowing out from it. No experience is necessary to partake in the hike. Alternatively just embark on a hike to the glacier's tongue. It's sobering to think that the glacier is retreating due to rising world temperatures, and in some years the glacier may be gone. Later on today, journey on to the black sand seaside town of Vik for lunch and some free time to explore. With the sea on one side and high cliffs on the other, this dramatically positioned quaint little village is Iceland's most southerly mainland settlement.



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DAY 5: Vik / Reykjavik

This morning we make our way back to Reykjavik. Iceland's capital has an eclectic arts and music scene, an abundance of quirky cafes and a laid-back vibe. Perhaps browse some of the city's great art galleries. If you feel like something more active, you can take a ride on an Icelandic horse, see killer whales just off-shore on a whale watching expedition, or pull on a dry suit to snorkel between two tectonic plates in the Silfra Fissure, a unique experience that you can't find anywhere else in the world. Alternatively, while away the hours with a soak in the geothermal waters of the famous Blue Lagoon, or if you haven't had enough of the Northern Lights yet, you could head out of town to chase them again this evening. Whatever you choose, tonight perhaps gather together your fellow Icelandic adventurers and celebrate the end of this Northern Lights Escape. Notes: Please note the Blue Lagoon has limited availability, and during peak times tickets sell out far in advance. We recommend you book your time slot online in advance if you would like to be sure of a certain time/date for your visit: bluelagoon.com.



DAY 6: Reykjavik

Today is departure day and time to say 'sjaumst'. As there are no activities planned, you are able to depart the hotel at any time. Check out time is at midday. If you are departing later, you can arrange to store your luggage at the hotel.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Standard

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Inclusions	Meals 5 breakfasts
	Transport Private minibus
Inclusions	Accommodation Guesthouse (2 nights), Hotel (3 nights)
	Included activities Golden Circle (Thingvellir National Park, Strokkur Geysir, Gullfoss Waterfall)
	Reykjavik City Tour
	South Shore Visit
	Glacier Lagoon (Jokulsarlon)
	Skogafoss Waterfall
	Skaftafell National Park
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structures to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.