

THE ARCTIC - ICELAND DISCOVERY, 8 DAY



INTRODUCTION

Travel to Iceland and delve into the ancient land of Vikings and volcanoes on this 8-day Icelandic adventure. Marvel at geothermal hot springs, witness the steamy eruptions of a giant geyser, touch the tongue of Europe's biggest glacier, see lava that's still warm after 20 years and scale giant waterfalls. Travel through Iceland's desolate lands, so mysterious and ethereal that they have inspired artists, poets and musicians for centuries. The ancient, untamed beauty of Iceland will stay with you forever.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Reykjavik

Welcome to Reykjavik, which 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 kicks off with a welcome meeting at 6 pm at your accommodation. If you arrive early, why not 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 perhaps join locals who gossip and chatter in the Laugardalslaug Geothermal Pool.



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Select Mondays,
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DAY 2: Golden Circle & Hvolsvollur Valley

Make an early start to beat the crowds on the Golden Circle route. Head to Thingvellir National Park, home to the Parliament Plains and location of Iceland’s first parliament. Thingvellir also contains the Silfra fissure, where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates are slowly pulling apart. The resulting gap is partly filled with fresh water and is clearly visible. From here head to the Geysir geothermal area, checking out Strokkur and watching as the geyser swells with blue water before erupting and shooting some 20—30 metres in the air. Be spellbound by the immense beauty and sheer power of the Gullfoss (Golden) double waterfall on the Hvita River, before proceeding to a remote farm in the Hvolsvollur region, our overnight stop for the night. The guesthouse is the leader in responsible tourism and sustainability in Iceland. Since the arrival of the first settlers to Iceland, deforestation has taken place in order to make space for pastures. Overgrazing has then led to soil erosion. With this in mind, the owners had the idea to start a tree planting project on their land to contribute to lowering CO2 and counteract soil erosion. Join the effort to counteract this and head out into the hills surrounding the property to plant trees.



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DAY 2: Generic Guesthouse

DAY 3: South Coast, Skaftafell & Jokulsarlon

Begin the day with a visit to the breathtaking Skogafoss waterfall. At 25-metres wide with a 60-metre drop, this waterfall roars. You can feel it’s power up close with a strenuous walk up a windy set of stairs up to a stunning viewpoint. The black sands and bizarre, rectangular rock formations of Reynisfjara are up next. Then, travel to Skaftafell National Park, where you have the option to walk on the mottled blue, grey and black face of Skaftafellsjokull, one of the tongues of epic ice cap Vatnajokull. Cap off a busy day by cruising between jagged icebergs in an included boat tour of Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon. From here it is not far to our overnight stay, located on another lagoon that is sheltered by a black sandbar.



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DAY 4: East Fjords & Modrudalur Valley

Take a scenic drive along the rugged coast of the East Fjords. Enjoy spectacular views of high mountains, deep fjords, spectacular waterfalls, glaciers, and quaint fishing villages. Make stops along the way at small but notable towns like Faskrudsfjordur, where historical ties have resulted in street signs being written in French. You'll also stop at Djupivogur which became a member of the cittaslow movement in 2013 and is aiming to be the Happiest Town in Iceland, and drop by Egilsstadir, home to the mythic Lagarfljot Wyrm. Continue along mountain roads into the highland to the farm village of Modrudalur. At 469 metres (1539 feet) above sea level, Modrudalur is the highest inhabited place in Iceland, and snow can be seen almost year-round. Stretch your legs with a walk to the farm's church, built in 1949 by farmer Jon Adalsteinn Stefansson in memory of his wife. Spend the evening in this unique town, which is small but rich in history.



DAY 5: Lake Myvatn & Akureyri

Set off for magnificent Dettifoss, Europe's mightiest waterfall at 100-metres wide and with a 45-metre drop into the craggy shores of Jokulsargljufur canyon below. It's so powerful that it's vibrations can be felt underfoot. Continue to volcanic Lake Myvatn. Next is Namaskard, where steam rises from the sulphuric terrain and it's hard to believe you're on Earth and not Mars. Take a walk around the lava stacks and caves of Dimmuborgir and then observe the massive pseudo craters of Skutustadir. Continue to the crescent shaped Godafoss waterfall, where legend says a lawmaker priest threw the idols of the Norse gods when Christianity became Iceland's official religion in AD 1000. Travel on to Akureyri and settle into your accommodation for the evening.



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DAY 6: Akureyri & Snaefellsnes

Situated at the head of Iceland's longest fjord, Akureyri is the nation's second-largest city. Embark on a short walking tour of the town, taking in the striking church and other local sights. If you're travelling between May and December, you might have the option to partake in a whale watching excursion. Ask your leader for details. Later, continue to Snaefellsnes National Park, home to the magnificent Snaefellsjokull Glacier, which played a starring role in Jules Verne's 1864 novel Journey to the Centre of the Earth. Look forward to an included home-cooked dinner this evening. If you are up for it, you can also join in a cooking class with your host and help prepare tonight's meal.



NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

DAY 7: Snaefellsnes & Reykjavik

Continue exploring the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, beginning with the basaltic pebble beach Djupalonssandur. Continue to the white beach at Budir, then go on to Arnarstapi, where a short stroll along the coastal cliffs exposes you to rich bird life and other wonders of nature. Next up is Lysuholslaug, where you can bathe in thermal pools (depending on the seasons) or check out the pony-sized Icelandic horses grazing in the fields. In the afternoon head back to Reykjavik to complete your circuit of Iceland, passing beautiful Hvalfjordur (Whale Fjord) along the way. The rest of the evening is yours for the taking. Perhaps head out for dinner with your fellow travellers and toast with a glass of Brennivin, a savoury schnapps.



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DAY 8: Reykjavik

Today is departure day and time to say sjaumst (see you soon)! Check out time is at midday. If you are departing later, you can arrange with reception to store your luggage at the hotel. If you wish to spend more time in Reykjavik, we'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Please speak to your booking agent at the time of booking. 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, or see killer whales just offshore on a whale watching expedition. Alternatively, while away the hours with a soak in the geothermal waters of the famous Blue Lagoon.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	<p>Meals 9 breakfasts, 3 dinners</p> <p>Transport Private minibus</p> <p>Accommodation Guesthouse (9 nights)</p> <p>Included activities: Reykjavik City Tour Golden Circle (Thingvellir National Park, Strokkur Geysir, Gullfoss Waterfall) Museum at Skogar Waterfalls of Seljalandsfoss and Skogafoss Dyrholaey & Reynisdrangar Skaftafell National Park Glacier Boat Tour - Jokulsarlon East Fjords, Egilsstadir & Modrudalur Lake Myvatn Dettifoss Waterfall Namaskard boiling mud pools Town of Akureyri Trollaskagi Peninsula Godafoss Waterfall Snaefellsnes National Park Hraunfossar and Barnafoss Waterfalls Grabrok Volcano Deildartunguhver Hot Spring & Hvalfjordur Fjord</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details.
Notes	Not Available
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, seasonality 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

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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 structured 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.

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