

WINTER ACTIVITIES, HOT SPRINGS AND NORTHERN LIGHTS

Winter Activities, Hot Springs and Northern Lights

Do not (always) trust the myths and legends! This winter discovery of Iceland is accessible to all. With an average temperature of 0 °C in winter, this North Atlantic island can be easily discovered by foot - hiking or snowshoeing. A wonderful journey into the heart of the most spectacular and fascinating places in southern Iceland, between ocean, glaciers and volcanoes in a world of geysers, ice grottos, black sand beaches and cliffs, we explore both over and underground. This week promises a total change of scenery hopefully under the light of the dancing aurora borealis.

 Region	South Iceland
 Activity	Winter
 Duration	8 days
 Group	5 to 12 people
 Code	EISLHA
 Price	From €2,135
 Level	2/5
 Comfort	4/5
 Language(s)	English / French

ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrival in Reykjavik



Welcome to Iceland. You will be greeted by a member of the team at Keflavik Airport and transferred to your accommodation. City tour and dinner at leisure in the capital city.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Day 2 Reykjavik, Reykjanes Peninsula & the Golden Circle

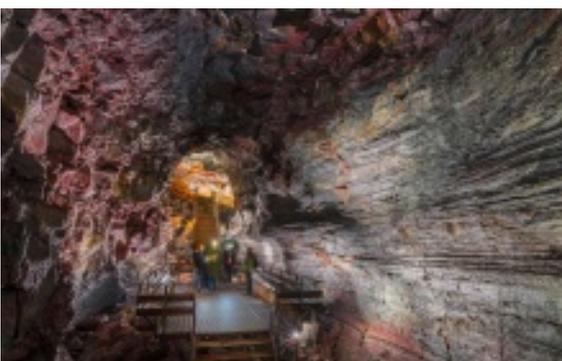


Early departure to the Reykjanes peninsula: "the smoke peninsula" for a first discovery of the geothermal activity of the island at the site of Krisuvik. We take the road to the north to travel the Golden Circle first stop Thingvellir, the valley of the parliament, the Mecca of Icelandic history. This is where the summer sessions of the Alþing (ancient Iceland Parliament) were held, established in 930. Our journey continues with the discovery of the geyser Strokkur which erupts every 5 to 10 minutes. The discovery of Gullfoss, "The Golden Fall" follows, a gigantic two-level waterfall flowing into a ravine adorned with basalt columns. At the end of the day we can enjoy a swim in a pool directly in nature at the "secret lagoon" (entrance fee included).

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Walking time: 2h

Day 3 Lava Tunnels, Waterfalls and Black Sand Beaches



This morning we leave our guesthouse Reykjavik to conquer the south coast of Iceland. First stop: Raufarhólshellir, one of the longest lava tunnels in Iceland (entrance fee included). It will be an opportunity to walk along the marks of lava that flowed over 5,200 years ago. Then we will continue our way towards the waterfalls of Seljalandfoss and Skogafoss to join Vik and its beaches of black sand. Among the waves emerge some lava columns carved by the waves - the Reynisdrangar. If the weather allows, we will have the opportunity to bathe in the oldest natural water pool in Iceland, a lost pool in the heart of nature: Seljavellir.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Walking time: 3h

Day 4 Hiking Skaftafell and Jokulsarlon Lagoon



We continue east to visit the largest glacier in Europe (Vatnajökull). Then we discover Skaftafell and hike to the glacial tongues which descend from Vatnajökull - an amazing alpine landscape only a few dozen meters above sea level! (Snowshoes and walking poles provided if necessary). A few kilometres further east, at the end of the day we reach the glacial lagoon Jokulsarlon, where the glacier Breidamerkur breaks into icebergs that drift towards the ocean. At certain times of year, in the evenings, seals come to hunt in the lagoon and play among the Icebergs.

Accommodation: Farmhouse

Day 5 Glacier hiking and ice caves



Today we get to go hiking on the Vatnajökull Glacier, the largest and most voluminous ice cap in Iceland. Crampons on (technical equipment provided), we venture our onto the glacier before reaching an ice cave, an ephemeral fairy gallery that will disappear at the end of the winter. We admire bluish reflections, and dancing light displays across the ice (activity lead by a qualified Icelandic guide, easy, accessible to all and included in the price of the stay).

Accommodation: Farm house

Day 6 The Lava centre, Hveragerdi & Reykjavik



It is a few hours drive to the geothermal area of Hveragerdi. On the way we stop in Hvolsvollur to visit the lava museum (entrance fee included). The Lava centre is a fabulous interactive museum, exhibition and film for understanding Icelandic volcanic phenomena. In Hveragerdi, depending on the weather conditions, we will snowshoe or hike between of fumaroles and bubbling pools of mud. Then, we will relax in a hot water river, fed by the Hengill volcano, before heading back to Reykjavik for an evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Evening meal not included. Perhaps we can sample a local traditional restaurant together.

Day 7 The Blue Lagoon



This morning, you can choose between strolling through the streets of Reykjavík, leaving for a whale-watching excursion (not included) or discovering the world of Icelandic horses with various rides available for all levels (not included).

The group will meet for lunch and then we will set off together to Reykjanes Peninsula. In the late afternoon, we will relax in the most famous spa in Iceland: the Blue Lagoon. Located in the middle of a lava field a few kilometres from Reykjavík, we will have the opportunity to bathe in a milky water at 39 °C and experience the revitalizing effect. We will return to

Reykjavík for an evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Evening meal not included. Perhaps we can sample a local traditional restaurant together.

📍 Day 8 **Farewell Iceland**



Breakfast and airport transfers included. Free time in function with your flights.

The details in this programme are regularly updated but imponderables and unpredictable circumstances may result in inaccuracies. In order to provide the adventure which is best suited to your demands, the weather and the operational conditions, changes to the itinerary may be made. For safety reasons, we reserve the rights to interrupt your participation at any time if your technical level or fitness is deemed unsuitable or if you are seen as a danger to yourself or to those around you. This will in no case give rise to refunds or compensation.

DATES & PRICES

International departures:

No departure for now

Departures for French-speaking groups:

No departure for now

Trip code: EISLHA

Included

- Airport transfers
- Guesthouse/hostel accommodation (dormitory sleeping arrangements and shared bathroom facilities)
- Full board, except meals in Reykjavik the first night and the last two nights
- Supervision by your professional guide
- The following activities: Lava tunnel visit, glacier hiking and ice caves
- Entry to the Blue Lagoon, entrance to the "Secret Lagoon" and admission to "the Lava centre"
- Snowshoes and hiking poles if necessary

Not included

- Your international flights
- The registration fee: 18 € per person
- Travel insurance
- Additional optional activities
- Tips and personal expenses

Notes

Difficulty level 2/5

Pace: Easy to moderate

Daily walking time: 3 to 5 hours

Daily elevation: 500 m

Preparation: One month before departure, improve your stamina by training once a week.

Experience: Good physical condition

You are in good physical condition. You like to walk for several days in a row, at an average of 3 to 5 hours per day (6 to 14 km) with vertical differences of up to 500 meters. You prefer simple, even rustic, accommodation.

Terms and conditions

Inscription

Booking a trip with Altai Iceland implies acceptance of the terms and conditions of sale. Each customer is required to complete a registration form and, subject to availability at the time of registration, travellers are expected to pay a deposit of 30% of the total price to complete their booking. Payments can be made online or by bank transfer. You will receive an e-mail with your booking confirmation.

Facturation

Once your booking is confirmed you will receive an invoice by e-mail. The full balance of the trip must be received at least 30 days before your departure date. We reserve the right to cancel your booking, free of charge, if this deadline is not respected.

Annulation

If for any reason you have to cancel your trip, we require written confirmation of your decision. The money you have paid will then be refunded according to the following deductions:

- Cancellation received more than 30 days prior to the departure date: a sum of €50 per person will be retained
- Cancellation received 30 to 21 days before the departure date: your deposit, 30% of the total trip price will be retained

- Cancellation received 20 to 14 days before the departure date: 50% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received 13 to 7 days before the departure date: 75% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received less than 7 days before the departure date: 100% of the total trip price will be retained

Special cases:

Please note that, regardless of the date of cancellation or modification if you have agreed to pay for services such as hotel reservations, flights or additional activities, these services are usually non-refundable so additional fees may apply.

Fixed airfares: if your airline ticket was issued in advance, often done to avoid significant surcharges, you will be charged 100% of any non-refundable fees if you wish to change or cancel your flight plan.

Fixed in-country costs: early charges for firm bookings will be charged if you cancel or modify your trip. Insurance costs: if you have taken out comprehensive or cancellation insurance, the cost of insurance is due and cannot be refunded.

Please note that fees apply according to the date we receive your cancellation or modification request in writing.

If we have to cancel a departure due to an insufficient number of participants, you will be informed no later than 21 days before departure and a full refund will be issued, you will not be entitled to further compensation. We reserve the rights to cancel departures due to exceptional circumstances which may impact the safety of participants. Such circumstances include those amounting to 'force majeure' in which case participants will receive a full refund but they will not be entitled to any compensation.

Modification du contrat

If you wish to make a change to your booking please contact Altaï Iceland in writing; you will be expected to pay any fee which might arise from this change. In the event of unforeseen external events, Altaï Iceland may change some aspects of the travel contract. If any changes are necessary you will be informed as quickly as possible.

Prix et révision des prix

The prices on our website are updated regularly and all of the prices we advertise are accurate when published. We reserve the rights to make changes to any of these prices. Before you make a booking we will give you the up-to-date price of your chosen holiday including any supplements, upgrades or additional activities you may have requested. If the number of travellers is fewer than the indicated number of participants on the website, a small group surcharge may be applied. For all of our trips we include details of services, prices and what is/is not included but please be aware that changes to the prices may be necessary in accordance with exchange rates or price changes of various components of the journey.

Cession du contrat

If you are unable to travel for any reason, you can transfer your booking to another person in which case our modification conditions apply. Both the transferor and transferee will be jointly and severally liable for payment of the total holiday price and other associated expenses. Some airline carriers treat name changes as cancellations and you may be required to pay for the cost of a new ticket.

PRACTICAL INFO

Staff

Upon your arrival at Reykjavik Airport, you will be greeted by your tour guide or a member of the Altai team. Your trip is supervised by an English-speaking guide who is part of the Altai team. The guides are versatile guides that can take care of the supervision of the stay, the driving as well as the kitchen in order to ensure in the best conditions the development and make possible the trips that we propose. Our trips are so-called "participatory" trips, participation in collective tasks: crockery and loading of vehicles is essential to the smooth running of the stay.

Food

After a hearty breakfast, the picnic is always composed of local foods: sandwiches, salads, fruits, cakes and dried fruits ... prepared by yourself in the morning. In the evening, meals are taken and prepared together with your guide / guide. Despite the high latitude, we strive to offer fresh fruits and vegetables daily.

During your stay, you will have the opportunity to taste skyr, smoked salmon, leg of lamb and other tasty Icelandic dishes. Special diets: Our guides already cook for the group, they can not prepare special meals every night for people with specific diets.

For vegetarians: please specify if you eat fish / shellfish. We have meat / fish at all dinners so you will have the same accompaniments as other participants (starchy, fairly traditional vegetables) but you have to provide for supplements on your side to make up for the lack of protein. For picnics lunch, we have either salads or sandwiches (salmon, cold cuts, ...), so you can possibly prepare salads the day before with your guide, according to its menus.

For "gluten-free" diets: please specify if intolerance or allergy and tell us what you eat daily. We have meat / fish at all dinners, which we accompany either vegetables or starchy. So you have to predict what to replace these starchy (eg couscous seed that is cooked quickly) and bring food supplements for 3 to 4 days a week. We can have biscuits, gluten-free crackers for picnics, but plan extra as well. You must therefore provide complete meals or food supplements for 3 to 4 days a week.

The tap water in Iceland has excellent quality and is potable.

Do not forget that alcohol and cigarettes are heavily taxed and expensive in Scandinavia. If you wish to enjoy an aperitif with your group in the evening we recommend purchasing duty-free products at the airport.

Accommodation

The different types of accommodation we use in Iceland:

Guesthouse: Friendly, clean accommodation in large typical Icelandic houses, located in towns or along the road no. 1.

Guesthouses are small structures of 5 to 10 rooms. Rooms accommodate 4 to 6 people in single or bunk beds. Single or double rooms can also be booked upon request, subject to availability. Guesthouses generally have shared bathrooms, and often include access to a fully equipped kitchen. Wifi is available and breakfast is served in a communal room along with plenty of hot drinks.

Reykjavik hostel village: <http://reykjavik-hostel-village.at-hotels.com/en/Igdlo>

Guest house: <https://igdlo-guesthouse-reykjavik.hotelmix.com/#roomstabReynivellir>

Guest house: <https://reynivellir.is/>

Inn: In the heart of the Icelandic countryside, inns are often located on farms, at home or in a neighboring building. These are usually small structures of 5 to 20 rooms. This simple and warm accommodation is the safest way to meet Icelanders and discover their original culture. The toilets are more generally shared but rooms with private bathrooms are possible for tailor-made trips. The wifi is often accessible, access to running water and electricity is systematic. Some offer a typical Bed & Breakfast catering service with typical meals prepared by the owners of the premises.

Svinafell: <https://svinafell.com/Berunes>

Hi hostel: <http://berunes.is/>

Refuge: The Icelandic refuges are isolated facilities in the middle of an exceptional natural setting. Most of them are located in the heart of the highlands. Like our mountain refuges, they have a large dormitory with basic comfort, where it is necessary to bring his sleeping bag. The refuges have running water and mostly electricity. The showers as well as the recharging of batteries are paying (500 Isk), we therefore recommend to have spare batteries for your cameras.

Landmanalaugar: <https://www.fi.is/en/mountain-huts/landmannalaugar>Camping:

Camping is a very good way to enjoy the wild natural environment. They are always clean and well located. They offer the usual amenities (sanitary and hot shower fee between 3 and 4 € / shower). The equipment (tent, mattress) camping will be provided by us. Campsites do not reserve in advance. For individuals, we provide you in the travel book our selection of campsites. For groups, the first and last night in Reykjavik are in guest houses, rooms for 4 to 6 people and sanitary shared. On the rest of the camping stay, we provide you with the following equipment: a Simond tent type MAKALU T3 for 2 people (possibility to reserve an individual tent on request, 130 euros for the entire stay) & individual inflatable Thermarest mattresses. The camp is mounted around a large mass tent. This mass tent with table and stools is a warm place for the group, where we share the anecdotes of the day around a good meal.

Kerlingarfjoll: <http://www.kerlingarfjoll.is/facilities/Skaftafell>: <https://www.nat.is/skaftafell-camping>

Hotel: Basic standard type three stars or more

Sandhotel Reykjavik: <https://www.sandhotel.is/en/Hotel>

Leiffur Erricson: <https://hotelleifur.is/>

Iceland is a country of only 350,000 inhabitants which welcomes nearly two million tourists a year. Therefore guesthouses and shelters suitable for groups are rare and very popular, especially during the summer period. Despite a permanent effort in the choice of accommodation, their level of comfort and equipment remains variable during this tour. A sleeping bag is necessary, it accompanies you on all the stay by way of cover. For more comfort, take one with a comfort temperature of 0-5 ° C. You can also take a bag sheet (useful for sometimes overheated accommodation) and a small inflatable pillow. We sleep in a guesthouse or hostel on the entire stay (rooms with 3 to 10 beds, with sanitary to share). You use your sleeping bag as sheets, we recommend a comfort temperature of 10/15 ° c. The accommodations are not necessarily located on the same places of excursions. They can be removed until about one hour from the sites visited.

Transportation

For this route we use a privatised vehicle for the group, adapted to the routes taken.

Budget & exchange

1 euro = 125 ISK (course at the beginning of the year 2018).

International credit cards are accepted at almost all businesses in Reykjavik and the rest of the country. These payments may be subject to fees, depending on your bank. We can not buy or sell Icelandic crowns out of Iceland or at a very disadvantageous rate and Euros are not accepted in Iceland. We advise you to withdraw money from an ATM machine once in Reykjavik. We recommend a withdrawal of at least ISK 15,000 (about 120 €) for this stay per person. If you still want to buy local currency by changing euros on site, you will find a currency exchange in the city (exchange rates are very disadvantageous) and in the banks (closed on weekends). Keep in mind that the bank card is accepted in almost all businesses and that (depending on your bank fees), it is often the cheapest alternative.

To give you an idea of the cost of living in Iceland, here are some estimates (tariff beginning of 2018): - coffee: ISK 350 to 400 (around € 3) - one pylsur (hot dog): 500 ISK (about 4 €) - Beer: around 900 ISK (around 7 €) - a fish dish in a brewery in Reykjavik: around 4000 ISK (around 32 €) - a bus ticket to Reykjavik: 460 ISK (around 3.70 €) - Movie ticket: around 1600 ISK (around 13 €) - a handmade woolen sweater: around 15.000-22.000 ISK (120 € - 175 €)

Tips

Although the custom is not widespread here, if you are satisfied with the services of your guide, tipping is always appreciated - it is not obligatory and should be left to the discretion of each individual.

Supplied equipment

- rent of rackets and walking sticks

Vital equipment

Try not to over-pack!

- Waterproof jacket (with a hood)
- Waterproof trousers/salopettes
- A balaclava (fleece)
- Appropriate warm neck wear

- A warm hat (wool)
- A warm jacket (synthetic down)
- 3 sets of thermal underwear (long johns & long sleeved tops)
- 1 or 2 pairs of thin socks
- 3 or 4 pairs of thick socks
- Two pairs of good gloves
- Sunglasses (UV 400)A ski mask
- Sun screen and protective lipsal (not water-based - water freezes)
- Any personal medication
- Mini toiletry kit and toilet roll
- A 1L thermos flask

Material

We prefer that you do not wear cotton clothing, including underwear, when participating in activities. When cotton gets wet from water or sweat it ceases to insulate and it does not dry fast. The best materials for outdoor activities are fast drying materials like polyester or materials which are warm when wet like wool. The most powerful materials against the wind and rain are 'breathable' materials like Gore-Tex or Nikwax.

Our advice for keeping warm

Winter in Iceland can be very cold, please think carefully about what clothes you bring, the layers you wear next to your skin make the biggest difference. We recommend:

- No cotton
- Bring dry spares of everything, even underwear and gloves
- Wear multiple layers including:
 1. A warm breathable base layer
 2. A second thermal layer
 3. Wind and waterproof protective out layer

Helpful equipment

You may also consider packing

- A pair of warm comfortable boots for the evenings
- Overgloves
- An extra jumper/fleece jacket
- Energy bars
- Wet wipes
- Blister plasters
- A suitable camera
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothing
- A small inflatable pillow

Luggage

Please bring a small rucksack to use as a day bag. You can bring this as hand luggage on the aeroplane. You will carry your lunch, water, spare layers and any personal medication with you each day in this bag. You will also need a larger bag to store your other clothes and belongings in, please ensure that this is a soft bag like a rucksack or holdall rather than a hard cased suitcase because it is more practical to transport. We recommend packing all of your clothes in plastic bags so that they stay dry in the event of wet weather.

Medicine

Your companion has a first-aid kit during the tour. However, we recommend that you bring your medications:

- Personal medication
- Anti pain medication Paracetamol
- Diarrhoea drugs
- Intestinal dressing
- Sun screen with strong protection for the lips and the skin

- Eye drops for the eyes
- Moisturizing cream for the treatment of superficial burns (blisters and sunburns)
- An adhesive elastic band
- a box of adhesive plasters and disinfectant compresses
- Double skin for blisters

Passport

Most travellers require a passport that is valid for at least three months after the return date. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific passport requirements and please be aware that proof of onwards travel may be required. You can check your requirements by clicking the following link provided by the Icelandic government: www.utl.is/index.php/en/

Visa

EU citizen do not need a visa as Iceland is part of the Schengen cooperation.

Travellers of other nationalities please check the following link of the Icelandic government: www.utl.is/index.php/en/visas

Mandatory vaccines

There are no specific health risks

Weather

Contrary to the name 'Ice-land' the weather in Iceland is relatively mild considering its location. In summer the average temperature is 10-13°C (50-55 °F) but warm summer days can reach 20-25°C. From June to September it is nearly always light with the return of night and the first Northern Lights appearances towards the end of August.

Electricity

Iceland uses Northern European electrical standards (50Hz/220 volts) and the standard Europlug socket with two round prongs. Please be aware that some of our more remote campsites and refuges charge for electricity use. Local time in Iceland uses Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) like the United Kingdom but does not observe daylight-saving time in the summer

Local time

Iceland observes Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) all year. There are no Daylight Saving Time clock changes.

Topography

Area: 39,768.5 m² Population: 334,252 inhabitants (2016) Capital: Reykjavik Languages: Icelandic Regime: Parliamentary Republic Iceland is 20 million years old and is a volcanic island with around one eruption every 5 years. 11% of the island is covered with ice, 1% of the land is cultivated, 20% is grassland, 2% is lake, 40% is sand and the rest is desert

Sustainable tourism

As adventure and wilderness travel experts who run trips to some of the most remote parts of the world, we take responsible tourism very seriously. We respect the 'Leave No Trace' outdoor ethical code and try to explore this beautiful location whilst causing minimal environmental damage.

The Leave No Trace policy can be summarized in 7 simple steps which we hope you will follow during our trip...

1. Be prepared
2. Stick to trails and camp overnight right
3. Stash your trash and pick up waste
4. Leave it as you find it
5. Be careful with fire
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

Over the years we have built up good relations with our local suppliers and we are keen to support local businesses as much as possible. We are a small company and we pay our local partners and suppliers directly insuring fair rates.

Our small group sizes not only provide a more intimate adventure but also cause less impact on the environment and local communities.

We expect all who travel with us to support and uphold our Sustainable Tourism philosophies.

If you have any questions regarding how to be a responsible traveller or concerning any other subject, please do not hesitate to contact us.