










# HIDDEN GEMS & HIGHLIGHTS OF SOUTHERN ICELAND

## *Hidden Gems & Highlights of Southern Iceland*

Each day of this unique adventure promises to bring something new as we explore the full flavours of Southern Iceland from its hidden gems to its well known features. Combine hiking in the famous colourful mountains of Landmannalaugar with relaxing in a secret warm water river. Visit Vík and the iconic black sand beaches of Reynisfjara and go on a quest to find puffins, the elusive clowns of the sea.

Visit floating icebergs, iconic volcanoes and impressive geysirs. Discover world famous hiking, fascinating geology and intriguing history all from the comforts of warm traditional Icelandic style accommodation.

 Region	Reykjavík & Reykjanes South Iceland The Highlands
 Activity	Hiking Off-season Summer
 Duration	8 days
 Group	5 to 15 people
 Code	EISL8CVA
 Price	From €2,440
 Level	3/5
 Comfort	4/5
 Language(s)	English

# ITINERARY

## Day 1 Reykjavik



Welcome to Iceland! We will greet you at the airport and escort you to your accommodation in the capital city. Enjoy an evening to explore Reykjavik at leisure - why not join a walking tour of the capital city? Or perhaps you'd like to visit a museum or eat at a local restaurant? We have lots of recommendations for your first evening in Iceland.

*Accommodation: Guesthouse or youth hostel*

*Transport: Bus, 35 miles*

*Optional Activities: free walking tour of the capital city, traditional meal in local restaurant & museum visit*

## Day 2 Hiking in Þórsmörk Nature Reserve



This morning we head south to the stunning Þórsmörk nature reserve. Nestled between three enormous glaciers Þórsmörk valley is unique both historically and geographically. Here we will embark on a beautiful hike starting at the foot of Eyjafjallajökull, the glacier covered volcano which famously erupted in April 2010.

*4 ½ hours walking*

*Accommodation: Refuge*

*Transport: Private Vehicle, 100 miles*

## Day 3 The dramatic south coast



Today we head to Vatnajökull National Park stopping on the way to marvel at the impressive Seljalandsfoss and Skogafoss waterfalls. Today is the day we visit Vik and the iconic black sand beaches of Reynisfjara - This area is so impressive that it has featured in many films and TV shows including Star Wars Rogue One, Star Trek Into Darkness and Game of Thrones! With dramatic North Atlantic Ocean waves, black sands, impressive basalt columns, a huge cave, interesting folklore history plus the chance of puffin sightings this is a destination not to be missed! Our scenic journey continues to our traditional style accommodation in the beautiful Skaftafell area of Vatnajökull National Park.

*3 hours of walking*

*Accommodation: Refuge*

*Transport: Private Vehicle, 150 miles*

## Day 4 Hiking & glacier walking in Vatnajökull National Park



Today we will visit Skaftafell in Vatnajökull National Park and embark on a short hike together to discover this area with its impressive geology, surprising wildlife and interesting history. We will explore salt-peat houses and observe Svartifoss waterfall ('Black Falls'), famous for its tall black basalt columns. This afternoon we are in for a real adventure - we will go glacier walking on part of Vatnajökull glacier, the largest glacier in Iceland!

*6 hours of walking & glacier walking*

*Accommodation: Refuge*

*Transport: Private Vehicle, 135-160 miles*

#### Day 5 **Eldgjá & Jökulsárlón**



This morning we will visit deepest lake in Iceland, Jökulsárlón ('glacial river lagoon') an impressive area with many floating Icebergs! We will take a moment to marvel at this magical place where lumps of ice from the glacier drift towards the sea making eerie noises as they go. Today we will also explore the largest volcanic canyon in the world, Eldgjá. We love everything about this unique formation from its intriguing history to its lava fields and waterfalls. After an adventurous morning we will head to Landmannagalaugar and our accommodation in the Fjallabak Nature Reserve. This evening we can enjoy a stroll in this beautiful area with its distinctive multi-coloured mountains and bathe in local hot springs.

*2 hours of walking*

*Accommodation: Refuge*

*Transport: Private Vehicle, 135-160 miles*

#### Day 6 **Landmannalaugar - Volcanoes and Rhyolite mountains**



Today we will go hiking to fully explore this extraordinary area of volcanoes and rhyolite mountains. We will follow winding trails and uncover the remarkable geology of this colourful region with its impressive formations like the volcanic Torfajökull. We will discover the valley of the Stórihver hot springs and cross Brennisteinsalda Mountain, the most colourful volcano in Iceland. We will explore the vast Laugahraun lava fields and perhaps we can even climb to the top of Blahnukur for an exceptional panorama view. We can finish the day by swimming or relaxing in a warm river near to our accommodation.

*6 hours of walking*

*Accommodation: Refuge*

#### Day 7 **The Golden Circle tour**



Today we are in for a final day of sight-seeing followed by a free evening in Reykjavik. In the morning we will visit Ljotipollur Lake, translated into English the name means 'Ugly Puddle' but in fact it is a beautiful crater lake with distinctive red coloured walls - not to be missed! Then we will do the famous Golden circle circuit. First stop, Gullfoss ('Golden Waterfall'), a gigantic two-tiered waterfall with impressive basalt columns which flows into a deep ravine. We will uncover the exciting geothermal area of Geysir and observe the extraordinary Strokkur Geyser as it shoots a column of boiling water up into the air. Then we will explore Pingvellir UNESCO World Heritage Site the impressive Mid-Atlantic fault where the Icelandic

Parliament settled and different clans of Iceland gathered to vote and decide on the laws. Then it's back to Reykjavik for a final evening at leisure, we have lots of recommendations for your last night in Iceland. Why not enjoy some local food in an authentic Icelandic restaurant? Or perhaps you want to visit some of Reykjaviks famous landmarks or museums?

*2 - 3 hour sight-seeing tour*

*Accommodation: Guesthouse or Youth Hostel*

*Transport: Private vehicle, 155 miles*

*Optional Activities: traditional meal in local restaurant & museum visit*

## Day 8 Fly home



Morning transfer to the airport and flight

Please note that this itinerary, including walking distances and times, is indicative. Our guides aim to provide the adventure that is best suited to the weather, your interests and the demands of the group. Please be aware that in order to achieve this, they may make changes to the programme.

## Other trips you may like



A Fairytale South Coast Adventure: Unlock the secrets of Iceland's dramatic South Coast on your terms... We have combined the freedom of having your own vehicle with our expert local knowledge to create a truly fabulous flexible itinerary...

## DATES & PRICES

### ***International departures:***

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No departure for now

Trip code: EISL8CVA

### ***Included***

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- All in country transfers
- Accommodation
- Full board (except meals in Reykjavik)
- Full supervision by a qualified expert guide
- Two evenings in Reykjavik with walking tour of capital city
- The full Golden Circle Tour
- Multiple guided hikes with our professional guide (including hikes in the following areas: Landamannalaugar, Skaftafell, Eldgjá, Þórsmörk Nature Reserve & Vík)
- Glacier Walking on part of the largest glacier in Iceland
- Puffin watching
- Swimming/bathing in hot springs and rivers

### ***Not included***

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- International flights
- Registration fee: €18 (free for under 12s)
- Meals in Reykjavik (2 evening meals and one breakfast)

### ***Additional Options***

Please let us know if you would like to reserve any of the following optional activities:

- Icelandic meal in traditional restaurant: From €20

### ***Museums in Reykjavik***

There are lots of museums in Reykjavik, our personal favourites are:

- The National Museum of Iceland: €16 (free for under 18s)
- Aurora Reykjavik Northern Lights Centre: from €10
- Reykjavik City Museum and Settlement Exhibition: from €15 (free for under 17s)

Please let us know if you would like to plan museum visits to these museums or any others in Reykjavik ahead of time. Reservation in advance is not necessary.

### ***Notes***

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#### ***Explanation of difficulty level:***

##### **LEVEL 3 Moderate**

Pace: Moderate

Daily walking time: 5 to 6 hours

Daily elevation: 500 to 800 m

Preparation: You practice endurance sporting activity at least once a week.

Experience: You walk regularly and you are in good physical condition. You are in good physical condition. You like to walk several days in a row, at an average of 5 to 6 hours per day (15 to 20 km) with vertical differences of up to 800 metres. You prefer nights in camping bivouac camping or wild, to be in the heart of nature.

Please note that our difficulty ratings may vary depending on the weather.

### ***Terms and conditions***

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#### ***Booking conditions***

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.

### ***Invoice procedure***

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.

### ***Cancellation policy***

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.

### ***Changes to travel contract***

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

### ***Pricing***

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.

### ***Contract transfer***

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**

You will be welcomed at the airport by a representative from our friendly team and accompanied for the duration of your holiday. Armed with an abundance of experience and a wealth of knowledge our professional Icelandic team know the country inside out. All activities are lead by our qualified guides who are all English speaking outdoor practitioners with a passion for everything Icelandic.

### **Food**

This trip includes full board - we are proud of the varied, fresh and frankly delicious food we provide even when camping. Meals are based on a selection of local products and you will have the opportunity to try Icelandic delicacies such as skyr, smoked salmon and leg of lamb.

Each day will start with a hearty breakfast accompanied by plenty of tea and coffee. Then you will prepare your own picnic lunch for the day from a buffet style array of options - everyday there will definitely be sandwiches, fruit and cakes among the other options. Each evening meal will include meat, fish and vegetables - we offer fresh fruit and vegetables everyday. The tap water in Iceland is of very high quality and it is delicious.

Your help in the kitchen is expected and much appreciated, particularly in the evenings. We like when the whole group work as a team to cook dinner, it creates a pleasant atmosphere as we reflect on the days adventures together.

Please let us know about any dietary requirements when you book the trip and we will work with you to cater for your needs.

Alcohol is very expensive in Iceland and you can only buy beer which is stronger than 2.25% alcohol in state run liquor stores. If you want to enjoy an evening drink after your days adventures, we recommend buying Duty Free alcohol in the airport.

### **Accommodation**

During this trip you will get to stay in a variety of Icelands traditional sleeping bag accommodation options. Your first and last nights will be spent in a guesthouse / hostel close to Reykjavik city centre. You will also stay in Icelandic refuges and guesthouses in more remote areas, all have shared bathroom and kitchen facilities, hot showers and heating. Please bring a sleeping bag.

### **Transportation**

For this trip we will travel in style in our privatised classic 4x4 vehicles. Some of Icelands 'roads' are more like 'tracks' and fjord crossings are not uncommon - these vehicles are perfectly adapted to Icelands terrain!

### **Budget & exchange**

The currency in Iceland is Icelandic Krona (ISK). Please budget for:

- Meals in Reykjavik (2500-5600ISK)
- Showers in campsites (around 500-600ISK per shower)
- Drinks & personal expenses

### **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.

### **Vital equipment**

- Sleeping bag (comfortable at 0°C for maximum warmth)
- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket (with a hood)
- Waterproof trousers
- A warm jumper or two
- Suitable underwear, t-shirts and walking trousers
- Thermals - top & long johns

- A swimsuit
- Warm gloves and hat (even in the summer - evenings can be chilly)
- Sunhat and sun cream
- Sunglasses (UV 400)
- Any personal medication
- Towel & toiletries
- A water bottle
- A small rucksack to use as a day bag
- Warm pyjamas

## **Material**

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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, although we will provide warm outer layers, 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. warm breathable base layer
2. second thermal layer
3. Wind and waterproof protective out layer

## **Helpful equipment**

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You may also consider packing

- Your camera
- Binoculars
- A notepad and pencil
- A thermos flask
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothing
- A comfortable evening outfit
- Walking poles
- An inflatable pillow
- Insect repellent

## **Luggage**

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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**

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Your guide is a trained first-aider and will carry a full first aid kit at all times during the trip. We recommend that you bring any medication you may need with you such as inhalers, plasters and painkillers.

A valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will insure that you can access state-provided healthcare in Iceland for free or at a reduced cost.

For more information [click here](#).

## **Passport**

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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/](http://www.utl.is/index.php/en/)

## **Visa**

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EU citizens 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 to check: [www.utl.is/index.php/en/visas](http://www.utl.is/index.php/en/visas)

## **Mandatory vaccines**

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There are no specific health risks

## **Weather**

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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**

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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**

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Iceland uses Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) like the United Kingdom but does not observe daylight-saving time in the summer

## **Topography**

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Area: 39,768.5 m<sup>2</sup>

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**

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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.